

# Midterm Evaluation Report of the "Decentralisation for Development - D4D" Project

United Nations Development Programme

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IMPACTE - Consultants For Dev

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# FICHE TECHNIQUE

## PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>Project title</b>	Decentralisation for Development (D4D)
<b>Atlas ID</b>	00129163
<b>Corporate outcomes and output</b>	<p>4.1 By 2026, more people in Mozambique, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, are protected and able to claim and enjoy their rights, and benefit from a secure, peaceful environment, enabled by transformative and inclusive governance systems, and independent, transparent and accountable institutions abiding by the rule of law.</p> <p>4.1.2 Decentralized institutions are more transparent, accountable, and inclusive, gender transformative, and promote peace and social cohesion.</p>
<b>Country</b>	Mozambique
<b>Region</b>	Southern Africa
<b>Date Project document signed</b>	11/ 2021
<b>Project Dates</b>	Start:11/2021 End: 12/2025
<b>Total committed budget</b>	6 961 220\$
<b>Project expenditure at the time of evaluation</b>	3 019 511\$
<b>Funding source</b>	European Union: 5 011 220\$ UNDP: 1 950 000\$
<b>Implementing party</b>	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

## EVALUATION INFORMATION

<b>Evaluation type</b>	Project Evaluation
<b>Final/midterm review/ other</b>	Midterm Evaluation
<b>Period under evaluation</b>	Start: 11/2021 End:09/2023
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<b>Evaluation dates</b>	Start: 09/2023 End: 11/2023

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## ACRONYMS

AACID	<i>Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo</i>
ADEL	<i>Agência de Desenvolvimento Económico Local de Sofala</i>
ADEM	<i>Agência de Desenvolvimento Económico de Manica</i>
ANAMM	<i>Associação Nacional de Municípios de Moçambique</i>
BGF	Boa Governação Financeira
CEP	Provincial Executive Council
CSREP	Council of Provincial State Representation Services
D4D	Decentralisation for Development
ENDE	National Development Strategy
GRP/PRG	Provincial Reference Group
I4D	Initiatives for Development
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MAEFP	Ministry of State Administration and Civil Service
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
OD	Development Observatories /Observatórios de Desenvolvimento
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
OE	State Budget
SE	Specific Objective
OGDP	Provincial Decentralised Governance Bodies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

OREP	State Representative Bodies in the Province
PES	Social Economic Plan
PGQ	Five-Year Government Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ProDoc	Project Document
PTA/AWP	Annual Work Plans
SISTAFE	State Financial Administration System
EU	European Union
PMU	Project Management Unit
UP	United Purpose

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**1. Context of the evaluation and the project:** The Mid-Term Evaluation of the "Decentralisation for Development - D4D" Project, implemented in Mozambique, was carried out between September 2023 and November 2023. The project under evaluation was implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). D4D began in November 2021 and is scheduled to end in November 2025. It aims to support the Government of Mozambique to undertake fundamental reforms that result in more inclusive decentralised governance, shared prosperity and a more capable local government system. The project has an overall budget of 6,961,220\$, financed by the European Union (EU) and the UNDP.

**2. Objectives of the Evaluation:** The objectives of the mid-term evaluation are: 1) to assess the performance of the Project, and the extent to which it has achieved the expected results, with a focus on analysing its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability; and 2) to recommend strategic guidelines for the remaining time of implementation.

## 3. Evaluation findings

**3.1 Relevance:** According to the evidence gathered, the D4D Project is relevant. The design of the project responds to national development priorities, the UNDP Strategic Plan and also the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of the Mozambican government's priorities is the implementation and revision of legal tools as part of decentralisation reforms, due to the introduction of the new Decentralisation Package in 2019. In its project design, D4D proposes to respond to this need by supporting the capacity-building of decentralised bodies in the provinces, with a focus on Decentralised Provincial Governance Bodies, Provincial State Representations and Provincial Assemblies. There is a natural fit between the support provided by D4D - and other development partners - and the national need to understand the changes to the legal-institutional framework, as well as their practical application. Participants in the consultations, with a focus on national and provincial bodies, shared a good level of understanding of the project's objectives and activities and the results achieved so far. They believe they are clear, practical and feasible within the defined timeline. This assessment is largely due to the fact that they felt adequately consulted and involved in defining the project. The general objective and specific objectives of the project, defined in the ProDoc Logical Framework, are clear and there is a logical relationship between the objectives and the five products defined. However, in terms of the indicators, baseline values and targets, there is a need to revise them, especially in terms of the statement of the indicators, which would allow for a better understanding of the project's results and also of the scope of the products.

**3.2 Effectiveness:** Regarding achieving results, the evaluation found that the project has already made positive progress. The role of the project in ensuring coordination between different partners and government entities, in a collaborative manner, at national and provincial level, was emphasised. D4D's support has been very relevant to the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and the Ministry of State Administration and Civil Service (MAEFP) in strengthening the technical capacity of both ministries, as well as supporting the digitalisation and modernisation of public administration. A key aspect of the decentralisation process is strengthening institutional coordination mechanisms at national and provincial level. D4D has provided support for the organisation of the National Coordination Council, provided for in Decree 4/2020, with a view to improving coordination mechanisms, and consequent coordination and dialogue between ministries at national level and in the provinces. The Provincial Coordination Councils held so far have also supported improved coordination and dialogue between the Council of Provincial State

Representation Services (CSREP) and the Provincial Executive Council (CEP), and fostered decentralised, participatory, and inclusive governance. In the case of Manica, ADEM has faced more difficulties in holding the events, due to the lack of availability or prioritisation of these meetings by the provincial bodies.

Strengthening the technical capacity of the MEF and MAEFP, as well as decentralised governance bodies, provincial bodies representing the state, and civil society partners, is based on a logic of capacity building and strengthening skills, transmitted through technical assistance and training. Capacity-building initiatives were repeatedly mentioned as one of the project's added value for all those involved, leading to the acquisition of new skills. With the Provincial Reference Groups (GRP), the seminars and training organised by D4D covered the topics of strategic planning and methodology for drawing up the territorial strategic plan; gender and development; localisation of the SDGs; identification and preparation of impact projects. Other support and ownership mechanisms for the national and provincial entities involved in the decentralisation process include the development of the Linkinmodex platform, in partnership with the Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) and the *Secretaria Virtual*, in partnership with the National Association of Municipalities of Mozambique (ANAMM). Feedback from potential beneficiaries on Linkinmodex is positive, in the sense that it could facilitate access to technical assistance in the provinces, overcoming the travelling constraints commonly mentioned. In the case of virtual secretariats, it is hoped that access to municipal services will be improved by reducing waiting times and associated costs.

The organisation of Development Observatories (OD), as accountability mechanisms at municipal, district and provincial level, facilitates the inclusion of civil society in the process of evaluating local annual plans, as well as formulating recommendations for subsequent years. So far, three events have been held in 2022 and three in 2023 (two per province). Despite the preparatory sessions organised by D4D to support local *stakeholders* on the issues discussed at the ODs, as well as the repeated affirmations of greater interaction with civil society and academia, the need to continue looking at the quality of civil society representation was mentioned. The reactivation/creation of the Provincial Reference Groups (GRP) in the three provinces played a major role in improving dialogue and coordination at provincial level. The members of the GRP played a key role in drawing up the Provincial Strategic Plans. Training sessions and exchanges of experience between provinces were considered useful for improving skills in drawing up territorial strategies, integrating the SDGs and designing projects. In the three provinces, the plans are at similar stages of development, with some delay in relation to the initial planning. Some difficulties were mentioned by the provincial players in terms of realising them without external support.

Lastly, the methodology for selecting and designing the Impact Projects should be emphasised, through a very inclusive process of capacity building with the involvement of the provincial entities, but also the districts and municipalities. Five (mini-) Impact projects were selected, worth around 200,000 USD each, namely: two projects in the water and sanitation sector (water supply); the education sector (distribution of school desks); the health sector (construction of a health centre); and sustainable agriculture (drip irrigation system). The projects aim to cumulatively benefit 16,455 people in the health and water supply sectors; 2,400 students; 14 associations, 108 individual producers and 168 households in the agricultural sector.

In terms of constraints, participants highlighted the new decentralisation model being discussed by the government and the implications these changes could have on the work carried out so far. Secondly, potential challenges that can be encountered when implementing the project during the election period were highlighted. These challenges have even been felt this year, with the local elections taking place in October 2023, with regard to the availability of the provincial bodies and the different political players to carry out D4D activities.

**3.3 Efficiency:** To date, the project has executed 3,019,511.00 USD, which corresponds to 75 per cent of the budget planned for the first two years of implementation. Products 2.1. and 2.2. have a lower execution rate, which is due to the delay in implementing impact projects in the provinces. The project took a strategic approach to prioritising interventions, making the most of the budget by sharing resources between the three projects managed by the UNDP team, namely D4D, the *Initiatives for Development Project (I4D)* and the *Localisation of the SDGs Project*, particularly with regard to *staff* in Maputo and the provinces; the absence of office expenses; and the synergies exploited with other projects in organising and financing activities.

The project's implementation's execution strategy is adequate. At the level of the Project Management Unit (PMU), the current team has adequate technical skills to carry out the activities, and has established a network of close and trusting interpersonal relationships with the beneficiary partners. The local structures made up of area managers in the provinces were also pointed out as relevant to the success of the Project, as a way of streamlining the implementation and monitoring of the Project at central and local level and strengthening its response capacity. The assessment of the responsible parties (ADEL, ADEM and UP) who support the management of activities in the provinces is positive. The Steering Committee was characterised as pragmatic and very functional, giving the different players the opportunity to understand the results achieved, plan work together, promote project complementarities and mitigate any constraints.

**3.4 Sustainability:** Although the project has not defined a clear exit strategy, there are several factors in the design and implementation that largely contribute to its sustainability, which are related to the very nature of the activities and the degree of involvement and ownership of the partners. One of D4D's positive factors in terms of sustainability is the adequate involvement of partners from the design phase, through the annual planning phases, to the implementation phase, which favours good ownership of the benefits resulting from the project. Secondly, the alignment of the project with national strategies and policies indicates that it is responding to the structural needs of the beneficiary partners. Thirdly, the evaluation results confirm that the capacity-building strategies have generated improved knowledge and key competences for territorial planning, as well as fostering a better relationship and coordination between the OGDP and OREP. The benefits of D4D are also sustained through the synergies created with other projects that support decentralisation reforms, in particular the Decentralisation Working Group (DWG), which supports the alignment and harmonisation of the actions of the different partners. The consensus created by the Project with regard to the creation of the GRPs, the organisation of provincial coordination meetings and provincial Development Observatories, among others, is a gain supported by D4D, which is based on the laws in force, but which depends to a large extent on the priorities and commitment of the state. The participants consulted indicate that there is still a great deal of dependence by government entities on external funding to guarantee the realisation of these activities.

**3.5 Cross-cutting issues:** Analysing here the extent to which the project presented a sensitive approach to gender and human rights and sought to consider the vulnerabilities caused by conflicts, the evidence supports that D4D invested in these issues. Of particular note are the seminars and training sessions organised by D4D that covered the topics of strategic planning, gender mainstreaming and alignment with the SDGs. This finding was reinforced by the GRP, who said they had acquired skills in gender equality and its integration into planning instruments. In addition, the use of the LNOB diagnosis in strategic planning supported the identification of vulnerable groups and the causes of vulnerability. The selection of impact projects took into account the reach of the most vulnerable populations, as well as their alignment with the SDGs. On the other hand, one of the problems commonly mentioned is gender inequality in terms of



participation in project activities, both in terms of the composition of the GRPs and attendance at training sessions and workshops.

#### **4. Lessons learnt (LA):**

**LA1.** The appropriate involvement of partners from the design phase, through the annual planning phase, to the implementation phase favours good ownership of the activities to be implemented, as well as the benefits resulting from the project.

**LA2.** The creation of the Provincial Reference Groups (GRPs) - as operational structures that guarantee the harmonisation of actions at provincial, municipal and district level - has led to improved institutional coordination and capacity building across the various institutions involved in the planning processes.

**LA3.** Encouraging synergies with other projects that support decentralisation reforms is key to ensuring the alignment and harmonisation of partners' efforts to strengthen the technical and financial skills of the various national, provincial, district and municipal players in a sustainable way. The Decentralisation Working Group (DWG) is a good practice for encouraging consultation between development partners and the government.

#### **5. Recommendations (R):**

**R1** Accelerate the finalisation of territorial strategies and the *kick-off* of impact projects in the provinces and start planning, together with the GRPs, their implementation and monitoring, which will require close follow-up.

**R2** Seek to improve the representation of civil society, the private sector and academia in the Provincial Reference Groups and Development Observatories, in terms of quantity and quality.

**R3** Continue to strengthen synergies with development partners to ensure responsiveness to district needs, which are directly linked to the success of territorial planning.

**R4** Explore new approaches to combat gender inequality in terms of women's participation in project activities. (e.g., involvement of other women-led organisations (e.g., civil society); identification of gender focal points in partner organisations).

**R5** Review the design of the Project Logical Framework to better understand the expected results and also the scope of the products. This would include a review of the defined indicators, baseline values, and respective targets, with a deeper level of disaggregation (province, entity, gender).

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Mid-Term Evaluation of the "Decentralisation for Development - D4D" Project, implemented in Mozambique, was carried out between September 2023 and November 2023. The project under evaluation was implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). D4D began in November 2021 and is scheduled to end in November 2025. It aims to support the Government of Mozambique to undertake fundamental reforms that result in more inclusive decentralised governance, shared prosperity and a more capable local government system. The project has an overall budget of \$6,961,220, financed by the European Union (EU) and the UNDP.

The Mid-term Evaluation focused on the implementation of the project to date. The aims of the evaluation are: 1) to assess the project's performance and the extent to which it has achieved the expected results, with a focus on analysing its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability; and 2) to recommend strategic guidelines for the remaining time of implementation. The evaluation model followed was based on the evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), as well as the OECD/DAC evaluation quality standards.

The main users of the assessment are the members of the D4D Steering Committee, namely: UNDP, the European Union, national partners (MAEFP and MEF), responsible parties (ADEL, ADEM and UP). With this evaluation, they intend to collect lessons learned from the implementation of D4D to date, with a view to improving aspects that may require review, updating or reorientation to achieve the expected results in the remaining time of the evaluation.

Structurally, this evaluation report begins with the evaluation framework, which contextualises the project to be evaluated, as well as the objectives of the evaluation. This is followed by an explanation of the methodology followed, including the evaluation criteria and questions, the data collection and analysis methods, the sample, the ethical considerations observed, as well as the limitations experienced during the course of this evaluation and the mitigation measures devised. This is followed by the evaluation findings, segmented by evaluation criteria, including: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and cross-cutting issues. Finally, the conclusions are presented, as well as systematising the main recommendations and lessons learned that emerged during the evaluation.

A set of relevant data and documents is attached: list of organisations consulted, data collection tools and bibliography.

## 2. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. PROJECT FRAMEWORK

The D4D Project, which runs from November 2021 until November 2025, is implemented by the UNDP in Mozambique, in partnership with the Ministry of State Administration and Civil Service (MAEFP) and the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF). D4D aims to support the Government of Mozambique to undertake fundamental reforms that result in more inclusive decentralised governance, shared prosperity and a more capable local government system.

The project is part of the European Union's "Support to the consolidation of peace process in Mozambique: Support to Decentralisation" programme and the UNDP's Programme to Promote Decentralised Governance, which aim to support the Mozambican government in the decentralisation process.

The project has an overall budget of 6,961,220 USD, financed by the European Union (5,011,220 USD) and the UNDP (1,950,000 USD).

D4D's intervention is at national and provincial level, specifically in three pilot provinces: Sofala, Cabo Delgado and Manica. At national level, D4D aims to support the implementation of legal tools for decentralised governance bodies (the Provincial Assembly, the Provincial Governor and the Provincial Executive Council), through short-term technical assistance to provincial and national authorities and support for dialogue mechanisms. At provincial level, the project aims to support the provinces in testing national decentralisation policies and reforms, through support for strategic planning processes.

#### 2.1.1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The general objective of D4D is: ***“Strengthened democratic governance and peacebuilding in Mozambique through supporting the decentralization process, enhancing the ability of national Ministries (MAEFP and MEF), the decentralized governance bodies and the provincial bodies of State representation to provide quality public services to citizens, improve socio-economic conditions and reduce conflicts.”***

The D4D also establishes two specific objectives (SO) and five products with the following corresponding indicators:

#### SO 1

Strengthened technical capacity of MEF, MAEFP, the decentralized governance bodies and the provincial bodies of State representation to define the technical and legal mechanisms for decentralization and its effective implementation at the subnational level (Province).

<b>Output 1.1</b>	Decentralized governance bodies, provincial bodies and central government agencies' capacities are strengthened, and their impartiality improved with a special focus on promoting inclusive, equitable and sustainable social development and gender empowerment in subnational governance.
<b>Output 1.2.</b>	Mechanisms for knowledge sharing and dissemination of specialist inputs, good practices and lessons learned are in place.

## SO 2

“Enhanced capacity at subnational level (Province) to carry out inclusive governance processes through the coordination of territorial stakeholders and the implementation of socio-economic development strategies linked to public policies and aligned with the 2030 Agenda.”

<b>Output 2.1</b>	Enabled Environment for responsive, agile subnational governments
<b>Output 2.2.</b>	Decentralized Governance improved by testing decentralization reforms and putting socio-economic projects into practice by improving the living conditions of the population at subnational level.
<b>Output 2.3.</b>	Project's implementation, tracking and evaluation, and reporting are performed efficiently and effectively

## 2.2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

### 2.2.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The main objectives of the Evaluation are to:

- **“Assess the performance and results achievement** of implementation so far, in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.
- **Recommend and outline possible strategic orientations and options** for the rest of the implementation, building on the knowledge from the results and achievements until now.”

### 2.2.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The ToR further adds the specific objectives of the Evaluation:

- “To assess the extent to which the project is contributing to meeting the needs and solving the problems of the beneficiary populations identified during the design phase, and to determine whether the needs at the outset of the project have been partially met (in 2 years' time).
- To measure the degree of implementation of the project, its effectiveness, efficiency and the quality of the products and outputs in relation to what was initially planned, highlighting its coherence and articulation with international partners, provinces and national priorities.
- To measure the extent to which the project has achieved development results for the target population/groups, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders, whether individuals, provinces, institutions, or others.
- To measure the project's contribution to achieving the objectives set for the various intervention components, as well as the overall objectives (UNSDCF, CPD, SDGs);
- Identify and document key lessons learned and good practices on specific issues.

- Provide information to inform future planning and decision-making, while providing guidance on whether or not further action is needed.
- Assess stakeholders' (donors, project staff, beneficiaries, partners, local authorities) perceptions of project activities.
- Assess the likelihood of the sustainability of activities, the ability to continue after support ends, and national ownership<sup>1</sup>.

### **2.2.3. EVALUATION SCOPE**

The following thematic, chronological and geographical scope of the D4D Evaluation was determined:

<b>Thematic scope</b>	The evaluation focused on the activities, products and outcomes of the D4D project.
<b>Geographical scope</b>	It covered the project's areas of intervention in Mozambique, in the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Manica.
<b>Chronological scope</b>	It covered the project's implementation period from December 2021 to October 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP: "Terms of Reference (ToR) for Mid Term Evaluation of Decentralization for Development (D4D)", 2023

## 3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation was based on the criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC)<sup>2</sup>: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Gender and equity considerations were also assessed as part of this evaluation and included in all the criteria.

<b>RELEVANCE</b>	Relevance refers to the appropriateness of the explicit objectives of the programme in relation to the socio-economic problems it is supposed to address. Questions of relevance are important because the focus is on choosing the best strategy or on justifying the one proposed. The aim is to check whether the socio-economic context has evolved as expected and whether this evolution calls into question a particular objective.
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	Effectiveness concerns whether the objectives formulated in the Project are being achieved, what the successes and difficulties have been, how appropriate the chosen implementation strategies have been, and what is the influence of external factors on Project implementation.
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	Efficiency is assessed by comparing the results obtained or, preferably, the impacts produced, and the resources mobilized. In other words, are the effects obtained commensurate to the inputs? The terms 'economy' and 'cost minimization' are often associated with efficiency in implementation.
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	Sustainability refers to the extent to which the results and outputs of the intervention are durable. Evaluations consider the sustainability of institutional changes as well as socio economic impacts. The criterion of sustainability is also linked to the concept of sustainable development which can itself be regarded as one definition of utility, particularly if sustainable development is defined as concerning the maintenance of human, productive, natural, and social capitals rather than just the maintenance of the environment for future generations.

<sup>2</sup> OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development): "*Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully*", OECD Publishing, Paris, 2021.

## 3.2 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This report seeks to answer the following evaluation questions:

### RELEVANCE

- To what extent does the project design effectively respond to national development priorities, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals?
- To what extent are the project activities relevant to the needs of the provinces in the current context of decentralization? To what extent did the project choose the right administrative level of intervention at territorial level (province, district, municipality)?
- To what extent are the project's objectives and results clear, practical, and achievable within its timeframe? Is the intervention logic realistic?

### EFFECTIVENESS

- What progress has the project made toward achieving the proposed objectives and outcomes so far?
- What have been the greatest constraints identified during the project?
- To what extent have stakeholders (mainly in provinces) been sufficiently involved in the implementation of the project?
- To what extent has the project's assistance made financial resources available to these provinces, local associations and beneficiaries of the D4D to develop projects with the objective of reducing poverty and achieving the SDGs?
- To what extent was the project implementation able to adapt and respond to unexpected constraints, such as the conflict in the North or some natural disasters among other events? Were there any unexpected outcomes from this adaptation? If yes, how so?
- To what extent has the project responded appropriately to the changing priorities of partners?

### EFFICIENCY

- To what extent has the project's implementation strategy and execution, including the project management structure, been efficient and cost-effective?
- To what extent was there a cost-effective use of financial and human resources? Specifically, were resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) allocated strategically to achieve results in a cost-effective and timely manner?
- To what extent does the monitoring and evaluation system used by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management and results measurement?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?

### SUSTAINABILITY

- To what extent do project interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies?
- To what extent are project results sustained and how have they contributed to increased stakeholder ownership and commitment?
- To what extent will national financial and institutional resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?

## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- To what extent have cross-cutting issues such as gender and human rights been taken into account in project design and planning?
- To what extent did UNDP adopt gender-sensitive, human rights-based and conflict-sensitive approaches?
- To what extent are the project activities adopting a gender and conflict sensitive, and human rights-based approach?

## 3.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND SAMPLE

The methodology developed took into account the guidelines of the *United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)*, the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, vis-à-vis the integration of cross-cutting elements (human rights-based approach (HRBA), equity and gender equality, based on the Guiding Document *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations* and the *United Nations System Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP)*).

The Evaluation employed a mixed methods methodology, with different lines of evidence and triangulation of sources, including documentation analysis and literature review, primary and secondary data collection. The data collection process was participatory and collaborative, involving the project's main stakeholders. Visits were made to the provinces of Maputo, Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado

### 3.3.1 DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

The evaluation used documentary analysis of internal project documents (e.g. Project Document (ProDoc), annual progress reports) as well as external documents (e.g. *Decentralisation Working Group meeting minutes*, legal diplomas, national strategic documents). These were analysed using document analysis techniques.

### 3.3.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 40 key informants (15 women and 25 men) from the project team, government partners, UN agencies and development partners. The interviewees were identified on the basis of recommendations from the Project Team. The notes were analysed using discourse analysis techniques. The list of key informants interviewed, as well as the interview scripts, can be found in **Annexes 1** and **2**, respectively.

### 3.3.3 FOCUS GROUPS

Three focus groups were held with members of the Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado Provincial Reference Groups, attended by 24 participants (20 men and 4 women). The participants were invited to work in groups using the timeline methodology, i.e. trying to visually represent the main



changes driven by the project by drawing a timeline with three moments (pre-project, during the project, and post-project). The focus groups helped to fill gaps in knowledge identified during the literature review, and offered an opportunity to explore the project's results achieved to date and its potential for sustainability.

### **3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Data collection and processing was carried out in accordance with the following principles:

- Intentionality: taking into account the usefulness and necessity of an evaluation from the outset;
- Conflict of interest: exercising the commitment to avoid conflicts of interest in all aspects of work, thus maintaining the principles of independence, impartiality, credibility, honesty, integrity and responsibility;
- Interactions with participants: appropriate and respectful engagement with participants in evaluation processes, maintaining the principles of confidentiality and anonymity and their limitations; dignity and diversity; human rights; gender equality; and harm prevention;
- Evaluation processes and products: ensuring accuracy, integrity and trust; inclusion and non-discrimination; transparency; and fair and balanced reporting that recognises different perspectives; and
- Discovery of irregularities: discreetly reporting the discovery of any apparent misconduct to a competent body.

The evaluation has taken the following measures to respect these ethical principles:

- Ensure informed consent on the part of the interviewees;
- Respect confidentiality and anonymity;
- Integrate specific evaluation questions to address equity and gender issues into the evaluation design.

### **3.5 LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

The limitations of the evaluation were generally related to the data collection process. The evaluation methodology initially included the application of an online survey for a broader consultation of stakeholders, however, after discussion with the project team, it was realised that the online participation of *stakeholders* would be potentially low. In this context, the application of face-to-face focus groups with a wider group of members of the Provincial Reference Groups proved to be a more viable alternative.

Gender differences among the beneficiary partners in the interviews and focus groups are another limitation that needs to be taken into account. These are partly the result of a certain discrepancy

in terms of participation in the project itself and also the gender inequalities that exist in the country in terms of leadership positions (at national and provincial level). As a result, the number of men in the focus groups and individual interviews was higher than the number of women.

## 4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This chapter aims to answer the evaluation questions for the different evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability), presenting evidence for each question.

### 4.1. RELEVANCE

#### Evaluation Questions

1. How effectively does the project design respond to national development priorities, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals?
2. To what extent are the project's activities relevant to the needs of the provinces in the current context of decentralisation? To what extent has the project chosen the appropriate administrative level of intervention at territorial level (province, district, municipality)?
3. To what extent are the project's objectives and results clear, practical and achievable within the timeframe? Is the intervention logic realistic?

#### **1. How effectively does the project design respond to national development priorities, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals?**

According to the evidence gathered (e.g. documentary analysis, key informant interviews and focus groups), the D4D Project is a relevant project. The project's design responds with an adequate level of effectiveness to national development priorities, the UNDP Strategic Plan and also the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, this project came about as a result of the UNDP's support for decentralisation in Mozambique, which has been ongoing since 1998, at national, provincial and district level, with initiatives implemented in partnership with the MEF and MAEFP, with a view to supporting decentralisation reforms, promoting local development and reducing poverty. At the moment, in parallel to D4D, there are two other projects running, namely: The "*Initiatives for Decentralisation in Niassa and Nampula*" project and the "*Localizing SDGs*" project, with financial support from the Swiss Cooperation Office and the Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AACID), respectively, which contribute to the objective of "strengthening democratic governance and consolidating peace in Mozambique by supporting the decentralisation process".

One of the Mozambican government's priorities is the implementation and revision of legal tools as part of the decentralisation reforms, due to the introduction of the new Decentralisation Package in 2019. In its project design, D4D proposes to respond to this need by supporting the strengthening of the capacities of decentralised bodies in the provinces, with a focus on the

Decentralised Provincial Governance Bodies, the Provincial State Representations and the Provincial Assemblies. It is therefore hoped that the project will contribute to the government's national programme to support decentralisation. According to the consultations carried out and the literature review, there is a natural fit between the support provided by D4D - and other development partners - and the national need to understand the changes to the legal-institutional framework, as well as their practical application. The changes brought about by the new laws and decrees of the decentralisation package are difficult to understand for public service managers and citizens themselves<sup>3</sup>, and their coordination and dialogue is sometimes challenging due to the overlapping of some attributions between provincial directorates and provincial state services ("They didn't know how the bodies elected at provincial level would work with state representation. The context makes the relationship between the two organisations difficult, because we don't yet understand how it works.<sup>4</sup>").

The project is clearly aligned with the priorities of the Country Programme Document for Mozambique, namely *Outcome 4.1 - Promote inclusive and decentralised governance, justice, human rights, peace and social cohesion, with a view to contributing to greater accountability and governance in decentralisation reforms, strengthening financial management systems and improving civic spaces for participation*<sup>5</sup>. The intervention is also based on the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021: *Signature Solution 2: Strengthening effective, inclusive and accountable governance*<sup>6</sup>, as well as on one of the *Signature Solutions* of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, which proposes transformative support for countries' governance systems. As far as the European Union is concerned, D4D responds to the priorities identified in the European Union Programme "Support to the consolidation of peace process in Mozambique: Support to Decentralisation", namely Specific Objective 1 "Strengthened implementation of revised legal mandates for decentralised governance institutions", by providing short-term technical assistance to provincial and national authorities<sup>7</sup>. The alignment also extends to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide universal access to justice and build accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

## **2. To what extent are the project's activities relevant to the needs of the provinces in the current context of decentralisation? To what extent has the project chosen the appropriate administrative level of intervention at territorial level (province, district, municipality)?**

The decentralisation process in Mozambique began in 1998, when local elections were introduced. The consolidation process lasted until 2018, when a review was carried out to incorporate a new decentralisation paradigm, which led to the elections of the first provincial governors and the

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<sup>3</sup> Bernhard Weimer: "The New Paradigm of Decentralisation in Mozambique", 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations: "Country Programme Document for Mozambique (2011-2026)", 2022.

<sup>6</sup> UNDP: "UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021" DP/2017/38, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> EU: "Annex I of the Financing Agreement No MZ/FED/042-445".

emergence of other decentralised bodies such as the Provincial Executive Council and the Provincial Assembly.

D4D fits in with the need to strengthen the capacities of the new players in the decentralisation process. The project's activities meet the expectations and needs of provincial and national partners, and are in line with partner and donor policies. Participants in the consultations, with a focus on national and provincial bodies, shared a good level of knowledge of the project's objectives and activities and the results achieved so far. They believe they are clear, practical and feasible within the defined timeline. This assessment is largely due to the fact that they felt adequately consulted and involved in defining the project and, more specifically, the activities to be developed according to the specific needs of each organisation. The choice of acting at national and provincial level is based on the one hand, on the fact that there was a lack of support at provincial level from development partners. On the other hand, coordination between the two provincial bodies, and between them and the MEF and MAEFP, is essential to ensure harmonisation of decentralisation tools. It is also important to mention the need for greater support for district bodies. This issue was reiterated across the board in the consultations held.

Nevertheless, some partner organisations working on decentralisation mentioned that there was little room for consultation in the initial phase of defining the D4D, as well as the absence of joint work plans, which raised some concern about the possible overlapping of activities at provincial level. However, over the course of implementation, there has been an improvement in coordination, which is also due to the existence of the Decentralisation Working Group, made up of a group of international partners who coordinate support for the decentralisation process in Mozambique.

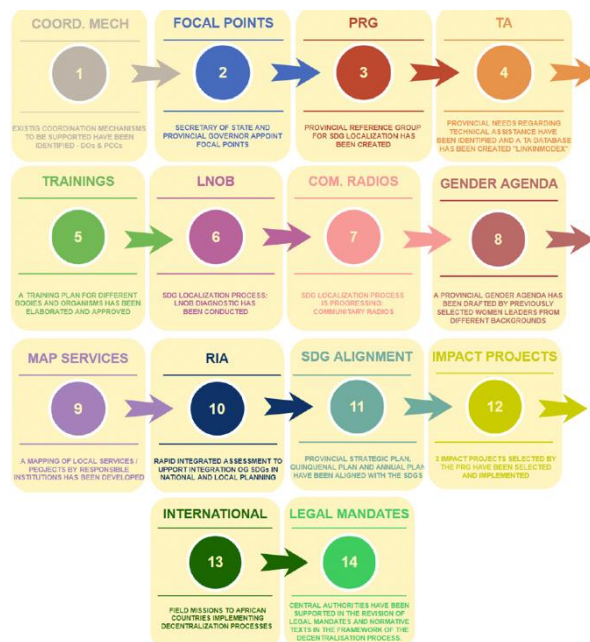
### **3. To what extent are the project's objectives and results clear, practical and achievable within the timeframe? Is the intervention logic realistic?**

The general objective and specific objectives of the project, defined in the ProDoc Logical Framework, are clear and there is a logical relationship between the objectives and the five products defined. However, in terms of the indicators, baseline values and targets, there is a need to revise them, especially in terms of the wording of the indicators, namely: i) the indicators at the level of the objectives are geared towards the realisation of activities (e.g., Indicator 1.5 - Number of short-term technical assistance and *coaching* to provincial and national services); ii) some indicators in terms of objectives and products are repeated (e.g. indicators 1.4 and 1.1.4); and iii) the number of indicators could be significantly reduced to simplify their monitoring. In this sense, revising the Logical Framework during the course of the project's implementation would allow for a better understanding of the project's results and also of the scope of the products. In this regard, it is also important to note the lack of documentation and reporting of objectives, products and

indicators in the Annual Reports, despite the fact that there is a great deal of detail on the achievements per activity, at national and provincial level.

The intervention logic is realistic and based on the UNDP tools for Decentralisation (see Figure 2), which defines a territorial approach, with concrete actions and support for the provinces, alongside work at national level with the MEF and MAEFP; with a focus on localising the SDGs and local economic development<sup>8</sup>. The risks of the intervention are identified in the ProDoc, such as political instability, changes in political priorities, or lack of capacity of the beneficiaries. To respond to these, D4D establishes a set of mitigation measures, based on the project's flexibility to adjust activities according to a potential situation of conflict or instability, as well as a strong component of capacity building, technical assistance and close monitoring of beneficiary organisations.

Figure 1 - UNDP Methodology for Decentralisation



<sup>8</sup> UNDP: "UNDP Tools for Decentralisation".

## 4.2. EFFECTIVENESS

### Evaluation Question

1. What progress has the project made towards achieving the objectives and results proposed so far?
2. What were the biggest constraints identified during the project?
3. To what extent have the stakeholders (mainly in the provinces) been sufficiently involved in the implementation of the project?
4. To what extent has the project's support made financial resources available to these provinces, local associations and D4D beneficiaries to develop projects with the aim of reducing poverty and achieving the SDGs?
5. To what extent was the implementation of the project able to adapt and respond to unexpected constraints, such as the conflict in the north of the country or some natural disasters, among other events? Were there any unexpected results of this adaptation? If so, how? To what extent did the project respond adequately to the evolution of the partners' priorities?

### 1. What progress has the project made towards achieving the objectives and results proposed so far?

The UNDP, through the implementation of the D4D Project, is supporting the latest decentralisation package in Mozambique, approved in 2018. D4D has effectively contributed to progress on the issues it set out to address. In terms of achieving results, the various data sources consulted and analysed show that the intervention has generally contributed to positive progress.

The general objective of D4D is to "Strengthen democratic governance and consolidate peace in Mozambique by supporting the decentralisation process, increasing the capacity of national ministries (MAEFP and MEF), decentralised governance bodies and provincial bodies representing the state to provide quality public services to citizens, improve socio-economic conditions and reduce conflicts." In this context, the project outlined two specific objectives and five products related to strengthening capacities to carry out inclusive governance processes as part of the decentralisation reform.

After analysing the results of the various actions carried out, this evaluation found that the project has already made positive progress in achieving its objectives. During the evaluation interviews, the role of the project in ensuring coordination between different partners and government bodies, in a collaborative way, at national and provincial level, was emphasised. The coordination

of organisations at local level (provincial coordination councils) was highlighted as one of D4D's major challenges. Strengthening dialogue and articulation between the different decentralisation bodies is also a gain of the project, which is reflected in a series of strategic actions to strengthen provincial governance, namely the creation of Provincial Reference Groups, the drafting of Territorial Strategies, support for the implementation of Development Observatories (OD), among others, which are explored in more detail below.

Table 1 - Specific Objective 1

<b>SO 1</b>	
Strengthened technical capacity of MEF, MAEFP, the decentralized governance bodies and the provincial bodies of State representation to define the technical and legal mechanisms for decentralization and its effective implementation at the subnational level (Province).	
<b>Output 1.1</b>	Decentralized governance bodies, provincial bodies and central government agencies' capacities are strengthened, and their impartiality improved with a special focus on promoting inclusive, equitable and sustainable social development and gender empowerment in subnational governance.
<b>Output 1.2.</b>	Mechanisms for knowledge sharing and dissemination of specialist inputs, good practices and lessons learned are in place.

**Output 1.1 - *The decentralised governance bodies and capacities of central government agencies are strengthened and their impartiality improved with a special focus on promoting inclusive, equitable and sustainable social development and gender empowerment in sub-national governance***

D4D's support has been very important for the MEF and MAEFP in terms of addressing the main priorities and concerns in the implementation of the decentralisation reform. In this regard, we would highlight the reinforcement of the technical capacity of both ministries, as well as support for the digitalisation and modernisation of public administration, which is based on Law 14/2020 establishing the principles and rules for the organisation and operation of the State Financial Administration System, abbreviated to SISTAFE.

At the MEF level, D4D has enabled it to support the provinces in creating territorial strategies, as well as capacity building and technical assistance in governance and public finance management. This effort is framed within the reform of the Planning and Budgeting Subsystem<sup>9</sup> and the guiding instruments of the SISTAFE legislation, and includes support for the integration and alignment of strategies, as well as planning and management instruments with the national framework of indicators and the National Development Strategy (ENDE). The preparation of the Guide for the

<sup>9</sup> Law no. 14/2020 and Decree no. 26/2021



preparation of the Territorial Strategy is in the approval phase, for future guidance for the provinces in the preparation and operationalisation of their Territorial Strategies.

According to the participants in the evaluation, a key aspect of the decentralisation process is strengthening institutional coordination mechanisms at national and provincial level. D4D has provided support for the organisation of the National Coordination Council, provided for in Decree 4/2020 on an annual basis, with a view to improving coordination mechanisms, and consequent coordination and dialogue between ministries at national level and in the provinces. D4D supported the organisation of the Coordination Council in 2022 and 2023, which promoted discussions on the following topics: coordination between decentralisation bodies; evaluation of the implementation of decentralisation reforms; evaluation of the performance of the Government's Five-Year Programme (PGQ) 2020-2024 and the Social Economic Plan (PES); and proposals for the PES and the State Budget (OE) for subsequent years. Streamlining these institutional mechanisms at different levels has led to greater and better coordination in decentralised governance ("There is greater coordination between the national and provincial parties, which is supported by the UNDP<sup>10</sup> .").

At MAEFP level, D4D provided technical assistance to decentralised bodies, provincial assemblies, and districts, to help them operationalise the package of decentralisation laws and respective decrees and regulations ("The aim is to harmonise operating methodologies<sup>11</sup> "). As part of the Public Administration Reform and Development Strategy (ERDAP 2012-2025), the MAEFP received training in the National Document Management System (e-SNGD) , with a view to implementing the e-SNGD at provincial level and consequently improving the quality of services provided to citizens. The planning focal points of the MAEFP directorates were also trained in the preparation of public investment projects<sup>12</sup> .

The strengthening of the technical capacity of the MEF, MAEFP, as well as decentralised governance bodies, provincial bodies representing the state, and civil society partners, is based on a logic of capacity building and strengthening skills, transmitted through technical assistance and training. Capacity-building initiatives were repeatedly mentioned as one of the project's added values for all those involved, leading to the acquisition of new skills as part of the ongoing decentralisation process.

With the Provincial Reference Groups (GRPs), the seminars and training organised by D4D covered the topics of strategic planning and the methodology for elaborating the territorial strategic plan; gender and development; localisation of the SDGs; and identifying and designing impact projects. In the area of strategic planning, the focus was on sharing tools to support the participation of local governments in the process of planning, implementing and monitoring plans as part of the

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<sup>10</sup> Semi-structured interview, October 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Semi-structured interview, October 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Within the framework of Law no. 14/2020.

decentralisation process. In this context, technical assistance was provided to provincial bodies in Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado on the following topics:

1. "Implementation of the Law on Local State Bodies (Law no. 8/2003 of 19 May and its regulations);
2. organisation and functioning of local councils (district level, administrative post and locality);
3. operation of public administration services (Decree 30/2001 of 15 October and its complementary legislation);
4. implementation of the infrastructure programme for local state bodies;
5. verification of the level of organisation and functioning of provincial decentralised governance bodies and state representative bodies (Law no. 4/2019 of 28 May and Law no. 7/2019 of 31 May).<sup>13</sup> "

They were also trained in elaborating the Balance Sheet Report on the Implementation of the Economic and Social Plan and the State Budget and the Balance Sheet on the Implementation of the Plan and Budget, with a view to ensuring the proper and standardised use of these instruments.

With regard to the SDGs, the aim was to "share knowledge about the commitments made by Mozambique under the 2030 Agenda in order to strengthen and raise awareness of the implementation of the SDGs<sup>14</sup> " at provincial level. According to the participants consulted in all the provinces where D4D operates, the sessions contributed to: i) the development of skills and capacities of the members of the GRPs, particularly in terms of appropriation and localisation of the SDGs (in territorial plans and annual plans); drawing up the territorial strategy; gender markers; skills for drawing up, implementing and monitoring territorial projects ("We acquired fundamentals that allowed us to design social projects for the development of communities."<sup>15</sup> ). In the specific case of Manica, there was training for the media (including community radio stations) in localising and disseminating the SDGs, given by previously trained members of the GRP.

The UNDP's training methodology is worth mentioning here. Initially the training was carried out by D4D, in the second cycle of training it was given by MEF with support from the Project, and the third round of training was carried out by MEF independently. The aim is to "use MEF to ensure the training cycle of the GRPs<sup>16</sup> ". The next step will be to institutionalise the training modules with IFAPAS.

Alongside training, other relevant initiatives were held to deepen the dialogue on decentralisation, such as the third National Conference on Decentralisation (held in August 2022, in partnership

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<sup>13</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2022 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2022.

<sup>14</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2022 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Focus Groups, Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, October 2023.

<sup>16</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2022 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2022.

with GIZ, IMD, USAID, UNICEF, the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), to reflect on the decentralisation process in Mozambique, including the progress made, constraints and next steps. Mention should also be made of the National Conference on Innovations and Good Practices in Public Administration (held in June 2023, with support from D4D, in partnership with GIZ's Good Financial Governance Programme), and the preparation of the Manual of Good Practices in Local Development, Local Governance (DL&GL) and Local Public Administration, in order to share the exchange of good practices at national and provincial level.

As part of the Public Administration Reform and Development Strategy (2012-2025), a study on the Degree of User Satisfaction and the Corruption Perception Index in the public administration is being carried out, led by the MAEFP. The study aims to improve understanding of: 1) the degree of user satisfaction; 2) the service attainment index; 3) the perception of improvement in the performance of public services by state employees and agents; and 4) the degree of satisfaction of state employees and agents<sup>17</sup>. Based on the results, it will be possible to facilitate the creation of policies that favour improvements in the provision of decentralised services.

Lastly, we should also mention the supply of equipment to public institutions, such as computer equipment for creating other access points to the e-Sistafe terminal (Manica and Sofala) and strengthening the operational and supervisory capacity of the Provincial Assemblies of Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, through computer equipment, office equipment and printers. At national level, the MEF benefited from computer equipment for the e-Sistafe laboratories, to support the improvement of public finances, and the acquisition of computer equipment for this group for the decentralisation technical group.

**Output 1.2 - *There are mechanisms for sharing knowledge and disseminating specialised contributions, good practices and lessons learned to all stakeholders,***

On this point, this evaluation lists a set of mechanisms supported by D4D for the support and ownership of the national and provincial entities involved in the decentralisation process.

Firstly, one of the results achieved by D4D within the scope of this product was the development of the Linkinmodex platform, in partnership with the Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM). The platform arose from the need to "rationalise the allocation of human resources and make them available to the territories<sup>18</sup>". It is a platform for managing the technical assistance process within the scope of Decentralised Governance, which involves and benefits the Provincial Assemblies, the Provincial Executive Council and the Provincial Council for State Representation, as well as the MEF and MAEFP. Feedback from potential beneficiaries is positive, in the sense that it facilitates access to technical assistance in the provinces, overcoming the travelling constraints commonly mentioned. However, they mention the need to extend the use and training to district bodies<sup>19</sup>. Its

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<sup>17</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2022 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2023.

<sup>18</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2022 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

effective operationalisation should begin soon with the provincial beneficiary entities, which have already been trained, and the possibility of extending the platform to IFAPAS is envisaged, so that it can be used by the various civil servants.

Secondly, D4D's support for the digitisation of municipal services stands out. Through a partnership with the Associação Nacional de Municípios de Moçambique (ANAMM), a digital solution is being developed to improve the management of public services in municipalities - the *Secretaria Virtual*. This solution was based on a mapping of residents' needs carried out in 2022. Through this service, online services will be made available to residents, including the issuing of various certificates, the issuing of DUATs; the issuing of building licences; access to employment opportunities and funding, among others. It is hoped to improve access to municipal services by reducing waiting times and associated costs<sup>20</sup>. With a view to its use, the beneficiary provinces and municipalities (in Manica, Sofala and Cabo delgado) will be the target of training, dissemination and sensitisation<sup>21</sup>. This phase will serve as a pilot to test the success of the platform, which, if positive, will be replicated in the different municipalities<sup>22</sup>, but the feedback is that "residents are very keen to simplify processes by using the platforms"<sup>23</sup>.

Table 2 - Specific objective 2

<b>SO 2</b>	
“Enhanced capacity at subnational level (Province) to carry out inclusive governance processes through the coordination of territorial stakeholders and the implementation of socio-economic development strategies linked to public policies and aligned with the 2030 Agenda.”	
<b>Output 2.1</b>	Enabled Environment for responsive, agile subnational governments
<b>Output 2.2.</b>	Decentralized Governance improved by testing decentralization reforms and putting socio-economic projects into practice by improving the living conditions of the population at subnational level.
<b>Output 2.3.</b>	Project's implementation, tracking and evaluation, and reporting are performed efficiently and effectively

**Product 2.1 - Enabled national environment for agile, responsive and subnational governments**

Strengthening institutional coordination mechanisms at provincial level is related to the difficult understanding of the changes introduced by the most recent decentralisation package, which is not entirely clear on the attributions between provincial directorates and provincial state services, potentially creating some friction between the bodies. On this point, the initiatives channelled by D4D are well placed. The Coordination Councils held so far have supported improved coordination

<sup>20</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2022 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

<sup>23</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

and dialogue between the Council of Provincial State Representative Services (CSREP) and the Provincial Executive Council (CEP), and have fostered decentralised, participatory and inclusive governance, according to the consultations held. Although the recommended frequency of the Coordination Councils is twice a year, in the cases of Cabo Delgado and Sofala two events were held per province (one in 2022 and one in 2023). In the case of Manica, ADEM has faced more difficulties in holding the events, due to the lack of availability or prioritisation of these meetings by the provincial bodies. In addition, one of D4D's relevant methodological approaches to institutional coordination was to ensure shared management and leadership between the two bodies in all the project's phases and activities.

Secondly, the organisation of provincial Development Observatories (OD) serves as an important mechanism for carrying out inclusive governance processes through the coordination of territorial actors. As accountability mechanisms at municipal, district and provincial level, the organisation of DOs facilitates the inclusion of civil society in the process of evaluating local annual plans, as well as in the formulation of recommendations for subsequent years<sup>24</sup>. The events are attended by members of civil society organisations, the private sector, the government, cooperation partners and the media. So far, three events have been held in 2022 and three in 2023 (two per province). According to the narratives of the participants in this evaluation, with the support of D4D they are able to guarantee the realisation of these events, which are quite expensive. On their own, they would hardly have been able to hold them as often as expected<sup>25</sup>. Notwithstanding the preparatory sessions organised by D4D to support local *stakeholders* on the issues discussed in the FOs, as well as the repeated affirmations of the existence of greater interaction with civil society and academia, the need to continue to look at the quality of representation of civil society was mentioned, which needs support in gathering evidence and preparing for the FOs ("We need to support initiatives led by civil society, include district organisations to participate in coordination councils, observatories, but this does not appear in the budgets<sup>26</sup>").

**Output 2.2 - Decentralised Governance has improved by testing decentralisation reforms and implementing socio-economic projects, improving the living conditions of the population at local level.**

The reactivation/creation of the Provincial Reference Groups in Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, as operational structures at provincial level that act as consultation mechanisms between the Decentralised Provincial Governance Bodies (OGDP), the Organs of State Representation in the Province (OREP) and the other development actors in the province, played a leading role in improving dialogue and coordination at provincial level ("The technicians started to work better, this happened because they put people in the same room to work together, with the support of

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<sup>24</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2022 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Focus Groups, Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, October 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

D4D<sup>27</sup> "). These groups share responsibility for harmonising actions at provincial, municipal and district level, and promoting good practices and localisation of the SDGs<sup>28</sup> . According to the participants in this evaluation, D4D's support has fostered a positive change in the dynamics of the reference groups, with the reactivation or updating of these groups.

In addition to the decentralised governance bodies and the State Representation in the province, which lead the GRPs, these groups are made up of the provincial assemblies, members of civil society and academia. It should be noted that in the case of Sofala, the Provincial Assembly participates as a guest, not as a member, by decision of the GRP. The consultations carried out point to the need for greater inclusion of civil society, the private sector and academia in the GRPs, in terms of quantity and quality of representation, notably in Cabo Delgado<sup>29</sup> .

The members of the GRP played a key role in drawing up the Provincial Strategic Plans. The drafting of the Provincial Strategic Plans - with the aim of guiding the development of the territory - is based on the MEF's territorial strategy guide and alignment with the Mozambique Development Strategy (ENDE). Given the decontextualised realities of the provincial strategies at the start of the project, the capacity-building actions and exchanges of experiences between provinces were considered useful for improving skills in drawing up the territorial strategy, integrating the SDGs and drawing up projects<sup>30</sup> . The exchange of experiences between the GRPs of Manica, Sofala, Cabo Delgado, Maputo, Niassa and Nampula, which took place in Cabo Delgado in November 2023, provided an interesting moment of sharing, where the members had the opportunity to learn from the experiences and methodologies of the other provinces and gather elements to support them in their own territorial strategies. In the three provinces, the plans are at similar stages of development, with some delay compared to the initial planning. Despite the good level of involvement of the GRPs in the diagnosis of the strategies, some difficulties were mentioned by the provincial players in terms of realising them without external support. In the cases of Manica and Sofala, there was a need to hire external consultants to help draw up the plans. In the case of Cabo Delgado, the GRP is responsible for evaluating the current Territorial Strategic Plan 2018-2027, for which a consultant will also be hired. The usefulness of these documents is clear to GRP stakeholders in the provinces. On the one hand, they referred to the lack of harmonised, inclusive territorial strategies aligned with the SDGs; on the other hand, they believe in the materialisation of the territorial strategy, the search for funding, and its integrated monitoring<sup>31</sup> .

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<sup>27</sup> Semi-structured interview, Sofala, October 2023.

<sup>28</sup> UNDP: "The Case Study of Provincial Reference Groups for SDGs" - draft version, 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Focus Groups, Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, October 2023.

<sup>30</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2022 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2022.

<sup>31</sup> Focus Groups, Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, October 2023.

Product 2.2 also includes the methodology for selecting and drawing up Impact Projects. Through a very inclusive process of training (on project preparation), identification of projects by the GRP's thematic committee, preparation of concept notes, and voting to select them. At this point, it's worth noting the involvement not only of the provincial entities, but also of the districts - reaching the level of community leaders - and the municipalities ("It was discussed and voted on at a retreat among the members of the GRP, where they reflected on the need for this project. This meeting was attended by technicians from the districts, municipalities and province<sup>32</sup>").

Figure 2 - Methodology for preparing Provincial Impact Projects



Source: D4D

The members of the GRPs listed the Impact Projects as a very important contribution of the project, giving them the skills to draw up and select projects in an inclusive way, supporting them in discussing provincial priorities and consulting their key partners. They also say that it has enabled them to make strategic decisions more participatory and inclusive, and more appropriate to the real needs of the provinces, allowing them to put the skills they have acquired into practice<sup>33</sup>. The engagement of the different provincial parties in these projects is notable, and visible in the quality of the project documents submitted.

Despite the motivation for implementing the projects, the consultations pointed to two constraints. Firstly, the slowness of public procurement processes and associated bureaucracy, which can lead to delays in project implementation, was mentioned. Secondly, some fear on the part of GRP members in managing the proposed activities, due to a lack of skills or competences. At this point, close monitoring of the projects by partners in the provinces, as well as the D4D area managers, is important to ensure that this testing phase brings positive results for the strengthening of provincial competences and for their socio-economic development.

Since **Output 2.3** relates to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project, it is explored under the efficiency criterion.

## 6. What were the biggest constraints identified during the project?

In the previous evaluation question, we had the opportunity to present the different challenges experienced in relation to the results obtained. Therefore, in this question, the evaluation explores other constraints not previously addressed, which have already taken place or will take place and which could pose risks to the successful implementation of D4D. In general, three main challenges

<sup>32</sup> Focus Groups, Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, October 2023.

<sup>33</sup> Focus Groups, Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, October 2023.

to the realisation of the activities and consequent achievement of the objectives stand out, which were mentioned across the board by the evaluation participants.

Firstly, one of the constraints comes from the new decentralisation model being discussed by the government and the implications these changes could have on the work carried out so far. These could have a direct implication on changing the decentralised governance model ("They are in a decentralisation process that has seen ups and downs and many changes<sup>34</sup> ").

Secondly, they highlighted the potential challenges that can be encountered when implementing the project at election time. These challenges were even felt this year, with the local elections taking place in October 2023, where difficulties were experienced in the availability of the provincial bodies and the different political actors to carry out the D4D activities ("It caused delays and they ended up losing one or two months of implementation.<sup>35</sup> "). In addition, according to those consulted, a greater degree of difficulty is expected when the Mozambican General Elections take place in 2024 ("In 2024, there will be general elections and a lot of people will be busy, because the campaigns start a long time before."). It is suggested that these constraints be taken into account in the annual work plans.

Thirdly, as a challenge, the project's support at the level of the district bodies stands out. Although the focus of the project was at provincial level - as described in the ProDoc - the participants in this evaluation stressed the need for greater involvement of the districts in supporting the decentralisation reforms and the respective instruments, for example in the deployment of the Territorial Strategies in municipal plans, given the lack of resources of the two provincial bodies to support the districts at this level. According to research carried out as part of the Decentralisation Working Group, one of the good practices found is to ensure support for decentralisation through a systemic approach at the different levels - macro, meso and micro<sup>36</sup> . This can be done through greater coordination with other entities working at district level (e.g. Good Financial Governance Project (BGF) in Sofala).

## **7. To what extent have the stakeholders (mainly in the provinces) been sufficiently involved in the implementation of the project?**

As shown in the previous chapters, the involvement of stakeholders in D4D is one of the aspects highly valued by the partners consulted in this evaluation. In general, government entities are well engaged in the project, both at provincial and national level. At national level, there is a close relationship between the project team and the MEF and MAEFP, which can be seen, for example, in the fact that the D4D team works on the MEF and MEFP premises in Maputo. At provincial level,

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<sup>34</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

<sup>35</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

<sup>36</sup> DWG: "Search Results", 2022.



the bodies are also well engaged in the implementation of the project. This is particularly true of the GRP, which closely monitor all the activities implemented in the provinces.

On the other hand, a relevant aspect relates to the constraints inherent in the involvement of the Provincial Assemblies, civil society, the private sector and academia and their role in the Project. In the cases of the Manica and Sofala assemblies, the potential for their greater involvement was highlighted, specifically in the activities of the GRP<sup>37</sup>, which could be maximised. With regard to the involvement of civil society, the private sector and academia, the potential for involvement relates to their integration in the GRPs, which is not very significant. This was even one of the recommendations of one of the focus groups held.

### **8. To what extent has the project's support made financial resources available to these provinces, local associations and D4D beneficiaries to develop projects with the aim of reducing poverty and achieving the SDGs?**

D4D will make financial resources available to the provinces as part of the Impact Projects. The Impact Projects will make it possible to test the effectiveness of provincial coordination, bringing a catalytic effect to poverty reduction in the selected communities<sup>38</sup>. As described above, the identification of the projects has already taken place in all the provinces, based on the provincial priorities. Their implementation will begin in the coming months.

Five (mini-) Impact projects were selected, worth around 200,000 USD each, namely: two projects in the water and sanitation sector (water supply) in Manica and Sofala; one project in the education sector (distribution of school desks) in Sofala; one project in the health sector (construction of a health centre) in Manica; and one sustainable agriculture project (drip irrigation system) in Cabo Delgado. The projects have an implementation timeframe of 14 to 15 months and aim to cumulatively benefit 16,455 people in the health and water supply sector; 2,400 students; 14 associations, 108 individual producers and 168 households in the agricultural sector (see figure 4).

Figure 3 - Selected Impact Projects

Province	Project	Beneficiaries	Duration	SDGS
Manica	<b>"KUMWA YA BASSANE NA UNGUMI WA MARIMANAU"</b>	6,000 inhabitants (3360 women and 2640 men) in Bassane	15 months	3, 6, 7 e 9
	1. Mini Project 1 - Water Supply System - Bassane Locality, Chitobe Administrative Post, Machaze District	5,955 inhabitants (3105 women and 2850 men) in Marimanau		
	2. Mini project 2 - Health Centre TYPE 2 - Marimanau Locality, Buzua Administrative Post, Tambara District			
Sofala	<b>Promoting the Well-Being of Sofala's Rural Communities</b>	4,500 inhabitants (2,800 women and 1,700 men) in 4 communities in the	15 months	4 e 6

<sup>37</sup> It should be noted that in the case of the Sofala Provincial Assembly, it is not an integral part of the GRP.

<sup>38</sup> UNDP: "Decentralisation for Development: Project Proposal. Annex I. Description of the Action", 2021.

	1. Micro Project 1- Improving the living conditions of rural communities in Chemba through water supply	Chemba District		
	2. Micro Project 2 - Improve the quality of education for primary school pupils in Nhamatanda by creating basic teaching conditions.	2,400 primary school pupils (1,400 girls and 1,000 boys) in Nhamatanda District		
<b>Cabo Delgado</b>	<b>Promoting Sustainable Agriculture in the Montepuez District</b>	14 associations and 108 individual producers	14 months	2, 5 e 8
	Promoting sustainable agriculture through the use of drip irrigation systems in the Montepuez district.	168 households.		

**9. To what extent was the implementation of the project able to adapt and respond to unexpected constraints, such as the conflict in the north of the country or some natural disasters, among other events? Were there any unexpected results of this adaptation? If so, how? To what extent did the project respond adequately to the evolution of the partners' priorities?**

D4D is keen to use approaches that are tailored to the reality of each province and its main challenges. The process of developing territorial strategies and their alignment with the main political instruments, but also with the SDGs, makes it possible to analyse the provincial context. They are basic instruments for territorial planning, which, by strengthening the capacities of provincial bodies, enable them to be responsible for defining local strategies and priorities, in collaboration with districts and municipalities. At this point, the "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) diagnoses allow for better identification of the causes of local vulnerability, informing decision-making and thus improving adaptability to specific constraints in each province (e.g. natural disasters or conflicts).

In the case of Cabo Delgado, for example, the revision of the territorial strategy was aligned with the interventions of partners UNHCR, UNICEF and the Cabo Delgado Stabilisation and Immediate Recovery Programme (UNDP), in order to "respond directly to the need to restore the basic functions of district governments affected by the conflict and to ensure an integrated peace, humanitarian and development approach"<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2022 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2023.

## 4.3. EFFICIENCY

### Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent were financial and human resources used cost-effectively? Specifically, have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve results in a cost-effective and timely manner?
2. To what extent was the project implementation and execution strategy, including the project management structure, efficient and cost-effective?
3. To what extent does the monitoring and evaluation system used by the UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management and the measurement of results?
4. To what extent has the project reacted adequately to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc. changes in the country?

#### 1. To what extent were financial and human resources used cost-effectively? Specifically, have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve results in a cost-effective and timely manner?

The total costs of D4D are estimated at 6,961,220.00 USD. This amount is financed by the EU (5,011,220.00 USD) and the UNDP (1,950,000.00 USD). To date, the project has executed 3 019 511.00 USD, which corresponds to 75 per cent of the budget planned for the first two years of project implementation (see table 3), or 80 per cent of the amount disbursed to date. Products 2.1. and 2.2. are the ones with the lowest execution rates. According to the information reported, the low level of financial execution is due to the delay in implementing the impact projects in the provinces, for which full implementation was planned for the first two years of the project.

Table 3 - Project Expenditure (in USD)

	Forecast (2021- 2023)	Realised (2021- 2023)	%
Product 1.1	554 524	572 728	103%
Product 1.2	197 668	264 184	134%
Product 2.1	320 060	180 034	56%
Product 2.2	1 586 407	883 189	56%
Product 2.3	1 184 937	961 769	81%
<b>Total Eligible Costs</b>	<b>3 843 596</b>	<b>2 861 905</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Total Indirect Costs</b>	<b>175 061</b>	<b>157 606</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4 018 658</b>	<b>3 019 511</b>	<b>75%</b>

From the evidence analysed during the evaluation, it can be seen that this project was generally efficient, i.e. the resources were converted into results in a cost-effective manner, with a good cost-benefit ratio. The project took a strategic approach to prioritising interventions, making the most of the budget by sharing resources between the three projects managed by the UNDP team, namely D4D, the *Initiatives for Development Project (I4D)* and the *Localisation of the SDGs*

Project, particularly with regard to *staff* in Maputo and the provinces; the absence of office costs (since it uses the MEF and MAEFP offices in Maputo); and the synergies exploited with other projects in organising and financing activities.

## **2. To what extent was the project implementation and execution strategy, including the project management structure, efficient and cost-effective?**

This evaluation concluded that the project's implementation and execution strategy is appropriate and efficient. The technical and financial coordination of D4D is ensured by the UNDP, through the direct implementation modality, in partnership with the MEF and MAEFP, the UEM, ANAMM, the provincial governments and assemblies, as well as with the three NGOs that ensure the implementation of activities in each of the provinces (the Manica Economic Development Agency (ADEM), the Sofala Local Economic Development Agency (ADEL), and United Purpose (UP)),

At the level of the Project Management Unit (PMU), the current team is well engaged in the implementation of the project, has adequate technical capacities to carry out the activities and, above all, has established a network of close and trusting interpersonal relationships with the beneficiary partners. The PMU has a team in Maputo, based at the MEF and MAEFP offices. In addition to the central team, the local structures made up of area managers in the provinces were also pointed out as relevant to the success of the project, as a way of speeding up the implementation and monitoring of the project at central and local level and strengthening its response capacity. Although some difficulties were reported with staff turnover in the Project, the majority of D4D partners report good levels of response from the PMU and good communication, which was evident in the progress made in technical implementation ("Good coordination, well-organised structure, very direct follow-up.<sup>40</sup> ").

According to the data collected, the focal points of the national (MAEFP and MEF) and provincial (DPPF and SPEF) organisations were engaged and receptive to the project's activities, given that D4D's technical and financial planning process is carried out in an inclusive and participatory manner. On the other hand, D4D's aim is for there to be a process of co-responsibility among the partners in implementing the activities. At this point, it should be noted that managing funds is still a challenge for some players, particularly the MAEFP.

It should also be noted that the project structure has applied a logic of optimising human and financial resources at provincial level, for example in the case of Cabo Delgado, the area manager is responsible for two projects (D4D and SDG Localisation). The synergies between the different provinces are also reinforced through the exchange of experiences, activities and joint products from the different D4D, I4D and Localisation of the SDGs projects (e.g., National Meeting of Provincial SDG Reference Groups, Cabo Delgado, November 2023). For example, the Manual of

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<sup>40</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

operational tools to support the oversight of provincial assemblies, drawn up by I4D, will also serve as support for the other provinces in the country.

The assessment of the responsible parties (ADEL, ADEM and UP) who support the management of activities in the provinces is generally positive, both from the point of view of the PMU and the provincial government partners themselves. According to the partners themselves, they see their participation as a learning and capacity-building opportunity. It should be noted, however, that the UP has not had a physical presence in Cabo Delgado since 2023. It monitors its activities from Maputo and Niassa.

With regard to the project's governance system, a Steering Committee has been set up, which meets annually, with the aim of supervising and approving the project's results and making strategic recommendations. The committee is made up of a broad group of *stakeholders*, including MEF, MAEFP, the EU, the OGDG and OREP focal points, the Provincial Assembly, the partners and other members of the GRP. According to the consultations held, the Steering Committee was characterised as pragmatic and quite functional, giving the different players the opportunity to understand the results achieved, plan work together, promote project complementarities and mitigate any constraints.

### **3. To what extent does the monitoring and evaluation system used by the UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management and the measurement of results?**

The Annual Work Plans (AWPs) presented in the annual progress reports have a good level of detail (e.g., planned activities by target group, partner and results achieved). However, it is not possible to clearly verify the achievement of product targets and objectives in these documents. As explored in the Relevance Criterion, a revision of the current D4D logical framework could allow for a better understanding of the project's results and the achievement of its outputs. It is suggested that some indicators that are geared towards the realisation of activities be reformulated, and that the number of indicators be reduced (and duplication eliminated) to allow for more focused monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Despite the need to adjust the defined indicators, D4D defined a set of instruments for monitoring the Project, of which the following stand out: i) Annual Monitoring Plan, consisting of monitoring activities, frequency of implementation and responsible entities; ii) monitoring tool for implemented activities (different tables for partner NGOs in each province; MEF and MAEFP), with detailed indication of activities carried out, calendar, number of beneficiaries (disaggregated by sex and type of entity), and benefits achieved.; and iii) annual audits of Project partners.

Based on these tools, D4D feeds information for reporting to the European Union monitoring system (OPSYS), as well as ensuring alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

#### **4. To what extent has the project reacted adequately to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc. changes in the country?**

The Annual Work Plans (AWPs) precede the implementation of activities and are drawn up each year in discussion with all the national and local partners, with a view to reflecting the real and current needs of the beneficiaries. While this exercise allows for greater ownership of the activities by the partners, it also allows for an adequate and adjusted reaction to changing priorities in the country. The partners characterised D4D as a project with a certain level of flexibility, particularly in terms of adjusting the timetable and changing the approach to certain activities, which was seen, by way of example, in the adjustment to the timetable of activities linked to the implementation of impact projects in the light of the slow response felt. So far, the evaluation has not identified any other relevant contextual adjustment needs.

## 4.4. SUSTAINABILITY

### Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent do project interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies?
2. To what extent are the results of the project sustained and how have they contributed to increasing *stakeholder* ownership and commitment?
3. To what extent will national financial and institutional resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?

#### **1. To what extent do project interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies?**

Assessing the continuity of the benefits resulting from the D4D intervention after its conclusion, i.e. the likelihood of the benefits lasting in the long term, it can be seen that at the time of the mid-term evaluation, concrete strategies and initiatives for the appropriation of the project's results by the target groups involved in it have not yet been defined. This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, the project is still in the middle of its implementation and, on the other hand, there is an ongoing commitment by the UNDP and the EU to support decentralisation reforms in Mozambique. Although the Project has not defined a clear exit strategy, there are several factors in the design and implementation that largely contribute to its sustainability, which relate to the very nature of the activities and the degree of involvement and ownership of the partners, as explored in detail in the following evaluation questions.

#### **2. To what extent are the results of the project sustained and how have they contributed to increasing *stakeholder* ownership and commitment?**

One of D4D's positive factors in terms of sustainability is the adequate involvement of partners from the design phase, through the annual planning phases, to the implementation phase. Adequate involvement of national and provincial partners favours good ownership of the benefits resulting from the project. This is naturally reflected in the identification and selection of the activities that will take place each year, given the dynamic needs of the national and provincial partners, with the possibility of programming the funds themselves.

Secondly, according to the information gathered by the evaluation, the Project's intervention is shaped by the responsibilities and mandates of the different institutions, i.e. D4D aims to support national and provincial entities in carrying out their functions within the framework of

decentralisation reforms ("They use the Project to boost MEF's responsibilities.<sup>41</sup> "). In other words, the mechanisms that D4D supports are mechanisms that exist and are institutionalised, e.g., the Development Observatories ("In one way or another, the Project is contributing to *gap filling*, where the provincial government has no funds<sup>42</sup> "). The alignment of the project with national strategies and policies indicates that it is responding to the structural needs of the beneficiary partners, which is another key element in ensuring that the results are sustained in the long term ("Awareness of decentralised government is irreversible.<sup>43</sup> ").

Thirdly, in terms of institutional sustainability, the results of the evaluation confirm that the capacity-building strategies have generated improved knowledge and key competences for territorial planning, as well as fostering a better relationship and coordination between the OGD and OREP ("In the long term there will be more people aware of and trained in the task of each body. There will be better coordination and engagement between the bodies.<sup>44</sup> ").

At the same time, it is hoped that the tools provided will be used by national and provincial bodies on an ongoing basis. Notable in this regard are the creation of Linkinmodex, the territorial strategies, and the various guides and manuals under development (e.g., Guide for drawing up the Territorial Strategy).

Another relevant aspect in terms of sustainability is the fact that although D4D is present in three Mozambican provinces, its work has a *spillover* effect on the other provinces. According to the consultations carried out, there is a shared motivation and desire on the part of the provincial entities to improve their coordination, their competences and to create effective planning tools. ("All the provinces, apart from the three where the project has been implemented, want to draw up Plans and create reference teams.")

The benefits of D4D are also sustained through the synergies created with other projects that support decentralisation reforms. Firstly, UNDP currently chairs the Decentralisation Working Group (DWG), made up of the government institutions involved in the decentralisation process, and various development partners and UN agencies. Given the large number of partners supporting decentralisation reforms, at national, provincial, district and/or municipal level (see table 4), this group provides a space for coordination and dialogue between the different partners and government, and aims to strengthen communication at the most different levels<sup>45</sup> , supporting the alignment and harmonisation of the actions of the different partners.

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<sup>41</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

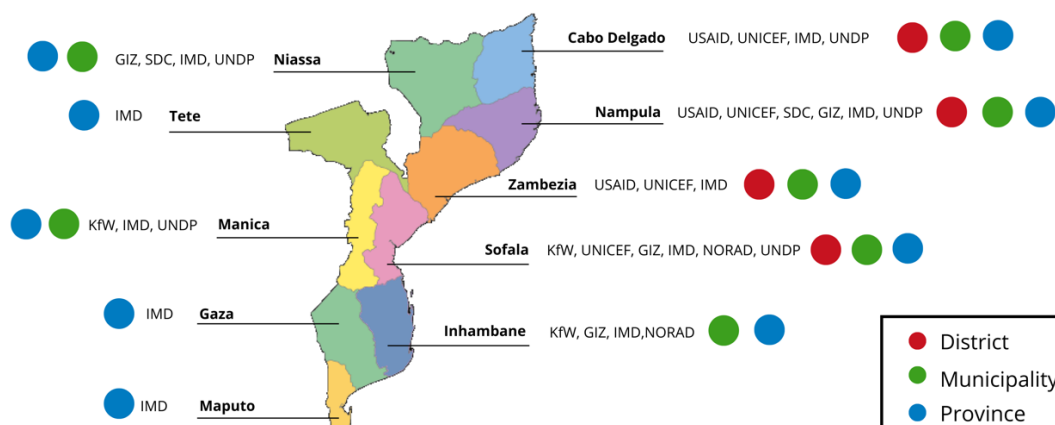
<sup>43</sup> Semi-structured interview, Sofala, October 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Semi-structured interview, Cabo Delgado, October 2023.

<sup>45</sup> DWG: "Action Plan", 2022.



Table 4 - Provinces where DWG members are present



Source: DWG, 2022

In this context, the project has worked in synergy with some other partners and UN agencies on the following concrete actions. According to D4D's annual narrative reports, at national level, the National Conference on Innovations and Good Practices and the 9th MAEFP Coordinating Council were held in partnership with GIZ. In Cabo Delgado province, the synergies with UNICEF in drawing up the Territorial Strategy, organising the Provincial Coordination Council and the Development Observatories stand out; and with the UNHCR in holding a joint workshop on durable solutions for internally displaced people. The continuity of this joint work is proving increasingly important to ensure that there is joint and coordinated action by the partners to strengthen the technical and financial competences of the various national, provincial, district and municipal players in a sustainable way.

### 3. To what extent will national financial and institutional resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?

The long-term sustainability of the project's benefits is directly linked to the provision of financial resources, both by national and provincial bodies and by development partners. The consensus created by the Project regarding the creation of the GRPs, the organisation of provincial coordination meetings and provincial Development Observatories, among others, is a gain supported by D4D, which is based on the laws in force, but which depends to a large extent on the priorities and commitment of the state. The participants consulted indicate that there is still a great deal of dependence on external funding by government bodies to ensure that these activities can be carried out ("Without the support of partners, the reference groups will continue to exist, perhaps with less dynamism<sup>46</sup>"; "One of the challenges is sustainability after the project is closed. Even in the districts there are observatories. Resources for organising events are essential.

<sup>46</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

But when a partner leaves, it's difficult. They have to provide the budget with resources to continue."<sup>47</sup> ).

According to the partners consulted, the concept of decentralisation in Mozambique is new and needs more effort, availability of resources and support from partners, both in the D4D and I4D beneficiary provinces and in the other provinces ("There are provinces that don't carry out observatories for lack of resources and partners, or others that do, but as soon as the partners stopped funding them, they stopped doing them."<sup>48</sup> ).

Although there is ownership on the part of government bodies because these are key activities in terms of strategic planning, they cannot be carried out in the same way without external support, given that public resources are limited.

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<sup>47</sup> Semi-structured interview, Manica, October 2023.

<sup>48</sup> Semi-structured interview, Maputo, October 2023.

## 4.5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

### Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent were cross-cutting issues such as gender and human rights taken into account in the design and planning of the projects?
2. To what extent has the UNDP adopted gender, human rights and conflict-sensitive approaches?
3. To what extent are the project's activities adopting a gender- and conflict-sensitive, human rights-based approach?

Analysing, at this point, the extent to which the project presented a gender and human rights sensitive approach and sought to consider the vulnerabilities caused by conflicts, the evidence supports that there was investment made by D4D in these issues. These considerations were taken into account in the different phases of the project cycle (including design and implementation).

In terms of design, the inclusion of the theme of promoting gender equality and the localisation of the SDGs in capacity building and the integration of gender equality in the policies, instruments and methodologies supported by D4D<sup>49</sup> (e.g. territorial strategies; gender-sensitive budgeting, among others) should be emphasised, territorial strategies; gender-sensitive budgeting, among others), as stated in product 1.1 of D4D ("The decentralised governance bodies and capacities of central government agencies are strengthened, and their impartiality improved with a special focus (...) on gender empowerment in sub-national governance.").

With regard to the implementation of D4D, the seminars and training sessions organised by D4D covered the topics of strategic planning, gender mainstreaming and alignment with the SDGs. This observation was reinforced by the GRPs, who said they had acquired competences in terms of gender equality and its integration into planning instruments ("Before the training, they didn't know how to reconcile the Strategy with Gender and the SDGs.<sup>50</sup> ").

In addition, according to D4D's annual reports, the use of the LNOB diagnosis in strategic planning has supported the identification of vulnerable groups and the causes of vulnerability. The "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) study, which is being carried out in partnership with the EMU, will also support the Project and partner organisations in understanding the most vulnerable groups in the provinces and the main associated vulnerability factors, thus informing the decision-making of provincial governments<sup>51</sup>.

As mentioned above, the selection of impact projects took into account the reach of the most vulnerable populations (catalytic effect for poverty reduction), as well as their alignment with the

<sup>49</sup> UNDP: "Decentralisation for Development: Project Proposal. Annex I. Description of the Action", 2021.

<sup>50</sup> GRP Focus Groups, Manica, Sofala and Cabo Delgado, 2023.

<sup>51</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2023 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2023.

SDGs. The aim is to cumulatively benefit vulnerable people in each province in the education, health, agriculture and water and sanitation sectors, namely 16,455 people in the health and water supply sector; 2,400 students; 14 associations, 108 individual producers and 168 households in the agricultural sector. It should be noted that the requirements for the projects were i) the use of 80 per cent of the financial resources for impact activities aimed at improving the living conditions of the population; ii) the development of projects that responded to the SDGs; that had a gender-sensitive approach; iii) that contributed to the development of the local economy; among others.

It should be noted that there are opportunities for improvement in the project's approach to gender equality. One of the problems commonly referred to is gender inequality in terms of participation in the project's activities, both in terms of the composition of the GRPs and in terms of attendance at training sessions and workshops (see table 3). Despite the efforts made by the D4D team to ensure an equitable percentage in terms of gender, by requesting (on a mandatory basis) more female participants per organisation, the information presented points to the fact that the number of women in the planning and monitoring departments of the provincial bodies, namely SPEF and DPPF, is low<sup>52</sup>. According to D4D<sup>53</sup>, there is a great need to create a gender agenda at national and provincial level, with recommendations to address gender inequalities.

Table 5 - GRP members (H/M)

Cabo Delgado		Sofala		Manica	
M	H	M	H	M	H
3	34	8	26	9	42
37		34		51	

In this context, according to the OECD's continuous gender equality scale<sup>54</sup>, D4D's intervention can be categorised as gender-sensitive, which means that its approaches take into account the diverse needs of different genders, but do not yet particularly challenge structural barriers to gender equality.

In addition, the issue of internally displaced people due to the conflict in Cabo Delgado was included. In this regard, the workshop on durable solutions for internally displaced people that took place in Cabo Delgado, with support from the UNHCR and other UN agencies, enabled GRP members to acquire more practical knowledge about actions to support internally displaced people (e.g., access to education, health, social protection).

<sup>52</sup> UNDP: "The Case Study of Provincial Reference Groups for SDGs" - draft version, 2023.

<sup>53</sup> UNDP: "Annual Report 2023 Decentralisation for Development (D4D)", 2023.

<sup>54</sup> OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development): "Applying a human rights and gender equality lens to the OECD evaluation criteria", *Best Practices in Development Co-operation*, OECD Publishing (Paris), 2023.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion (C1).** The project design responds to national development priorities, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs. In its project design, D4D proposes strengthening the capacities of decentralised bodies in the provinces, with a focus on Decentralised Provincial Governance Bodies, Provincial State Representations and Provincial Assemblies. The participants in the consultations, with a focus on national and provincial bodies, shared a good level of knowledge of the Project's objectives and activities and the results achieved so far, and broadly feel that they have been adequately consulted and involved in defining the Project.

**C2.** The general objective and specific objectives of the project, defined in the ProDoc Logical Framework, are clear and there is a logical relationship between the objectives and the five products defined. However, in terms of the indicators, baseline values and targets, there is a need to review them, especially in terms of the wording of the indicators, to allow for a better understanding of the project's results and also the scope of the products.

**C3.** Regarding achieving the results, the evaluation found that the project has already made positive progress in realising the planned objectives. The project's role in ensuring coordination between different partners and government bodies in a collaborative manner at national and provincial level was emphasised.

**C4.** D4D's support has been very important for the MEF and MAEFP in terms of addressing the main priorities and concerns in the implementation of the decentralisation reform. In this regard, we would highlight the reinforcement of the technical capacity of both ministries, as well as support for the digitalisation and modernisation of public administration.

**C5.** D4D has provided support in organising the National Coordination Council and Provincial Coordination Councils, with a view to improving coordination mechanisms, and consequent coordination and dialogue between ministries at national level and in the provinces.

**C6.** Strengthening the technical capacity of the MEF, MAEFP, as well as decentralised governance bodies, provincial bodies representing the state, and civil society partners, is based on a logic of capacity building and strengthening skills, transmitted through technical assistance and training. Capacity-building initiatives were repeatedly mentioned as one of the project's added values for all those involved, leading to the acquisition of new skills.

**C7.** The organisation of the ODs, as accountability mechanisms at municipal, district and provincial level, facilitates the inclusion of civil society in the process of evaluating local annual plans and

formulating recommendations for subsequent years. The need to continue looking at the quality of civil society representation was mentioned.

**C8.** The reactivation/creation of the Provincial Reference Groups has played a major role in improving dialogue and coordination at provincial level. The GRP members played a key role in drawing up the Provincial Strategic Plans, which are at similar stages of development, with some delay compared to the initial planning.

**C9.** The methodology for selecting and drawing up the Impact Projects is also a positive result. It was a very inclusive process of capacity building, identifying projects, drawing up concept notes and voting to select them, with the involvement of provincial entities, but also districts and municipalities.

**C10.** In terms of constraints, we would highlight the new decentralisation model being discussed by the government and the implications these changes may have for the work carried out so far; the potential challenges that may be encountered in implementing the project at election time, where difficulties have been experienced in the availability of provincial bodies and the different political players to carry out D4D activities; and the need to strengthen support for the project at district level.

**C11.** The Programme's implementation and execution strategy is appropriate and efficient. At PMU level, the current team is well engaged in the implementation of the Project, has adequate technical skills to carry out the activities, and has established a network of close and trusting interpersonal relationships with the beneficiary partners. The Steering Committee was characterised as pragmatic and quite functional, giving the different players the opportunity to understand the results achieved and plan their work together.

**C12.** Although the project has not defined a clear exit strategy, there are several factors in the design and implementation that contribute to its sustainability, which are related to the very nature of the activities and the degree of involvement and ownership of the partners; the alignment of the project with national strategies and policies; and the capacity building strategies that have generated improved knowledge and key competences for territorial planning, as well as fostering a better relationship and coordination between the OGDP and OREP.

**C13.** The benefits of D4D are also sustained through the synergies created with other projects that support decentralisation reforms, in particular the Decentralisation Working Group (DWG), which supports the alignment and harmonisation of the actions of the different partners.

**C14.** The project took a sensitive approach to gender and human rights in the following aspects: building capacity and skills in the area of gender equality, as well as integrating it into planning instruments; using the LNOB diagnosis in strategic planning to identify vulnerable groups and the

causes of vulnerability; and selecting impact projects with a view to reaching the most vulnerable populations. On the other hand, one of the problems commonly referred to is gender inequality in terms of participation in project activities, both in terms of the composition of the GRPs and in terms of attendance at training sessions and workshops.

## 6. LESSONS LEARNT

This chapter focuses on the lessons learnt (LA) from the implementation of the D4D Project, based on the evidence gathered in the evaluation process, and aims to draw on the experience gained to identify avenues for improving relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability for the expansion of the Project or for future projects in different contexts.

### Lesson learnt (LA)

- 1.** The appropriate involvement of partners from the design phase, through the annual planning phases, to the implementation phase favours good ownership of the activities to be implemented, as well as the benefits resulting from the Project. The Annual Work Plans methodology is effective and contributes to good levels of relevance, flexibility, implementation and ownership.
- 2.** - The creation of the Provincial Reference Groups (GRPs) - as operational structures that guarantee the harmonisation of actions at provincial, municipal and district level - has improved institutional coordination and capacity building across the various institutions involved in the planning processes, in line with the 2030 Agenda. The exchange of experiences between the GRPs of the different provinces has also proved invaluable for sharing experiences, good practices and methodologies.
- 3.** - Fostering the synergies created with other projects that support decentralisation reforms is key to ensuring the alignment and harmonisation of partners' efforts to strengthen the technical and financial competences of the various national, provincial, district and municipal players in a sustainable way. The Decentralisation Working Group (DWG) is a good practice for encouraging consultation between development partners and the government.



## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented are supported by evidence, conclusions and lessons learnt, and addressed to the users of the evaluation (UNDP, MEF, MAEF, EU). The evaluation team collected suggestions for recommendations through consultations with stakeholders in the field. The recommendations were categorised according to their priority: high, medium, low.

Recommendation	Recipient	Priority
<b>Strategic Recommendations (SR)</b>		
Accelerate the finalisation of territorial strategies and the <i>kick-off</i> of impact projects in the provinces and start planning, together with the GRPs, their implementation and monitoring, which will require close follow-up.	UNDP MEF MAEFP	High
Seek to improve the representation of civil society, the private sector and academia in the Provincial Reference Groups and Development Observatories, in terms of quantity and quality.	UNDP MEF MAEFP	Average
Continue to strengthen synergies with development partners in order to ensure responsiveness to district needs, which are directly linked to the success of territorial planning.	UNDP EU	Average
Explore new approaches to combating gender inequality in terms of women's participation in project activities. (e.g. involvement of other women-led organisations (e.g. civil society); identification of gender focal points in partner organisations).	UNDP MEF MAEFP	High
<b>Operational Recommendations (RO)</b>		
Revising the design of the Project Logical Framework to better understand the expected results and also the scope of the products. This would include a review of the defined indicators, baseline values, and respective targets, with a deeper level of disaggregation (province, entity, gender).	UNDP	High

# ANNEXES

1. LIST OF CONSULTATIONS
2. RESULTS OF THE TIMELINE EXERCISE WITH GRP
3. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS
4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

# 1. LIST OF CONSULTATIONS

## 1.1. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Organization	Name	Position
AACID	Esther Hernández Alonso	Representante
ADEM	Manuel Queiróz	Direção
ADEM	José Maria Abibo	Ponto Focal do Projecto D4D
ANAMM	Adérito Cumbane	Ponto Focal D4D
ANAMM	Onofre Muianga	Ponto Focal D4D
Assembleia Provincial Manica	Almeida Fernandes	Diretor
Assembleia Provincial Sofala	Maria Mazamanga	Diretora dos Serviços Administrativos
Assembleia Provincial Sofala	Aida Pinho	Departamento Assistência Técnica e Formação
Assembleia Provincial Sofala	Antonio Maope	Departamento de Assistência Jurídica
ADEL	Hamid Taybo	
ADEL	Moses Kakanu	Ponto Focal do Projecto D4D
DPPF Manica	Oswaldo Machava	Ponto Focal do Projecto D4D
DPPF Sofala	Adelia Mozila	Ponto focal do Projecto D4D
DPPF Sofala	Janet Vitor	Membro GRP
GIZ - Programa Governação Financeira	Alfeu Nombora	Coordenador Provincial
Instituto para Democracia Multipartidária (IMD)	Osman Cossing	Coordenador de Programas de Governação Democrática
Instituto para Democracia Multipartidária (IMD)	Bonga Merace	Gestor do Projecto Iniciativas para a Descentralização Provincial
MAEFP	Tomas Timba	Diretor Nacional Adjunto de Cooperação
MAEFP	Catarina Chiao	
MEF	Cristina Matusse	Diretora Nacional Adjunta do Plano e Orçamento
MEF	Vanessa Fortes	
PNUD	Catarina Jesus	Planning and SDG localization Specialist
PNUD	Cristino Pedraza	Conselheiro Técnico Principal
PNUD	Arsenio Paulo	Senior National Advisor   Economic Governance, PFM and Program
PNUD	Sabrina Bispo	Area Manager Cabo Delgado
PNUD	Custodio Xavier	Area Manager Manica e Sofala
PNUD	Lourença Sales	Area Manager Nampula
PNUD	Danilo Jone	Area Manager Niassa
SPEF Manica	Carlos Francisco Comissal	Diretor do Serviço Provincial de Economia e Finanças
SPEF Manica	Celestino Benjamim	Ponto Focal do Projecto D4D
SPEF Sofala	Sonia Cassocera	Ponto focal do Projecto D4D
SPEF Sofala	Ana Gisela Bomba	Membro GRP
UEM	Luis Neves	Diretor do Centro de Inovação e Tecnologia da UEM
UEM	Antonio Morais	
UNCHR	João Paulo Aguiar Moreira	
União Europeia	Mohamed Murargy	
UNICEF	Teles Ribeiro	Especialista de Políticas Sociais
UP	Emilio Mutasse	Ponto Focal
UP	Helena Skember	
UP	Esvenia Viola	

## 1.2. FOCUS GROUPS

### 1.2.1. GRP MANICA

Organisation	Name
SPAE	Micas Januário
Direção Provincial Transportes e Comunicação	Kendo Melo
Fórum das Organizações da Sociedade Civil de Manica	Xavier Razão
Gabinete do Governador da Província de Manica	Orlando Simão
DPPF	Judite Jorge
ADEM	José Maria Abibo
Assembleia Provincial de Manica	Inês da Conceição
DPGCAS	Chiwiro Filipe

### 1.2.2. GRP SOFALA

Organisation	Name
SPI	Ricardo Chinkuku
SPAS	Nelson Davissone
SPAS	Vicente Mifuisse
DPCT	Antonio Silvino
DPIC	Augusto Samajo
DPDTA	Augusto Machine
TJP	Januário Bulado
DPAP	Ernesto António
SPAE	Jorge Mabingo
DPPF	Mourinho Bizque

### 1.2.3. GRP CABO DELGADO

Organisation	Name
SPEF	Amaral Dias
DPPF	Carlton Sorte
Direção Provincial de Agricultura e Pescas	Tony Baptista
Assembleia Provincial	Fauzia Teimoso
SPEF	José Zita
DPPF	Nice Correia

## 2. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

### 2.1. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCRIPT

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Sex</b>	
Function	
<b>Organisation</b>	
<b>Province</b>	
<b>Place/date</b>	

#### QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS	Project Team	Stakeholder		
		Government	Partners	Donor
<b>Relevance</b>				
1. Can you briefly describe how the project came about, who was involved in designing the project and the reasons for its design and implementation?	X	X	X	X
2. To what extent was your organisation involved or consulted in the design of this project?		X		
3. How does the project align or not with the needs of the selected provinces in the current context of decentralisation?	X	X	X	X
4. To what extent do you think the project's objectives and expected results are coherent, realistic and feasible for the duration of the project?	X	X	X	X
<b>Efficiency</b>				
5. In general, what are the main results achieved by the project so far? Can you give clear examples?	X	X	X	X
6. In your opinion, what have been the project's biggest constraints during its implementation?	X	X	X	X
7. Do you feel that you have been adequately informed and involved in the implementation of the Project so far? If so, in what way? If not, why?		X	X	X
8. What are the main projects or activities in which the Project has provided financial support to your organisation? What progress has been made so far?		X	X	
9. To what extent is the project flexible enough to adapt and respond to changing needs and/or unexpected events during implementation (conflicts, natural disasters, etc.)?	X	X	X	X
<b>Efficiency</b>				
10. To what extent are the project's resources (financial and human) sufficient and adequate to achieve the proposed objectives within the time available?	X			X
11. What advantages and constraints have been identified in terms of coordination, project management structure and governance system so far?	X	X	X	X
12. To what extent does the project's monitoring and evaluation system make it possible to	X	X		

measure and share the results achieved in a participatory way?

**Sustainability**

13. What is the project's exit strategy? x x

14. What do you think the long-term impact of the project will be at provincial level (level of ownership and learning and provision of national resources)? x x

**Cross-cutting issues**

15. How does the programme integrate gender, non-discrimination and/or human rights issues into its planning and implementation? x x

16. What are the main lessons learnt from this project? x x x x

17. What would be your main recommendations for the remaining implementation or future Projects? x x x x

## 2.2. RESULTS OF THE GRP TIMELINE EXERCISE

GRP Manica		
Pre-Project	During the project	Post-project
Centralised governance and planning	Decentralised, participatory and inclusive governance	Continuing Decentralised and Participatory Planning
There was no harmonised Territorial Strategy	Drawing up a Territorial Strategy that is participatory, inclusive and aligned with the SDGs and gender	More funding
		Materialising the Territorial Strategy
		Integrated joint monitoring
GRP was not inclusive/existent	Constituted and functional GRP	Continuation of functional GRP
N/A	Developing the skills of GRP members	Continue to improve the capacity, dynamics and performance of GRP members through training and exchange of experiences
	Trained in Gender Markers and SDGs	
There was no ownership of the SDGs	Appropriate and localised SDGs	Strengthening ownership and localisation of the SDGs
Centralised projects unsuited to the province's needs	Decentralised, participatory and inclusive impact projects	Pre-Project Sustainability
		More funding and more impact projects
		Continue to strengthen the participatory development of impact projects
GRP Sofala		
Pre-Project	During the project	Post-project
No training for drawing up the Territorial Strategy	Trained in drawing up the Territorial Strategy	Equipped with the knowledge to implement the Territorial Strategy
Little interaction with civil society and academia	Integrating civil society and academia	N/A
	Joint work between bodies that led to integrated projects	

Before we had limited knowledge about project design for sustainable development	Fundamentals for designing social projects for community development	Solving social problems
No knowledge of identifying and preparing impact projects	Trained in identifying and drawing up Community Impact Projects: objectives, target groups, impact, budgeting, area and intervention	Able to design, implement, monitor and evaluate Territorial Strategy projects
Low level of knowledge about the SDGs	Mastering the SDGs Access to training on the SDGs	Aligning Sectoral Plans with the SDGs
They didn't know how to reconcile the Strategy with Gender and the SDGs		Localising the SDGs in the reality of the province and aligning them with the territorial strategy
They had no integrated projects	Prepared an integrated project	Implementation of the integrated project

### GRP Cabo Delgado

Pre-Project	During the project	Post-project
They were at an embryonic stage of decentralisation.	Improving coordination (provincial coordination council and provincial development observatories)	Need for an increase in the state budget to keep everything flowing
	Improving public-private dialogue	
GRP didn't exist. There was only a technical planning support team that was set up, but these teams no longer exist	The GRP was created in 2023 and is working well	There may not be the resources to continue the GRP's activities, namely capacity building
There is a Territorial Strategic Plan 2018-2027, which is out of date	The GRP is responsible for evaluating the current Strategic Plan and a timetable is already in place. A consultant will be hired to assist in this process. The guide for drawing up the territorial strategies has not yet been finalised and without this they cannot move forward	All actions to be developed must be aligned with the strategic plan. Funds must be mobilised outside the project to implement the Strategic Plan
Development observatories already existed, but they were done infrequently.	There is a certainty that the observatories will go ahead as planned	Guarantee resources to continue with activities as planned



Before D4D, they had already been working with the AACID project, where they had trained staff	With the creation of the GRP, these trainings are more comprehensive and there has been MEF training at national level.	The methodologies and knowledge imparted by the project will remain after the project
	The SDGs can already be integrated into the annual operational plans, because the team already has ownership in this matter. Ready	
	There was an improvement in the SDG indicators (National Framework of SDG indicators)	
N/A	Creating the impact project: drafting and approving the concept note, signing the memorandum and opening the account	The extra income that communities can earn from a project can guarantee the financing of future expenses such as maintenance

<b>COMMON CHALLENGES</b>		
Financing/Mobilisation of financial resources	Need for more training and competences/ Continuity of the training process	Levelling up the capacities of the different bodies at provincial and district level
Lack of know-how for the process of implementing and evaluating strategic plans	Fear of not having the capacity to implement impact projects	Civil society and academia need to be more involved in the GRPs
Political instability/conflicts	Lack of discussion on sustainability	Sustainability of the GRP and observatories without funding

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