



Independent
Evaluation
Office

United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR



Independent
Evaluation
Office

United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR

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



REPORTS PUBLISHED UNDER THE ICPE SERIES

Afghanistan (Islamic Republic of)	Costa Rica	Libya	Sierra Leone
Albania	Côte d'Ivoire	Madagascar (Republic of)	Somalia
Algeria	Croatia	Malawi	South Sudan
Angola	Cuba	Malaysia	Sri Lanka
Argentina	Djibouti	Maldives	Sudan
Armenia	Dominican Republic	Mali	Syria
Azerbaijan	Ecuador	Mauritania	Tajikistan
Bahrain	Equatorial Guinea	Mexico	Tanzania
Bangladesh	Egypt	Moldova (Republic of)	Thailand
Barbados and OECS	El Salvador	Mongolia	Timor-Leste
Belarus	Eswatini	Montenegro	Togo
Benin	Ethiopia	Morocco	Tunisia
Bhutan	Gabon	Mozambique	Türkiye
Bolivia	Georgia	Namibia	Uganda
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ghana	Nepal	Ukraine
Botswana	Guatemala	Nicaragua	United Arab Emirates
Brazil	Guinea-Bissau	Niger	Uruguay
Bulgaria	Guyana	Nigeria	Uzbekistan
Burkina Faso	Honduras	North Macedonia	Viet Nam
Cabo Verde	India	Pacific Islands	Yemen
Cambodia	Indonesia	Pakistan	Zambia
Cameroon	Iraq	Panama	Zimbabwe
Central African Republic	Jamaica	Papua New Guinea	
Chad	Jordan	Paraguay	
Chile	Kenya	Peru	
China	Kosovo	Philippines	
Colombia	Kuwait	Rwanda	
Congo (Democratic Republic of)	Kyrgyzstan	Sao Tome and Principe	
Congo (Republic of)	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Senegal	
	Liberia	Serbia	
		Seychelles	

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: Republic of Madagascar

Copyright © UNDP November 2023

Manufactured in the United States of America.

The analysis and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme, its Executive Board or the United Nations Member States. This is an independent publication by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

IEO TEAM

Directorate: Isabelle Mercier (Director), Alan Fox (Deputy Director)

ICPE Section Chief: Fumika Ouchi

Lead Evaluator: Juan David Gonzales

Associate Lead Evaluators: Amanuel Zerihoun, Charlotte Karagueuzian

Evaluation Advisory Committee Members: Ian Goldman, Morne Oosthuizen

Evaluation consultants: Masy Andriamparanony (governance), Ginna Rakotoarimanana (inclusive growth), Christian José Ravelonandro (environment)

Publishers: Flora Jimenez, Iben Hjorth

Administrative Support: Antana Locs

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

STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

UNDP staff in Madagascar: Natasha Van Rijn (Resident Representative) and Narcisse Chimi (Monitoring and Evaluation Officer) as well as other country office staff.

Other stakeholders and partners: Government of Madagascar, representatives of United Nations agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and bilateral and multilateral development partners.

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for Madagascar.

UNDP's efforts in Madagascar have focused on a range of areas, including decentralization, access to justice, combating corruption, civil society support, and electoral processes. While these endeavours have contributed to strategic frameworks, community participation, and justice services in remote regions, they have not addressed the underlying socio-political challenges hindering progress. The goals of inclusive growth, economic governance, and empowerment have faced mixed results due to institutional instability, limited scope, and operational challenges. Among these mixed results, environment and climate change initiatives faced difficulties with key partners – but made progress in ecosystem protection. While a portfolio approach was introduced to improve project coherence and communication, its superiority over the traditional approach remains unproven. Geographic repositioning aimed to enhance resilience in vulnerable areas but faced challenges in the Grand Sud region. Gender equality efforts saw lower expenditure and modest results, while project monitoring data quality was uneven, although it shows promise for future improvement.

The lesson is, as with many countries facing multiple development challenges, progress is hard. That said, UNDP remains a strong and trusted presence in the country. There are opportunities for UNDP to work closely with the Government of Madagascar to support the country's decentralization efforts, bolster private sector investment in the energy and green sectors, enhance its understanding and action on gender equality, and sharpen its operational approach in specific geographic areas, particularly the Grand Sud.

The evaluation recommendations are geared towards supporting UNDP in its continued efforts to work with the Government of Madagascar – at various levels, and with trusted partners. I hope that the recommendations offered in this report will provide a source of inspiration and direction for the country office as they continue their challenging work tackling these important issues.

I would like to thank the Government of Madagascar and all national stakeholders and colleagues at the UNDP Madagascar Country Office and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa who have provided their valuable time, information, and support throughout this evaluation. I am fully confident that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will help to strengthen the formulation of the next country programme strategy to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable development pathway for the people of Madagascar.



Isabelle Mercier

Director

UNDP Independent Evaluation Office

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	V
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	1
CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Evaluation purpose, objectives, and scope	6
1.2 Evaluation methodology	7
1.3 Evaluation limitations	8
1.4 Country context	9
1.5 UNDP in Madagascar	13
CHAPTER 2. FINDINGS	17
2.1 Governance and rule of law	18
2.2 Youth employment and inclusive growth	33
2.3 Environment and climate change	45
2.4 Cross-cutting issues	51
2.5 Coherence and strategic positioning	54
2.6 Knowledge management and operations	63
2.7 Rating of country programme performance	66
CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE	68
3.1 Conclusions	69
3.2 Recommendations	72
3.3 Management Response	76
ANNEXES	84

BOXES

Box 1.	Evaluation questions	6
--------	----------------------	---

FIGURES

Figure 1.	Budget and expenditure breakdown by outcome, 2019–2022	14
Figure 2.	Budget and expenditure breakdown by year, 2019–2022	15
Figure 3.	UNDP country office staff by type of contract and gender	15
Figure 4.	Evolution of budget and expenditure in the area of governance (Outcome 1), 2019–2022	19
Figure 5.	Evolution of the corruption perception index in Madagascar, 2012–2022	28
Figure 6.	Budget and spending evolution in the area of inclusive growth, 2019–2022	33
Figure 7.	Evolution of budget and expenditure for environment and climate change, 2019–2022	45
Figure 8.	Distribution of expenditures by gender marker and outcomes of the country programme in US\$ millions (left) and comparison of the share of programme expenditures by gender marker 2015–2018 and 2019–2023 (right)	51
Figure 9.	HDI and UNDP Geographic Positioning/Portfolio 3 (2023)	57
Figure 10.	Programme budget and expenditure with implementation rate, 2015–2022	61
Figure 11.	Donors by funding, 2019–2022	62
Figure 12.	ODA in Madagascar, 2019–2022	62
Figure 13.	PF3 pilot learning committee and mechanism organizational chart	64

TABLES

Table 1.	Overall country programme performance score	66
----------	---	----

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADER	Rural Electrification Development Agency (French acronym)
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AMP	Africa Mini-grids Project
ARAI	Illicit Assets Recovery Agency (French acronym)
ARMP	Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (French acronym)
BIANCO	Independent Anti-Corruption Bureau (French acronym)
BN-CCREDD+	Bureau on Climate Change and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (French acronym)
CENI	National Electoral Commission (French acronym)
CPD	Country Programme Document
CREAM	Centre for Research and Support to the Economic Analysis of Madagascar
CSO	Civil society organization
CTDs	Decentralized Territorial Communities (French acronym)
DCE	Direction of Economic Cooperation (French acronym)
DEM	Diversification of the Malagasy Economy (project) (French acronym)
FIER	Integrated Renewable Energy Financing (French acronym)
GBCI	Budget Management for Inclusive Growth and the SDGs (French acronym)
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GRES	Gender-Results Effectiveness Scale
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
ICPE	Independent country programme evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IGA	Income-generating activities
IOM	The International Organization for Migration
LIPW	Labour-Intensive Public Works
MEDD	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (French acronym)
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finances

MEH	Ministry of Energy and Hydrocarbons
MSME	Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PA	Protected Areas
PADRC	Decentralization and Community Resilience Support Programme (French acronym)
PAI	Institutional Support Project (French acronym)
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PDSPE	Development Planning, Private Sector and Employment Programme (French acronym)
PEM	Madagascar Emergence Plan (French acronym)
PF	Portfolio
PNA	National Adaptation Plan
PSMODDD	Strategic Planning and Implementation of the SDGs (French acronym)
RED	Rule of Law Project (French acronym)
ROAR	Results-oriented Annual Reporting
SACEM	Electoral Support Project for the Electoral Cycle of Madagascar (French acronym)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGP	General Secretariat of the Presidency (French acronym)
STDs	Deconcentrated Territorial Services (French acronym)
ToC	Theory of Change
TPI	Courts of First Instance (French acronym)
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Evaluation Brief: Madagascar

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted the second Independent Country Programme Evaluation of UNDP Madagascar in 2023. The purpose of the evaluation is to inform the development of the next UNDP country programme, strengthen accountability to national stakeholders and the UNDP Executive Board, and contribute to organizational learning and decision-making.

The Madagascar Independent Country Programme Evaluation assessed the current programme cycle (2021–2023), which covered three outcome areas – (1) governance and rule of law, (2) youth employment and inclusive growth, and (3) environment and climate change. It also covered the two last years of the previous programme (2019–2020). UNDP worked in alignment with the Madagascar Emergence Plan 2019–2023 through its country programme.

Madagascar is the second poorest country globally, with 81 percent of the population living below the international poverty line. Over the last few decades it faced economic decline, high inequality, and limited social protection, affecting vital areas such as education, health care, and nutrition. Extreme climatic hazards, including droughts and cyclones, exacerbated food insecurity, and water shortages, have brought about a lasting humanitarian crisis in the Grand Sud region. Further, political instability and corruption have hindered development, despite some improvements in economic performance. Madagascar relies heavily on foreign aid, but in recent years it has received less official development assistance than other East African countries. The government has worked to implement the Madagascar Emergence Plan 2019–2023, focusing on good governance, human capital, sustainable growth, and the environment. UNDP has played a vital role in addressing these challenges, aligning with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and working towards a more prosperous and sustainable future for Madagascar.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation underscores UNDP's significant role in enhancing good governance in Madagascar, focusing on decentralization, access to justice, anti-corruption, civil society engagement, and electoral support. These efforts align with the country's development goals, leading to improved strategic frameworks, community participation, and justice services, especially in remote areas. However, they fall short of addressing deep-seated socio-political challenges. The sustainability of these contributions is hampered by an unfavourable political climate, limiting national ownership and the potential to strengthen social cohesion. UNDP's operational roles in service delivery reflect the State's reliance on external assistance, revealing limitations in the scope of change achievable through such support.

UNDP's objectives in Madagascar are aimed at fostering inclusive growth in a challenging context. Despite commendable efforts to enhance planning, economic governance, empower women and youth, and facilitate the transition to a formal economy, results are mixed due to institutional instability, limited scope of its interventions, contextual intricacies, and a lack of coordinated private sector engagement to achieving expected results. Implementation delays, financial constraints, and sustainability issues also pose significant challenges. Despite some successes, such as improving economic governance and providing renewable energy access, addressing underlying issues and adopting more comprehensive and enduring approaches is crucial for achieving significant and sustainable inclusive growth in Madagascar.

In the area of environment and climate change, UNDP faced collaboration difficulties with one of its strategic partners, causing project delays and questioning their relevance. This strained partnership limited national ownership of project outputs. However, collaborations at the regional level were more successful, particularly in implementing the landscape approach in Atsimo Andrefana, where efforts were made to establish seven Community Protected Areas, emphasizing innovative community-based territorial management. Additionally, addressing the critical need for energy access, particularly in the Grand Sud, aligns with UNDP's endeavours to enhance electricity access for the population, given that only 14 percent of rural areas in Madagascar have electricity access. Notably, there are opportunities for UNDP to establish a stronger presence in testing innovative approaches to improve energy access in the Grand Sud, where some methods have been tested.

UNDP was in the process of adopting a portfolio approach, aiming to enhance programme coherence. While this transition has laid the foundation for strengthening synergies and complementarities between UNDP projects internally, it has also altered the initial country programme logic in the short term. The introduction of the portfolio approach has complicated matters by not being accompanied by an updated Theory of Change. Although the portfolio approach has improved communication and partnerships with key government partners, silos between portfolios and projects continue to exist. The evaluation has not found a clear improvement in the office's effectiveness resulting from this adoption.

UNDP's territorial approach in the Grand Sud aims to strengthen its presence and enhance interventions to bolster the resilience of vulnerable populations. While the results achieved in the Grand Sud are deemed relevant for local communities, they remain somewhat ad hoc, given the challenges associated with operating in remote, climate-vulnerable regions with limited resources and weak local capacities. UNDP's presence in the Grand Sud aligns nonetheless with the key goal of leaving no one behind. Furthermore, several UNDP initiatives piloted in the region have been adopted and scaled up by partners such as the World Bank, demonstrating their relevance in the region.

If operationalizing the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus has been identified as a necessary condition to achieve sustainable development in the Grand Sud, collaboration between UNDP and humanitarian actors has remained marginal. In this context, the deployment of major development partners, including the European Union and the World Bank, equipped with substantial financial capabilities and engaging in the humanitarian-development nexus, poses a dual set of challenges and opportunities for UNDP.

During the 2019–2023 period, the data collected through project monitoring exhibited irregular quality and lacked a structured format for effectively identifying key results, challenges, and lessons learned from programme implementation. The country office is nonetheless in the process of implementing new systems to gather more reliable and systematic monitoring data at the output and outcome levels and to promote evidence-based decision-making.

In the area of gender equality and women's empowerment, the absence of a gender strategy and a gender specialist at the country office level for most of the cycle contributed to the limited integration of gender into the office programmes and operations.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: UNDP should take advantage of its privileged position with the presidency to scale up its policy dialogue and advocacy efforts to ensure that the operationalization of the Madagascar Emergency Plan, or the plan that will follow this one, prioritizes the marginalized and the most vulnerable.

Recommendation 2: UNDP should strengthen its programmatic offer in the field of access to energy by seeking new donors and by brokering viable public and private financing solutions to scale up its efforts. At the local level, UNDP should further integrate these initiatives with its ongoing efforts to establish community protected areas and improve the livelihoods of populations.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should place greater emphasis on interventions that strengthen the capacities of its national partners both at the central and territorial levels to ensure national partners are better positioned to manage development funds by themselves.

Recommendation 4: UNDP should review and clarify the contours of its territorial strategy and intervene in an even more targeted way in the Grand Sud in order to move towards a full-fledged area-based approach.

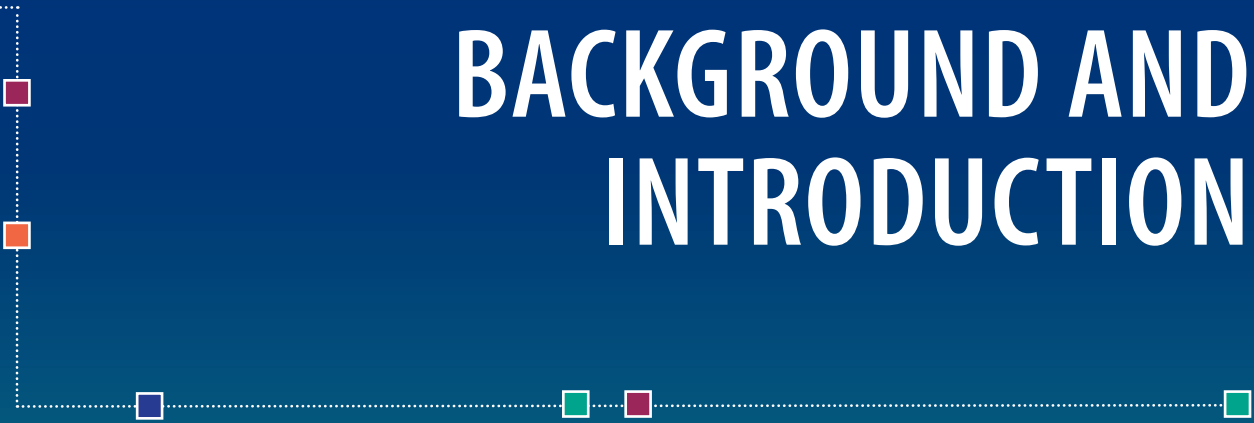
Recommendation 5: UNDP should ensure that the results framework of its next country programme document mentions and reflects the continued deployment of its portfolio approach in the next cycle. It should better define its portfolio approach and adapt accordingly its organizational structure.

Recommendation 6: UNDP should elaborate its gender strategy before the implementation of its next country programme and improve its gender analysis prior to project design.

Recommendation 7: UNDP should pursue the implementation of adaptive management and ensure that its monitoring and evaluation system generates evidence that will be effectively taken into account to improve ongoing projects and to develop new projects building on good practices.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION



This chapter presents the purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation and the methodology applied. It outlines the development context of Madagascar before presenting the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country programme.

1.1 Evaluation purpose, objectives, and scope

UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) conducts independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) to gather and present evidence of the organization's contribution to national development priorities, as well as the effectiveness of its strategy in leveraging national efforts to achieve these results. ICPEs are independent evaluations conducted within the framework of the general provisions of the UNDP Evaluation Policy.¹

The objectives of this ICPE, through its findings, conclusions, and recommendations, are to:

- Contribute to the development of the next UNDP Country Programme Document in Madagascar for the period 2024–2028;
- Strengthen UNDP accountability to its stakeholders in Madagascar;
- Strengthen UNDP accountability to its Executive Board;
- Contribute to organizational learning and decision-making.

This is the second country-level evaluation conducted by the IEO in Madagascar following the ICPE carried out in 2018 that covered the period 2015–2018.² This ICPE for Madagascar focuses on the current UNDP country programme 2021–2023, as formally approved by the Executive Board. However, to reflect the evolving country context, including the adoption of the Madagascar Emergence Plan 2019–2023, the scope of the evaluation also covered the two years (2019–2020) preceding the adoption of the current programme. The scope of the ICPE includes all activities carried out by UNDP in the country regardless of their source of funding, and therefore includes those funded by UNDP regular resources, bilateral donors, and the government. In accordance with the terms of reference of the evaluation (Annex 1, available online), this ICPE also covers all projects and activities from the previous programme cycle that have continued or have been completed in the current cycle (see Annex 2).

The main users of this evaluation are the UNDP country office in Madagascar, the Regional Bureau for Africa, the UNDP Executive Board, the Government of Madagascar, as well as civil society partners.

BOX 1. Evaluation questions

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

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

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

1.2 Evaluation methodology

The ICPE was guided by three main evaluation questions (Box 1). An evaluation matrix (see Annex 3) – structured around the evaluation criteria, questions, sub-questions, indicators, and data sources of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – was designed to guide the evaluation process. This matrix was used to organize available evidence by key evaluation questions, to attribute a performance rating to the country office for each indicator in the matrix, and to draw evidence-based conclusions and recommendations. Gender equality was mainstreamed in this evaluation using gender-specific evaluation sub-questions for each evaluation criterion.

Using the country programme performance rating system developed by the IEO³ allowed the evaluation team to quantify the programme's performance on each evaluation criterion (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability) using a four-point scale.⁴ A score was first calculated for each output, and then aggregated to obtain the performance score at the outcome level and, finally, an overall score at the programme level (Annex 8).⁵ The scores were assigned by the evaluation team members and validated by the lead evaluator to ensure a high level of inter-rater reliability.

The evaluation also adopted a gender-responsive approach to data collection and analysis. Gender-related data was used to analyse gender programme expenditures and to assess the level of commitment of the country office to gender equality and women's empowerment. Sex-disaggregated data was assessed against programme outcomes, where available. The IEO Gender-Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES) was used to assess the quality and level of achievement of the results in relation to the different expected programme outcomes. The GRES classifies gender outcomes into five categories: gender negative, gender blind, gender targeted, gender responsive, and gender transformative.⁶

The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the UNDP programme by analysing the progress made in achieving the intended outputs and the extent to which these outputs contributed to the intended outcomes, as defined in the Country Programme Document. To better understand UNDP's performance and the sustainability of results, the ICPE then examined specific factors that have influenced the programme, positively or negatively. UNDP's ability to adapt to the changing context and respond to national development needs and priorities was also examined.

Based on the methods and lines of evidence outlined below, the evaluation team successfully collected, analysed, and triangulated qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources to ensure the validity of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

- **A document review** was conducted, including all available UNDP documents (programme documents, results-oriented annual reports, decentralized evaluations, previous ICPEs, financial data), as well as documents analysing the national context, documents prepared by other development partners (donors, UN agencies, humanitarian agencies, international financial institutions), and by other UN agencies in Madagascar. The list of documents consulted is presented in Annex 4.

³ See http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/rating_system/UNDP_IESO_RatingSystem_Manual.pdf.

⁴ 4 = Fully Achieved/Exceeds Expectations; 3 = Mostly Achieved; 2 = Partially Achieved; and 1 = Not Achieved.

⁵ See <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/ratingsystem.shtml>.

⁶ See https://erc.undp.org/pdf/GRES_English.pdf.

- **Key informant interviews** were conducted with approximately 209 stakeholders through semi-structured remote and in-person interviews and focus groups. These included UNDP country office staff, government representatives at national and subnational levels, civil society organizations, other UN organizations, bilateral partners, and beneficiaries at the community level. The list of persons consulted is presented in Annex 5.
- **An in-country visit** was conducted in Antananarivo from 13 to 26 February and in the regions of Androy, Anosy, and Atsimo Andrefana from 18 to 24 February 2023. These visits allowed the evaluation team to meet with key ministries at the central level, Decentralized Territorial Communities (CTD), Deconcentrated Territorial Services (STD), as well as local authorities, partners, and beneficiaries at the level of the regions, municipalities, and fokontany (villages) visited. Community-level project sites in these three regions were also visited.

The draft of this report went through an internal and external quality assurance process before being submitted to the country office and the Regional Bureau for review and identification of any factual errors. The report was then shared with government officials and other national partners. This process was concluded by the organization of a debriefing carried out through a videoconference that brought together the main stakeholders of the programme. The debriefing offered an additional opportunity to discuss the results and recommendations included in this report and for the country office to present its management response.

1.3 Evaluation limitations

Data collection in Madagascar was affected by both internal and external factors. Among the external factors, it is worth noting that Tropical Cyclone Freddy hit the island of Madagascar for the first time on 21 February 2023, forcing the evaluation team to adjust its agenda and modify its plan to visit the southern part of the country (Grand Sud region) and to partially pause its data collection activities between 21 and 23 February. The occurrence of the cyclone and subsequent travel restrictions by the United Nations Department for Safety and Security did limit the scope of project site observations in the targeted regions. The evaluation team was able to mitigate this limitation by replacing face-to-face interviews with remote interviews when possible. As part of the team was already on the field at the time of the cyclone, three of the six members were nonetheless able to conduct shortened visits in the targeted regions.

On 21 February the government also went through a partial cabinet reshuffle, making staff from some ministries unavailable during that week. This resulted in the inability of the evaluation team to engage with selected key ministries. The team was nonetheless able to conduct most interviews scheduled for that week either the week before or the week after the reshuffle. It was unable, however, to conduct all required interviews with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) as key counterparts from the MEDD did not make themselves available for the evaluation. Consequently, their views could not be fully reflected in this report.

Among the internal factors that affected the evaluation process, another data collection mission to establish a monitoring system and collect baseline data was underway at the same time as the evaluation's in-country mission. The simultaneous conduct of this activity negatively affected the country office's ability to prepare an agenda for the evaluation mission in a timely manner. Consequently, some partners who received short-notice were unable to make themselves available for the evaluation. To mitigate the risk this posed to the evaluation process, a member of the evaluation team remained in Antananarivo during the second week of the mission (initially scheduled for field visits) to conduct interviews that could not be

conducted during the first week. The overlapping of the two missions also created some confusion among some of the partners that were consulted. Finally, the country office experienced a fairly significant staff turnover, starting with the departure of the Deputy Resident Representative a few days before the data collection mission.

1.4 Country context

The Republic of Madagascar is an island country located in southern Africa in the Indian Ocean and is the second largest island in the world, with an area of 587,295 square kilometres.⁷ Its population was 28.6 million in 2021⁸ and is characterized by a growth rate of 2.6 percent⁹ and low density (48 people per square kilometre in 2020).¹⁰ About 38.5 percent of the country's population lived in urban areas in 2020.¹¹

According to the latest available data (2012), 81 percent of the population lives below the international poverty line (compared to 34 percent for Africa), which makes it the second poorest country in the world and categorized as a Least Developed Country.¹² According to the World Bank, real income per capita reached a historic low in 2020 at just 45 percent of the level recorded in 1960. While Madagascar is one of six countries in the world to have experienced such a decline over such a long period, it is the only one among them that has not experienced armed conflict or civil war.

In 2021 the country was ranked 173 out of 191 countries with a score of 0.501 on the Human Development Index. The level of inequality recorded in 2021 was also high, at 42.6 percent, and has followed an upward trend since 2009.¹³ While the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was around 70.3 percent in 2018, strong disparities exist between urban (MPI 50.3 percent) and rural (MPI 76.6 percent) populations. The region of Analamanga (where the capital is located) has the lowest MPI, and the regions of Anosy, Androy, and Atsimo Andrefana (commonly known as the southern regions of the Grand Sud) as well as those of Atsimo Atsinanana, and Vatovavy Fitovinany (south-east regions) record the highest MPIs in the country.

Inequality in the country takes many forms. Data from 2020, for example, shows that 49 percent of the country's population is undernourished, up from 27 percent in 2011.¹⁴ The country also faces challenges in education, ranking 156 out of 163 countries on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) index, with SDG 4 on education quality being a major challenge for the country as, for example, low secondary education completion rates continue to deteriorate.¹⁵ The health care system capacity is very limited, as evidenced by the fact that the country has experienced measles and pulmonary plague epidemics and has seen a resurgence of poliomyelitis cases in recent years. If the unemployment rate is very low, at 1.8 percent of the active population, it is because informal employment accounted for 95.2 percent of total employment in 2015. State spending on social protection is among the lowest in the world (0.7 percent of GDP or about \$3 per capita) and only 9.3 percent of the population was covered by social protection in 2019.¹⁶

⁷ World Bank, "Surface (sq.km) – Madagascar," World Development Indicators.

⁸ Population Division, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World Population Prospects 2022."

⁹ World Bank, "Population growth (annual percent) – Madagascar," World Development Indicators.

¹⁰ World Bank, "Population density (people per sq. km of land area)," World Development Indicators.

¹¹ UN-Habitat, "Percentage of Population at Mid-Year Residing in Urban Areas by Country/Area 2000-2050," Urban Indicators.

¹² UN, "Indicators 1.1.1., Series: Proportion of population below international poverty line (percent)," UNStats.

¹³ World Bank, "Gini Index," World Development Indicators.

¹⁴ World Bank, "Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)," World Development Indicators.

¹⁵ UN, SDG Dashboards.

¹⁶ International Labour Organization, "Unemployment rate (%) – annual," "Proportion of informal employment in total employment by sex and sector (%)," and "Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems," ILOStats.

Madagascar is highly vulnerable to extreme climatic hazards, including flooding, tropical storms, cyclones in its northern and eastern regions, and drought in its southern regions. The 2015–2016 El Niño weather phenomenon has had a devastating impact on Madagascar, causing a lasting humanitarian crisis in the Grand Sud, with more than a million people food insecure due to consecutive years of failed rainy seasons and locust invasions, exacerbated by sandstorms causing desertification. In 2021 the country experienced its worst drought in 40 years, suggesting that Madagascar, and the Grand Sud in particular, is yet another example of a country facing a food crisis caused by climate change.¹⁷ In the Grand Sud alone, 33 percent of the population is acutely food insecure, while between April and August 2022 some 1.68 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above). According to UNICEF, Madagascar is the third country in the world with the greatest shortages of drinking water, a situation even more palpable in the Grand Sud where droughts and famines have been recurrent for nearly 20 years. Poor hygiene and sanitation practices have also had a dramatic impact on chronic malnutrition.

The eastern parts of the country are recurrently experiencing cyclones and tropical storms, which also cause floods across the country. The island has been hit by at least 27 cyclones and tropical storms in the last 10 years. Madagascar was consequently ranked 29 out of 180 countries, with a score of 40.33 by the Global Climate Risk Index in 2021, and recording 14 climate-related deaths per 100,000 inhabitants and \$83 million in losses in 2019.¹⁸

Women and girls accounted for 50.1 percent of Madagascar's population in 2021.¹⁹ The Gender Inequality Index ranks Madagascar 143 out of 191 countries, with a score of 0.556 in 2021, which is lower than the average for sub-Saharan Africa (0.569).²⁰ The World Economic Forum's Gender Global Gap report ranks Madagascar 48 out of 146 globally and 7 out of 36 regionally in 2021 in terms of gender parity, thanks to the economic participation of women (ranked 17th globally), but the country is experiencing challenges in terms of health (102nd), education (94th), and political empowerment (75th).²¹

Women accounted for 48.7 percent of the workforce in Madagascar in 2021, compared to 46.2 percent in sub-Saharan Africa.²² The country scored 71.9, above sub-Saharan Africa (71.5) on the Women in Business and Law Index score.²³ In terms of political participation, only 18 percent of seats in Parliament were held by women in 2021, compared to 26 percent in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁴ In addition, 40 percent of women aged 20 to 24 were married for the first time or were common-law wives before the age of 18 in 2021.²⁵ The COVID-19 pandemic has also reportedly exacerbated domestic violence in the country, although there are no official statistics on gender-based violence in Madagascar.²⁶

Madagascar records a percentile rank of 24.06 in 2021 in terms of political stability and absence of violence/terrorism in global governance indicators, below the average for sub-Saharan Africa at 30.458.²⁷ The country has faced various crises and difficult political transitions since independence that have affected

¹⁷ See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/10/1103712>.

¹⁸ Germanwatch, "Global Climate Risk Index 2021. Who suffers the most from extreme weather events? Weather-related loss events in 2019 and 2000–2019."

¹⁹ World Bank, "Population, Women (percent of Total Population)," World Development Indicators.

²⁰ IEO Datamart, "ICPE Country Background data frame, extracted from UNDP, "Gender Inequality Index (GII)," Human Development Data Center.

²¹ World Economic Forum, "The Global Gender Gap Report 2022," July 2022.

²² World Bank, "Workforce, women (percent of total workforce)," World Development Indicators.

²³ IEO Datamart, "ICPE Country Background data frame," extracted from the World Bank, "Women Business and the Law Index Score (scale 1–100)."

²⁴ IEO Datamart, "ICPE Country Background data frame," extracted from the World Bank, "Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (percentage)."

²⁵ UNICEF database, 2021.

²⁶ Amnesty International, "Madagascar."

²⁷ IBE Datamart, "EIPP Country" Background data," extracted from World Bank, "Political stability and absence of violence," Global Governance Indicators.

its development and social cohesion. The last political crisis occurred between 2009 and 2014, during which time the country experienced a coup d'état, causing a contraction in growth of 4 percent, the suspension of aid by primary donors, and the deterioration of development indicators, including a 10 percent increase in poverty. Following the return to constitutional order in 2014, the country conducted presidential, legislative, and communal elections between 2018 and 2019 in a relatively peaceful climate, despite some political tensions. Despite this apparent return to stability, Madagascar still faces challenges in terms of government effectiveness and rule of law, with percentile ranks of 13.94 and 20.67, respectively, both lower than those of sub-Saharan Africa countries (26.658 and 29.082, respectively).²⁸

The country started its administrative and fiscal decentralization process in the 1990s, but progress towards effective decentralization has been mixed. Progress in reforms were affected by changes in governments, including the various political crises experienced by the country, which never enabled effective transfer of competences to decentralized and deconcentrated administrative units.²⁹ Since 2015 the country has developed various legal frameworks in support of decentralization and measures issued to enhance fiscal decentralization, reducing disparities in transfers across localities and enhancing community participation. Nevertheless, effective decentralization has remained elusive, with less than 2 percent of the total budget managed at decentralized levels.³⁰

Corruption is also a concern for the country as it ranked 142 out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index in 2022.³¹ Despite recent progress, the perception of corruption has increased over the past decade with an 18 percent decrease in the index score between 2012 and 2022. The country suffers from elite capture, which according to the World Bank concerns access to the country's land and abundant natural resources, public contracts and state companies, political immunity, and tax exemptions.³² This phenomenon has contributed to weakening the functioning of institutions, but also investor confidence. Civil society participation remains limited in Madagascar, although it has improved slightly in recent years (score of 5 in 2022 compared to 4 in 2014 according to the Bertelsmann transformation index).³³ The country has also seen a significant deterioration in freedom of expression since last year, which saw the country's ranking drop 41 places on the Reporters Without Borders index between 2021 and 2022 (ranked 98 out of 180 countries in 2022 compared to 57 in 2021).³⁴

Madagascar's economic performance improved over the period 2010–2021 with an annual GDP growth rate of 2.2 percent on average, although it recorded a negative GDP growth rate (-7 percent) in 2020 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁵ Its economy is dominated by the services sector (51.8 percent of GDP in 2020), followed by agriculture (24.8 percent) and industry (16.4 percent).³⁶ The country records a persistent trade deficit (with its external balance on goods and services at -7.7 percent in 2021),³⁷ with fuel representing its main import and vanilla its main export.³⁸ Access to electricity remains low, estimated at 33.7 percent of the population in 2020.³⁹ Limited private sector development and competitiveness remains

²⁸ IBE Datamart, "EIPP Country Background data frame," extracted from the World Bank, "Government effectiveness" and "Rule of law Global Governance Indicators."

²⁹ Banque Mondiale (2004), *La décentralisation à Madagascar*.

³⁰ World Bank (2022), "2022 Systematic Country Diagnostic Update for Madagascar."

³¹ Transparency International, "Corruption perceptions index."

³² The World Bank Group in Madagascar Country Programme Evaluation, Fiscal Years 2007–2021.

³³ Bertelsmann Transformation Index, "BTI-Atlas. Governance Index."

³⁴ Reporters Without Borders, "World Press Freedom Index."

³⁵ World Bank, "GDP growth (annual percent) – Madagascar," World Development Indicators.

³⁶ World Bank, "Services, value added (percent of GDP) – Madagascar," "Agriculture, forestry and fisheries, value added (percent of GDP) – Madagascar," and "Industry (including construction), value added (percent of GDP) – Madagascar," World Development Indicators.

³⁷ World Bank, "External balance of goods and services (percent of GDP) – Madagascar," World Development Indicators.

³⁸ World Integrated Trade Solution database, "Country Profile: Madagascar."

³⁹ World Bank, "Access to electricity (percent of population)," World Development Indicators.

a challenge for the country. The costs of doing business in the country remain very high due to its insularity and the poor state of its infrastructure, as reflected in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, which ranked Madagascar 161 out of 213 countries in 2020.⁴⁰

Madagascar has been less affected by the COVID-19 pandemic than other African countries, recording 67,488 reported cases and 1,413 cumulative deaths as of 18 December 2022.⁴¹ However, the confinement measures and the interruption of international trade have affected the country's economy due to a decline in exports (21.5 percent as a percentage of GDP in 2020, compared to 28.2 percent in 2019) and tourism (by 48.4 percent in terms of the number of tourists between 2019 and 2020).^{42,43} While the country experienced an economic recovery in 2021 with positive growth at 4.4 percent⁴⁴ unemployment, albeit from a relatively low level, has seen a steady increase from 1.9 percent in 2019 to 2.6 percent in 2021.⁴⁵ Youth unemployment (aged 15–18) is a growing concern and saw a larger increase during the same period, from 3.5 percent in 2019 to 4.8 percent in 2021.⁴⁶ The informal sector accounts for about 24 percent of the country's GDP, and the population working in this sector (95.2 percent of total employment in 2015) has been negatively affected by the lockdowns and lack of social protection.^{47,48}

Madagascar ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1998, the Kyoto Protocol in 2003, and the Paris Agreement in 2016. It has also adopted various policies and legislation at the national level, including its first National Adaptation Programme of Action on climate change in 2006, the National Policy to Combat Climate Change in 2010, and submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution and three National Communications to the UNFCCC in 2015. The development of a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) was initiated in 2012 to strengthen the integration of climate change adaptation in all sectors, but was only taken up in 2018 by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development through the National Bureau for Climate Change and Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and subsequently validated in 2021. The country, which emitted 4.24 million tons of CO₂ in 2021, has had a national REDD+ strategy since 2018 for sustainable development and biodiversity preservation.⁴⁹ Some 21.4 percent of its territory is covered by forests,⁵⁰ with 171 protected areas, composed mainly of terrestrial and inland waters (including national parks and reserves).⁵¹ Its varied species of fauna and flora are 80 percent endemic to the island.⁵²

Madagascar relies heavily on foreign aid and official development assistance (ODA), which accounts for 10 percent of its GNI, compared to the 4 percent average for sub-Saharan African countries in 2020.⁵³ However, the country receives relatively little ODA compared to other East African countries. Indeed, of the 18 countries composing the sub-region, Madagascar ranks 17th in terms of ODA per capita (\$106/inhabitant).⁵⁴

⁴⁰ World Bank, "Historical data – Doing Business – with scores," <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/business-enabling-environment/doing-business-legacy>.

⁴¹ World Health Organization, WHO coronavirus (COVID-19) dashboard, 18 December 2022.

⁴² UNDP, "Note on the impact of COVID-19 on Madagascar's economy: Scenario and recommendations," Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, April 2020.

⁴³ World Bank, "Exports of Goods and Services (percent of GDP)," World Development Indicators.

⁴⁴ World Bank, "GDP Growth (Year-on-Year) – Madagascar," World Development Indicators.

⁴⁵ World Bank, "Total Unemployment (percent of total labour force (ILO modelled estimate)," World Development Indicators.

⁴⁶ World Bank, "Unemployment, total youth (percent of total labour force aged 15–24) (ILO modelled estimate)," World Development Indicators.

⁴⁷ UNDP, "Note on the impact of COVID-19 on Madagascar's economy."

⁴⁸ ILO, "Proportion of informal employment in total employment by sex and sector (percent) – Annual," ILOSTAT.

⁴⁹ Our World in Data, "Annual pa₂ emissions."

⁵⁰ World Bank, "Forest area (percent of land area)," World Development Indicators.

⁵¹ Protected planet, profile of Madagascar, <https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/MDG>.

⁵² US Agency for International Development (USAID), "Madagascar: Environment and Climate Change," <https://www.usaid.gov/madagascar/environment>.

⁵³ World Bank, "Net ODA received (% of GNI)," World Development Indicators.

⁵⁴ OECD, "Query Wizard for International Development Statistics – Madagascar," 2023.

The government is committed to implementing the Madagascar Emergence Plan 2019–2023, replacing the former National Development Plan 2015–2019. Articulated around the four strategic areas of good governance, human capital, accelerated inclusive/sustainable growth, and the environment, a finalized version of this document has not yet been officially published.

Annex 6 of this report provides an overview of the country’s main development indicators.

1.5 UNDP in Madagascar

Although Madagascar became a member of the United Nations in 1960, the partnership between UNDP and Madagascar officially began in 1992 with the signing of the Standard Basic Framework Agreement, which forms the legal basis for the relationship between the government and UNDP. Since the 1990s, UNDP’s main priority areas have been democratic governance, peacebuilding, and sustainable and inclusive development. More recently, the programme has refocused part of its interventions to build resilience and support the recovery of the Androy region of southern Madagascar, in response to the 2015–2016 drought and the successive crises that have affected this region.⁵⁵

Operating under the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2023, the Madagascar Emergence Plan, and in alignment with the six distinctive solutions of the UNDP Strategic Plan on poverty and inequalities, governance, resilience, environment, energy, and gender equality, the evaluated Country Programme Document (CPD) has set the following three objectives to be achieved by the year 2030:

Outcome 1. By 2030 national institutions will be effective, accountable, and transparent, and will operate within a constitutional and legal framework, while complying with the rule of law and respecting human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability to ensure the foundations of political legitimacy.

Outcome 2. By 2030 youth access to decent, productive, sustainable, and resilient jobs will be promoted through entrepreneurship development and measures to accelerate the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

Outcome 3. By 2030 actors at different levels effectively implement measures to conserve, preserve, and enhance biodiversity and natural capital so that the environment and natural resources are the pillars of economic growth, sustainable development, and improved living conditions.

The previous ICPE, conducted in 2018, provided several recommendations that UNDP agreed to take into account. It had notably recommended UNDP to: (1) continue prioritizing sustainable development efforts initiated in the Grand Sud, including the development of a sub-theory of change (ToC); (2) develop an explicit ToC for transformative change; (3) advocate with government partners for the implementation of the government’s political commitments and for the scaling up of good practices, most notably in the rule of law sector; (4) continue supporting the improvement of environmental governance; (5) continue

⁵⁵ IEO UNDP, “Independent Evaluation of the Madagascar Country Programme,” 2019.

supporting the capacity-building of decentralized territorial communities; (6) support interventions and approaches for transformative change for women and girls; and (7) strengthen its programme monitoring and evaluation system.

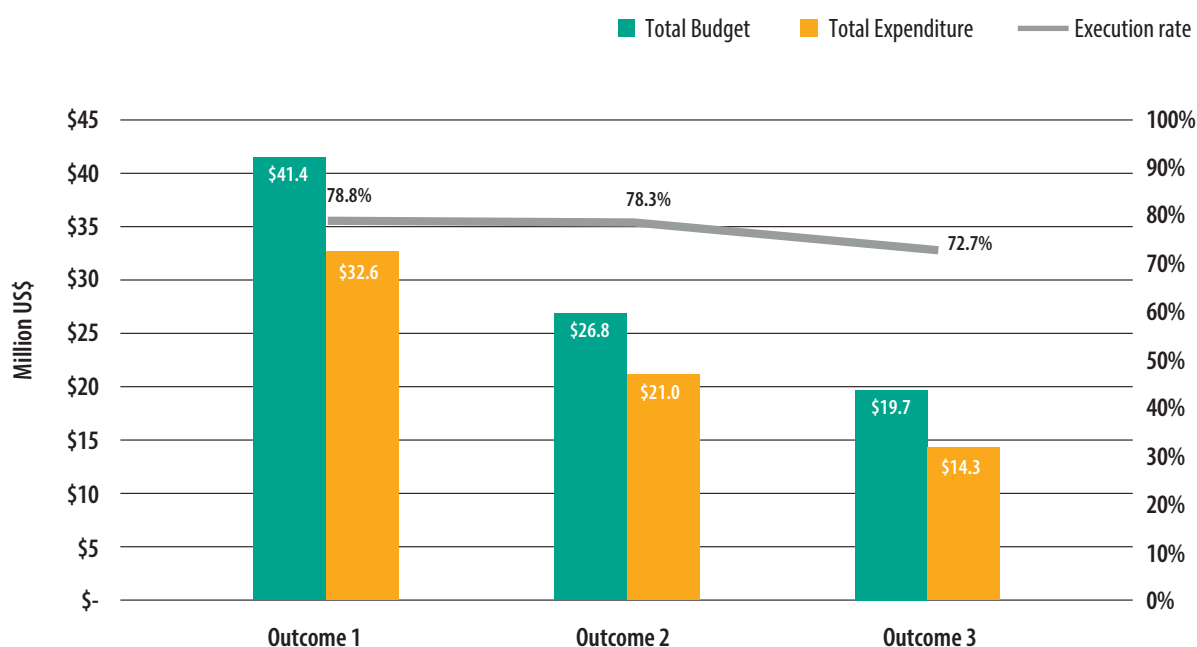
Following the adoption of its new CPD, UNDP Madagascar began piloting in 2021 a portfolio approach that consisted in the grouping of its projects around three portfolios (PFs). Within the office, these portfolios aspire to adopt “a holistic intervention approach that takes into account the cross-sectoral nature of interventions, the large number of implementing partners, and the risks related to socio-economic, political, and humanitarian contexts, particularly in the South.”⁵⁶

PF1 is dedicated to bringing together interventions in democratic governance and the rule of law (Outcome 1); PF2 represents those of a strategic nature related to inclusive growth and sustainable development (Outcome 2); while PF3 includes interventions implemented at the territorial level (covering all outcomes). PF1 and PF2 therefore intervene upstream and PF3 downstream exclusively at the subnational level. Issues related to the environment, biodiversity, and climate change (Outcome 3) are addressed in the three PFs based on their nature.

Budget and expenditure for the period 2019–2023

The budget for the period 2019–2023 was \$87.9 million, of which \$41.4 million is related to the current CPD, and expenditure was \$67.9 million, of which \$26.2 million is related to the current CPD.⁵⁷ The majority of programme expenditures were recorded under Outcome 1 while the lowest budget and expenditures were recorded under Outcome 3 (see Figures 1 and 2).

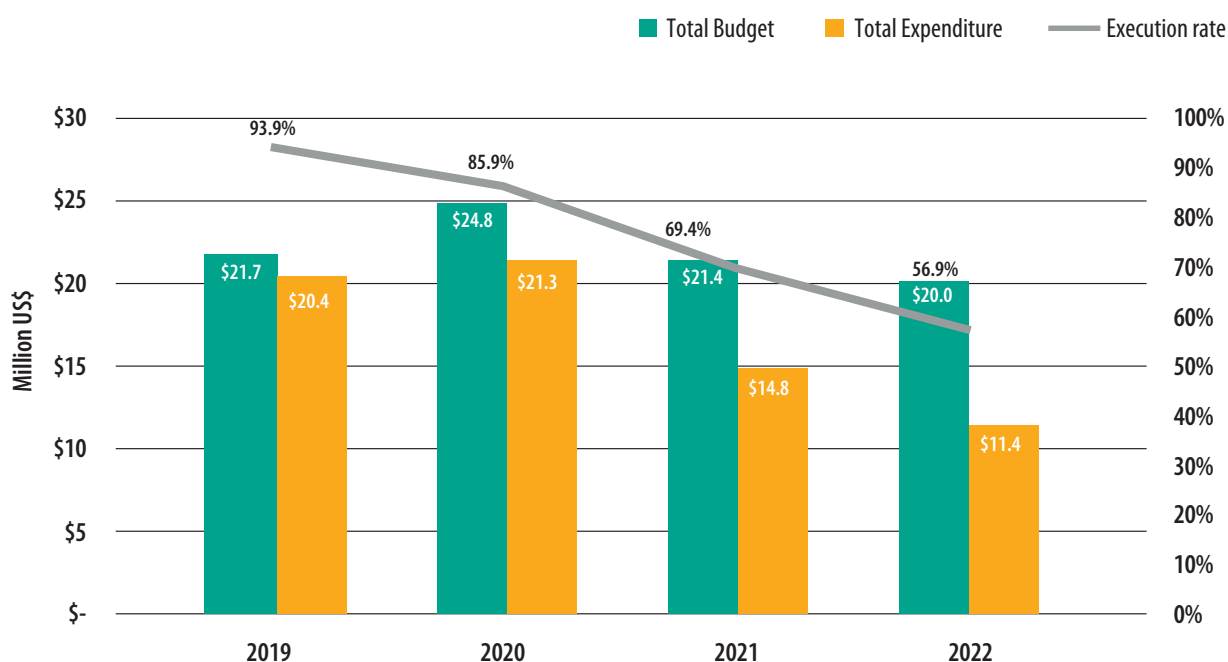
FIGURE 1: Budget and expenditure breakdown by outcome, 2019–2022



⁵⁶ UNDP, “Portfolio Document: Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development,” 2021.

⁵⁷ According to UNDP Atlas/Quantum through the Datamart of the IEO as of 17 March 2023, while the CPD estimated a budget of \$78.4 million for the period 2021–2023.

FIGURE 2: Budget and expenditure breakdown by year, 2019–2022

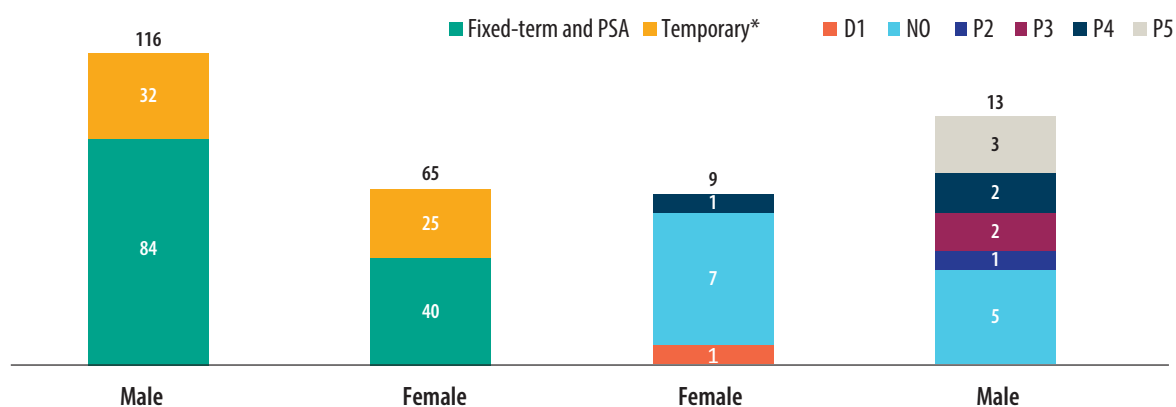


Source: Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of 17 March 2023.

Human resources

During the evaluation the country office had 181 staff members, of whom 104 were based in the capital and 77 were distributed across the three regions of the Grand Sud. The personnel composition had a higher number of men (116) than women (65). Among them, 43.6 percent worked under a National Professional Service Agreement contract, and 21.5 percent under a Fixed-Term Appointment contract (see Figure 3). As of the end of February 2023 the office had seven vacant positions.

FIGURE 3: UNDP country office staff by type of contract and gender



Source: Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of 17 March 2023.

*Interns, UN Volunteers, and temporary service contracts.

CHAPTER 2

FINDINGS



This section of the report assesses UNDP contributions to results and outputs following the structure of the CPD. It is followed by findings on cross-cutting issues of strategic and operational nature, gender mainstreaming, and factors that influenced the achievement of expected results. The status of the CPD output and outcome indicators is presented in Annex 7.

2.1 Governance and rule of law

Outcome 1: By 2030 national institutions are effective, accountable, and transparent, and operate within a constitutional and legal framework while complying with the rule of law and respecting human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability to ensure a basis for political legitimacy.

Related outputs

Output 1.1: Constitutional, electoral, and parliamentary bodies and political actors, including the media and civil society, are empowered to promote an inclusive, transparent, accountable, and stable political system.

Output 1.2: Actors in the justice system are better able to expand access to justice, promote the rule of law, and combat corruption and inequality, with particular attention to women and marginalized groups.

Output 1.3: At the national and decentralized levels, institutions have the necessary skills and tools, including digital (e-governance), to effectively plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate public policies, as well as to mobilize financial resources to improve the delivery of basic public services.

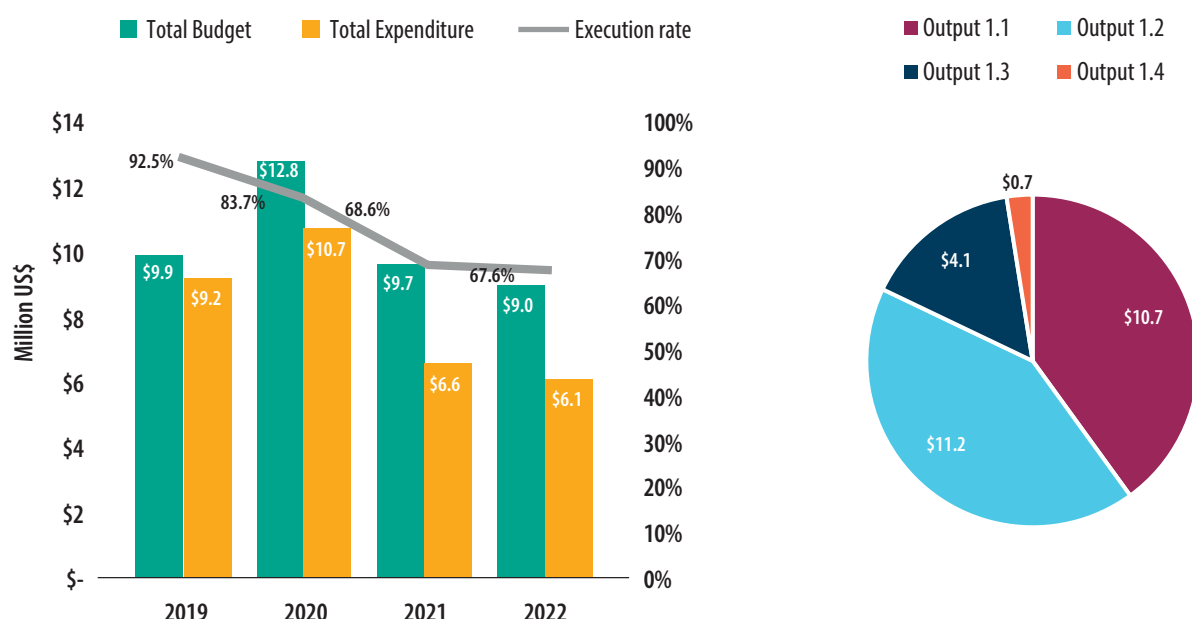
Output 1.4: Key actors in the justice and security system, civil society organizations, and communities have increased capacity to implement and enforce the law for sustainable management of natural resources and the environment.

During the period 2019–2022, 16 projects were implemented under Outcome 1 related to the area of governance. These projects counted on a budget of \$41.4 million (47 percent of the total programme budget) and recorded expenditure of \$32.6 million (48 percent of total country programme expenditure), which corresponds to an average implementation rate of 79 percent at the time of the evaluation. Eleven projects (68.3 percent of Outcome 1 expenditure) were directly implemented by the UNDP Direct Implementation Modality and five projects (31.7 percent of Outcome 1 expenditure) were implemented by national partners. Outcome 1 interventions were mainly funded by UNDP (50.1 percent), the Peacebuilding Fund (19.4 percent), and the Government of Madagascar (12.4 percent).^{58, 59}

⁵⁸ The others are: USAID (5.3 percent), European Commission (3.7 percent), Government of Norway (2.5 percent), Government of Germany (2.2 percent), and Government of South Africa (1.5 percent). The following entities contributed to less than 1 percent of the country office expenditures: United Nations Population Fund, Government of France, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, MPTF- Joint SDG Fund, Australian DFAT, BMCE Bank of Africa, Global Environmental Fund, Government of Switzerland, Universal Postal Union, Government of Cape Verde, and Government of the Republic of Korea.

⁵⁹ The bulk of the funding from the Government of Madagascar (90 percent) supports the Support to the National Response to COVID-19 project and the rest (10 percent) supports the Strengthening Madagascar's Pre-Electoral Democratic Government project.

FIGURE 4: Evolution of budget and expenditure in the area of governance (Outcome 1), 2019–2022



Source: Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of 17 March 2023.

Finding 1: Decentralization. UNDP has played a significant role in revitalizing the planning and management of the decentralization process by contributing to the strengthening of national strategic frameworks while promoting community participation to enhance access to basic services in targeted areas of the Grand Sud. However, effective decentralization remains hindered by limited progress in the transfer of powers and resources to local administrations, a lack of local capacity, and conflicts of authority between Decentralized Technical Services (STDs) and Decentralized Territorial Communities (CTDs) – challenges that UNDP interventions have only partially addressed.

Building on the achievements of the Local Decentralization and Resilience Support Programme (PADRC) 2015–2021, UNDP developed the Institutional Support for Effective Decentralization project (2022–2023), which provided strategic support to the Ministry of Interior and Decentralization and aligned with the interventions of PF3 in the Grand Sud and Analamanga regions at the local level.

The implementation of the PADRC project started during the previous cycle and continued during the current one. It sought to implement the government’s 2015 decentralization policy by strengthening the legal framework, building the management capacities of CTDs, promoting community participation, and improving services delivery to the population in the Grand Sud.⁶⁰ It also sought to implement the recovery and resilience plan in Grand Sud. While the PADRC included both upstream strategic interventions and downstream local support, the Institutional Support for Effective Decentralization project exclusively focused on upstream actions, while the PF3 concentrated its actions at the local level, as part of the portfolio approach that the country office is implementing.

⁶⁰ Until 2017 the Decentralization and Community Resilience Support Programme (PADRC) operated in the regions of Analamanga, Atsimo Atsinanana, Atsimo Andrefana, Androy, and Menabe.

Despite the challenges faced in project implementation due to the humanitarian crisis in the Grand Sud, the 2018 electoral deadline leading to political transitions at the national and local levels, and the COVID pandemic, the PADRC managed to pilot initiatives aimed at local development and promoting community participation to create an enabling environment for decentralization.

At the national level, the project strengthened the legal framework by contributing to the design and/or updating of 10 laws and/or regulatory decrees governing the functioning and organization of the CTDs.⁶¹ Also, UNDP pursued its previous efforts to strengthen the strategic and legal framework for decentralization, local development, and resilience. Notably, it supported the development of the Emerging Decentralization Policy Letter, which was adopted in 2021 to replace the previous policy dating back to 2015 but that had not been consistently implemented.

UNDP also facilitated the consultation process of the interministerial committee responsible for decentralization leadership in the country's 23 regions to develop the National Plan for Emerging Decentralization (PNDE). This plan aimed to operationalize the policy letter but had not been finalized and validated at the time of the evaluation. However, the PNDE was validated in July 2023, following the national forum for decentralization under the patronage of the President of the Republic.

Despite the lack of communication around the adoption of the policy letter and the consultation workshops, UNDP's support was recognized and appreciated by national partners and development stakeholders encountered during the evaluation. These partners considered this support as valuable, as it revitalized political will and coordination frameworks for decentralization, especially given that the dialogue between partners and the government had been dormant since 2018.

At the local planning level, UNDP continued to support the CTDs in strengthening their planning, management, resource mobilization, and service delivery capacities in its intervention areas. UNDP notably contributed to the development of inclusive and integrated local development plans in 58 municipalities in the Androy region. These plans were followed by recovery plans, which were developed in response to the results obtained through the Local Governance Index.

Additionally, UNDP supported the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals by facilitating the development and validation of four SDG action plans in the regions of Anosy, Androy, Atsimo Andrefana, and Menabe.⁶² These initiatives contributed to strengthening sustainable development actions at the local level by aligning global objectives with the specific realities and needs of each respective region. UNDP also supported the development of SDG localization documents for two additional regions (Itasy and Analanjirofo) and the development of local development plans in five municipalities in the Analanjirofo region, accompanied by resource mobilization strategies.

The establishment and operationalization of local consultation structures in 12 municipalities were supported, particularly through the development of peace plans that defined priority projects aimed at strengthening social cohesion.⁶³ UNDP also continued under PF3 the regularization of the administrative and financial situation of over 15,000 civil servants through occasional registration activities at the district level between 2019 and 2021, which allows them to access their advancement rights.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Decree No. 2015 – 957, relating to the local consultation structures of the CTDs; Decree No. 2015 – 958, on decentralized cooperation; Decree No. 2015 – 959, on the budgetary and financial management of DPAs; Decree No. 2015 – 960, laying down the powers of the Chief Executive of the DPCs.

⁶² UNDP Madagascar, "Evaluation finale du Programme d'Appui à la Décentralisation et la Résilience Communautaire (PADRC)," 2021.

⁶³ The Local Consultation Structure is a space for dialogue and consultation allowing the inclusive participation of all development actors, both public and private (Article 3, Decree No. 2015 – 957 on the Local Consultation Structure of Decentralized Territorial Authorities).

⁶⁴ UNDP Results-oriented Annual Reporting (ROAR), 2021.

Field interviews in the Grand Sud revealed limited ownership of the planning and coordination tools implemented with UNDP's support. The stakeholders involved were poorly motivated due to a mismatch between local realities and the tools proposed to the municipalities, inadequate capacity, and insufficient resources for the implementation of inclusive and integrated local development plans and Local Governance Index recovery plans. Furthermore, local consultation structures struggled to become operational due to the lack of additional funding from the state. Despite these challenges, UNDP's support, particularly the establishment of participatory planning frameworks, allowed other development partners to build on UNDP's efforts to scale up what had been initiated. Among these partners, the World Bank's Mionjo project, which is implemented at the local level, complements and extends some of UNDP's interventions. This synergy among various development initiatives contributes to strengthening sustainable development actions in the Grand Sud region.

The persistent scarcity of resource transfers to decentralized entities highlights the lack of political will to delegate power to decentralized and deconcentrated structures. As a result, both CTDs and STDs, particularly in the Grand Sud, remain dependent on the support of UNDP and other development partners, thereby compromising their ability to provide adequate public services. This situation complicates coordination and harmonization of actions, primarily due to ongoing confusion about the respective competencies of different structures, such as governors and prefects, as well as municipal councils and local consultation structures.

This situation is identified as a major challenge in the final evaluation of the PADRC. The ongoing scarcity of resources continues to fuel mistrust among the involved actors, limiting the possibility of effective collaboration, even though collaboration is necessary. It is essential to note that the revival of decentralization, supported by UNDP, occurs in a political context where centralization policies at the presidential level tend to supplant decentralization efforts. This complex context makes the promotion of decentralization even more crucial but also more challenging.

The capacity deficit at the CTD and STD levels remains a significant challenge. Several stakeholders highlighted persistent management capacities issues among local officials, particularly in terms of compliance with procurement rules. It was also noted that many local elected officials, mayors, and municipal council members have been imprisoned for cases of fraud and/or corruption in procurement processes. According to the 2021 annual report of the Independent Anti-Corruption Bureau (BIANCO), decentralized communities are the administrative units most exposed to corruption, accounting for 22 percent of all complaints received by the bureau in 2021.⁶⁵ Many municipalities also struggle to mobilize resources from the Local Development Fund, which itself faces challenges in the budget execution of funds provided by technical and financial partners.

Interlocutors expressed divergent opinions on this matter and noted a significant gap between the rigor of procedures and the local personnel's capacity to comply, particularly at the municipal level, where many mayors are not educated. Some interlocutors questioned the quality of accusations against municipal staff and expressed concerns about the high levels of indictment of mayors by judicial authorities. This situation highlights the challenges faced in Madagascar when attempting both to combat corruption and to strengthen the capacities of local authorities. The fact that some mayors are disproportionately detained can harm local governance efforts and complicate the implementation of development projects. Therefore, the findings of the previous 2018 ICPE, which emphasized the need to strengthen the capacities and support of CTDs and STDs, remain valid.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ BIANCO, Annual Report, 2021.

⁶⁶ UNDP IEO, ICPE Madagascar, 2018.

Various projects, including those implemented by UNDP, have attempted to address capacity deficits by producing procedural guides, such as guides for mayors. However, these supports remain ad hoc and have not allowed for the necessary post-training support, as recommended in the final evaluation of the PADRC in 2018.

In 2021, UNDP was selected as an implementation partner by the US Agency for International Development for the Strengthening Governance in Madagascar (RINDRA) programme. With a budget of \$14 million for the period 2021–2026, this programme aims to work with the National Institute for Decentralization and Local Development to develop subnational training capacities and to strengthen continuous mentoring for local actors. The RINDRA project adopts a more structured approach to strengthening the capacities of mayors, and takes into account one of the findings of the final evaluation of the PADRC, which noted that achieving significant results in the Grand Sud was more challenging than in other regions, such as Menabe, where more notable progress was observed.⁶⁷ Contrary to the country office's orientation of prioritizing the Grand Sud, the RINDRA project intervenes in four other regions (Analanjirifo, Atsinanana, Commune Urbaine d'Antananarivo, and Menabe) with absorptive capacities for aid and development levels higher than those of the Grand Sud.

Finding 2: Access to justice. UNDP has contributed to improving the provision of justice by strengthening the capacity and presence of judicial actors in the Grand Sud, particularly in remote and security-challenged areas in the Anosy region. These types of support, which are rather punctual and operational in nature, have a limited effect on the underlying dysfunctions of the justice system and the fight against impunity. Thus, despite a good level of national ownership by the Ministry of Justice, the lack of integration of these initiatives into broader reform frameworks limits the scope and sustainability of UNDP's efforts.

During this cycle, UNDP continued to support the improvement of access to justice in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice. Projects included legal awareness activities to inform citizens of their rights and facilitate access to legal aid (the 'demand' component, see Observation 3). UNDP also strengthened the 'supply' of judicial services in certain jurisdictions to enhance the effectiveness of the judicial system and to ensure fair and expedient justice. The overall objective was to create a conducive environment for access to justice for all citizens of Madagascar.

UNDP provided various forms of technical and material support at different levels of the criminal justice chain. This included training judicial personnel (judicial police officers, clerks, and magistrates) as well as the establishment of judicial services such as mobile courts and criminal sessions. UNDP also provided equipment (furniture and IT) to actors in the criminal justice chain and contributed to the rehabilitation of the Courts of First Instance (TPI, according to the French acronym). The rehabilitation of judicial infrastructure addressed a tangible need, as many of these facilities dated back to the country's independence.

Additionally, UNDP supported the digitization of TPI services in 10 regions of the country, with varying levels of progress.⁶⁸ Although the evaluation team did not have access to detailed performance statistics, UNDP reported in 2021 that, cumulatively, these various supports resulted in a significant increase in the percentage of criminal cases handled by the supported TPIs in the Grand Sud, rising from 20.74 percent in 2015 to 61.5 percent. These efforts thus contributed to enhancing the effectiveness of the judicial system in the region.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ UNDP Madagascar, Final evaluation of the PADRC project, 2021.

⁶⁸ The TPI of Diego, Tuléar, Fianarantsoa, and Majunga by the Institutional Capacity Building for the Promotion of the Rule of Law Programme (RCIPED). The RINDRA project envisages support to the TPI of Antananarivo, Tamatave, Fenerive East, Antalaha, Morondava, and Antsohihy for the implementation of civil cases handling software.

⁶⁹ UNDP ROAR, 2021.

These supports, including infrastructure modernization, had a positive impact on the public's perception of the justice system, as they improved the working conditions of judicial personnel and facilitated citizens' access to higher-quality judicial services. This also reflects the funding challenges faced by the judicial sector in Madagascar, making UNDP's support even more essential to strengthen the country's justice system.

Through funding from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), UNDP collaborated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to address the increasing insecurity in remote districts of the Anosy region.⁷⁰ The goal was to holistically strengthen the presence and services of the state to restore trust between the population and the authorities.⁷¹ The REAP (Responding to Threats to Peace and Social Cohesion Related to Uncontrolled Migration by Empowering and Promoting Women in Madagascar) and PROSUD (Strengthening Inclusive Institutional Mechanisms for Peace Consolidation in the South) projects enabled the construction and equipping of nine advanced security force posts, the rehabilitation and modernization of TPIs, the establishment of legal clinics, the issuance of civil registry services by the CTDs, as well as the implementation of community activities and frameworks for citizen participation in local decision-making and community security. These interventions were implemented in the districts of Betroka, Bekily, and Ihosy, which are remote areas facing security problems.

The PROSUD project also strengthened its intervention by implementing income-generating activities and enhancing the administrative management of livestock to combat theft of zebu, the domestic humpback ox. Gender issues were integrated through the training and support of legal clinics aimed at addressing gender-based violence by raising community awareness and by the training of security force agents.

Although the evaluation team could not visit the sites due to the passage of Cyclone Freddy, reports and interviews suggest that the enhanced presence of the state contributed to reducing insecurity in the region. The scalability of practices implemented within these initiatives was not clearly emphasized, but partners interviewed noted that the operational presence of the UN system in Betroka served as a guarantee of the sustainability of the intervention's effects in terms of security enhancement. Except for the PBF projects, UNDP's governance support was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice.⁷² These projects were implemented using the National Implementation Modality. This approach fostered a high level of ownership due to the physical presence of UNDP teams within the Ministry's premises, as confirmed during the interviews.

In general, however, the evaluators observed that UNDP's support in the field of justice often focused on operational issues, aiming to bridge the funding gaps for judicial actors. Fewer efforts were directed towards structural reforms to sustain the actions taken in the projects or to more broadly reform the justice sector. A few examples of strategic support were nonetheless identified. For instance, despite some delays,⁷³ one of the key achievements of the Rule of Law Project (RED) was the reform of the Criminal Procedure Code, including its update, dissemination, and distribution of 1,000 paper copies to judicial actors. Furthermore, support was provided for the digitization of the information collection and processing system. This initiative was tested in collaboration with the Anti-Corruption Poles through the use of the E-asa software, allowing real-time monitoring of case processing up to the production of reports. Other strategic interventions,

⁷⁰ Since the Peacebuilding Fund has a portfolio, IOM is the agency with which UNDP has participated the most in joint projects, including two joint projects exclusively implemented between the two agencies.

⁷¹ In the southern regions where cattle ranching is more common than in other parties in the country, the 'Dahalo' (which are marginal population groups) practice cattle theft. This has evolved to where it has become characterized as organized theft and organized crime.

⁷² This concerns the RED and RCIPED projects.

⁷³ UNDP Madagascar, "Final evaluation of the project strengthening the Rule of law," 2021.

such as the development of a draft decree on the sustainability of legal clinics initiated in 2015, have not led to its adoption. Interviews during this evaluation confirmed that the situation regarding this decree had not evolved (see Finding 3).

The interviews highlighted structural challenges facing the justice sector in Madagascar, including the level of funding envisaged in budget laws, which is often insufficient to meet the sector's needs.⁷⁴ Accessibility to justice is also hindered by a shortage of magistrates trained by the National School of Magistracy, where promotions were interrupted following a corruption scandal.⁷⁵ Additionally, magistrates are frequently reassigned to different positions within the administration, which can affect their continuity and expertise in their field of competence.

The justice sector also faces poor public perception, partly due to reported corruption. According to the 2022 BIANCO report, the justice sector is considered one of the five sectors most exposed to corruption. The absence of reform of the Superior Council of the Magistracy and the insufficient strengthening of judicial mechanisms have also had a negative impact on the perception of impartiality and credibility within the justice sector.⁷⁶

The 2018 EIPP highlighted UNDP's support in the development of the national security sector reform plan for the period 2017–2021, as well as the adoption of implementing decrees in 2017.⁷⁷ Despite these efforts, however, the National Security Sector Reform Office, foreseen within the framework of this reform, was never established. The interviewed interlocutors confirmed that this effort had not been pursued, notably due to the introduction of the reform on the eve of the 2018 presidential election.

In 2020, UNDP supported the development of the National Good Governance Strategy. This strategy included an assessment of key governance sectors, strategic priorities aligned with the Madagascar Emergence Plan, and covering various sectors from the former national security sector reform strategy. However, the proposed institutional framework for the implementation of this strategy, under the supervision of the Prime Minister's Office and coordinated by the Committee for Integrity Safeguarding, did not seem to generate sufficient momentum to progress with reforms addressing the various challenges identified in this strategy.

Finding 3: Legal aid. The legal clinics supported by UNDP have demonstrated their usefulness in resolving minor civil cases and promoting social cohesion through legal awareness, mediation, and legal guidance. Despite their utility, however, the current model presents challenges in terms of sustainability and struggles to effectively enhance the trust and access of the population to the formal justice system, mainly due to the complex coordination between this alternative dispute resolution mechanism and the formal justice system.

UNDP continued to support alternative justice mechanisms, including legal advice for vulnerable communities, in order to expand access to justice. It supported nine legal clinics managed by NGOs, building on the support provided in the previous cycle through the RED project (2015–2021), which established six legal clinics and worked on a decree to institutionalize their services.⁷⁸ However, this decree was never adopted.

⁷⁴ The share of the budget allocated to Malagasy ministries/institutions in the finance laws has seen the budget allocation of the Ministry of Justice decrease from 2.19 percent to 1.49 percent between 2019 and 2023, despite a 45 percent increase in the total share allocated to the financing of ministries and institutions during this period.

⁷⁵ Madagascar has 40 Courts of First Instance for the 119 administrative districts of the 23 regions of the island.

⁷⁶ The Superior Council of the Magistracy is responsible for career management, deployment, and inspection of magistrates and is chaired by the President of the Republic and co-chaired by the Minister of Justice.

⁷⁷ The strategy envisaged reforms in the army, police, gendarmerie, judiciary, territorial administration, intelligence, parliament, and non-state actors.

⁷⁸ In localities of the regions of Vatovavy, Fitovavy, Atsimo Atsinanana, Analamanga, Anosy, Ihorombe, Androy, and Atsimo Andrefana.

UNDP continues to support these legal clinics through various projects and initiatives in the field of justice. Three additional clinics were established in the main towns of targeted areas in the Grand Sud through PF3 (Taolagnaro, Ambovombe, Toliara). All clinics receive basic training and financial/material support for their operations. The clinics are staffed by paralegals who conduct awareness activities about rights and the availability of clinics in their respective areas of operation.

The results of the legal clinic activities suggest that they are indeed sought after by the population. According to reports from UNDP and the implementing NGOs, more than 30,000 people sought their services between 2015 and 2021 in the regions of the Grand Sud. Based on reports from UNDP during this cycle, nearly 5,000 people consult the clinics each year, with almost half on average coming from the legal clinic in Antananarivo. Among those who consult these clinics, mediation and conciliation services are widely sought by women, who constitute an average of 75 percent of all clinic users. The available data does not precisely define the geographical coverage of legal clinics, but interviews and some reports from the implementing NGOs indicate that their services are primarily sought by rural populations outside the urban areas where the clinics are located.

The opinions of interviewees were mixed regarding the recommended approach to expanding the services of legal clinics and ensuring their sustainability. Some respondents pointed out that the approach of deploying legal clinics managed by NGOs rather than by the Ministry itself limited the potential for ownership and sustainability by the state and somewhat discharged the state of its 'right-holder' role.

This perception is reinforced by the fact that some legal clinics have been operating on non-governmental funding since 2004 and continue to depend on external support for their operations. In other words, the paralegals working in legal clinics are not funded by the Ministry's budget but rather by international aid. While the legal aid decree opens the door for the government to subsidize these NGOs, it was not on the path to adoption at the time of the evaluation.

Primarily focused on mediation and conciliation, the legal clinics do not seem to have a sufficient budget to assist victims of crimes within the formal justice system or to collaborate with lawyer associations to ensure proper judicial support in criminal cases. While legal clinics are obligated to refer criminal cases to the TPI, interviews revealed that the clinics face difficulties in effectively guiding victims to appropriate services such as judicial police officers, TPIs, or even hospitals. Furthermore, based on interviews and activity reports from the clinics, follow-up of cases for referred victims does not seem to be ensured by the clinics. The activity reports and interviews with the clinics indicate that the majority of cases are related to disputes and family violence. However, victims often prefer to seek conciliation from the clinics rather than pursuing legal procedures against their spouses.

Interviews also raised questions about the quality of services offered by legal clinics. Although efforts were made under the RED project for training and experience sharing among different managers and paralegals, this practice does not seem to have been continued since 2018–2019, which could have helped to harmonize and professionalize the practices of different clinics. With the adoption of the portfolio approach, the supervision of support activities for legal clinics is now distributed between PF1 and PF3. An additional challenge for legal clinics is the geographical reach of their services. Despite the provision of means of transportation (motorcycles) for each clinic, clinic staff reported difficulties in extending their services beyond the neighbouring communities.

Legal clinics operate under the coordination of the Ministry of Justice and are assigned a focal point among TPI magistrates in the jurisdictions where they operate to ensure their supervision and referral of criminal cases. However, the effectiveness of this mechanism could not be confirmed as evaluators noted shortcomings in coordination and communication between the legal clinics and TPIs, limiting the potential of the overall mechanism to strengthen populations trust in the formal justice system.

Overall, legal clinics have shown their usefulness as a mechanism to resolve minor civil cases through conciliation and mediation, as well as by relieving TPIs of these minor cases. By enhancing the availability of legal services, these efforts have, to some extent, facilitated alternative access to justice for vulnerable individuals.

Traditional justice systems have remained significant in Malagasy society, and justice is often managed through Dinas, which are “social norms or codes of conduct that govern relationships within or between communities.”⁷⁹ A form of precolonial traditional justice, they currently cover 75 percent of the country’s population. Since 2001 they have been recognized by a specific law concerning public security, and require homologation by the court and publication to have enforceable value.⁸⁰ However, challenges exist in terms of supervising the Dinas, especially those that have not been homologated by the courts in accordance with the law. While the Dinas have helped resolve conflicts and contributed to social cohesion in some regions of the country, concerns have arisen about encroaching on the competencies of formal jurisdictions, the proportionality of sanctions administered by the Dina councils, and instances of abuse, especially when they are not homologated.

Through the PADRC and PF3 projects, UNDP supported the dissemination and harmonization of Dinas at the regional level. Interviews highlighted the challenges faced to harmonize and enforce a Dina at the regional level. However, interventions so far have mainly focused on the dimension of local governance without establishing links with judicial authorities. A 2014 UNDP study had emphasized the need to formalize the use of mediation and regulate traditional justice mechanisms to integrate them into the strategy of restoring citizen trust.⁸¹ Existing models in other countries show that community paralegals can play a useful complementary role and act as a bridge between traditional mechanism and formal judicial actors, leveraging their advantages (geographical coverage, trust and recognition by communities) while supporting harmonization and integration of the law.⁸² Practices and existing legal frameworks in Madagascar present a favourable environment for the replication of such interventions by supporting the certification of Dinas by local courts, and by strengthening the working relations and participatory mechanism between traditional actors and formal judicial actors.

Finding 4: Fight against corruption. UNDP continued to support the operationalization of anti-corruption structures and the strengthening of the participation of accountability bodies for the implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy. Although progress has been made with the establishment of all structures required by law, their geographical reach and capacity to fully fulfil their mandate are limited due to unfavourable conditions both in terms of finances and politics.

⁷⁹ Andriamalala, G. and Gardner, C. J., “L’utilisation du Dina comme outil de gouvernance des ressources naturelles : leçons tirées de Velondriake, sud-ouest de Madagascar,” *Tropical Conservation Science* (2010), pp. 447–72, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/194008291000300409>.

⁸⁰ Law No. 2001-004 of 25 October 2001 on the general regulation of Dina in matters of public security.

⁸¹ UNDP Madagascar, “Study on the dysfunctions of the criminal justice chain Malgasy,” 2014, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/mg/a503a0341e72dad5f47793c6cd7470f8f6c9aaeade80bb9eba2909b7fa3284d7.pdf>.

⁸² See the case of Malawi developed by the NGO PASI, <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/12827> and <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/11102>.

Following the establishment of a priority plan for peace consolidation for the period 2016–2019, Madagascar became eligible for funding from the PBF in 2015. Its eligibility was extended in 2019 with the approval of a second portfolio of projects. The priority plans aimed to strengthen trust between citizens and institutions in the post-crisis context that followed the period of 2009–2014. Through this funding, UNDP implemented various projects in partnership with other UN agencies, aiming to support the fight against corruption, transparency of public institutions, citizen participation in public accountability efforts, and the presence of authorities in insecure areas in the southern region (Finding 5).⁸³

In continuation of some of its previous interventions, UNDP contributed to the establishment and operationalization of the anti-corruption apparatus in Madagascar. It supported the revisions of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy in 2015 and the development of framework laws for the creation of Anti-Corruption Poles (PAC), the fight against corruption, and asset recovery, as well as for their operationalization.⁸⁴ In 2020, UNDP assisted the Committee for the Safeguarding of Integrity in conducting the mid-term evaluation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and the development of the National Good Governance Strategy to align reforms with the new priorities of the state.⁸⁵ This approach highlighted the progress made during the five years of strategy implementation, including the adoption of laws, corruption prevention, and user education.⁸⁶

Progress has been achieved since the last IEO ICPE, conducted in 2018, which pointed out delays in the promulgation of the law concerning asset recovery. The latter was finally adopted in 2019, and its implementation decree in 2021 facilitated the establishment of the Illicit Assets Recovery Agency (ARAI). The adoption of the implementing decree and the establishment of the ARAI complete the establishment of the anti-corruption system as defined in the anti-corruption law, allowing ARAI to join other institutions of the anti-corruption system, including the Committee for Safeguarding Integrity, BIANCO, PAC, and the Financial Intelligence Unit. During this cycle, UNDP continued to provide support for prevention and awareness efforts of BIANCO and the ongoing operationalization of PAC through the provision of equipment and support for magistrate training.

The PAC in Antananarivo and Mahajanga are still functioning adequately, having processed 1,234 cases, judged 674 cases, and rendered 950 judgments of conviction since their creation.⁸⁷ Although the number of complaints addressed to BIANCO has generally decreased since 2008, a 30 percent increase in complaints received between 2018 and 2021 has been reported.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the ratio of complaints that can be investigated compared to complaints received has increased by two percentage points, and a 14 percentage point increase has been observed in the proportion of investigated complaints that have been processed and forwarded to the courts, indicating an improvement in case processing efficiency.⁸⁹

The operationalization of the structures remains a slow process marked by significant implementation delays. Similar to the establishment of ARAI, the structures that are intended to have territorial representations, such as BIANCO and PAC, have not yet been deployed across the entire country. Although BIANCO,

⁸³ This support has been operationalized through the projects “Integrity, Representative, and Credible Democratic Institutions 2016–2019”; “Charting the Way to Peace through the Voice of Youth 2018–2020”; “Popular Art at the Service of Young People Engaged in Peacebuilding in Southern Madagascar 2019–2021”; “Strengthening Inclusive Institutional Mechanisms for Peacebuilding in the South 2020–2022”; and “Observatory of young citizens engaged for a more inclusive, effective and peaceful governance 2020–2022.”

⁸⁴ IEO UNDP, “Independent Evaluation of the Madagascar Country Programme,” 2018.

⁸⁵ See <https://www.csi.gov.mg/politique-nationale-de-bonne-gouvernance-nov-2020/>.

⁸⁶ Comité pour la sauvegarde de l’intégrité, “Évaluation à mi-parcours de la SNLCC de Madagascar,” 2020.

⁸⁷ Based on the cumulative activities of the CAP presented in its 2021 Annual Report. These figures represent the accumulation of files over three years and six months for the PAC of Antananarivo, and one year and three months for the PAC of Mahajanga.

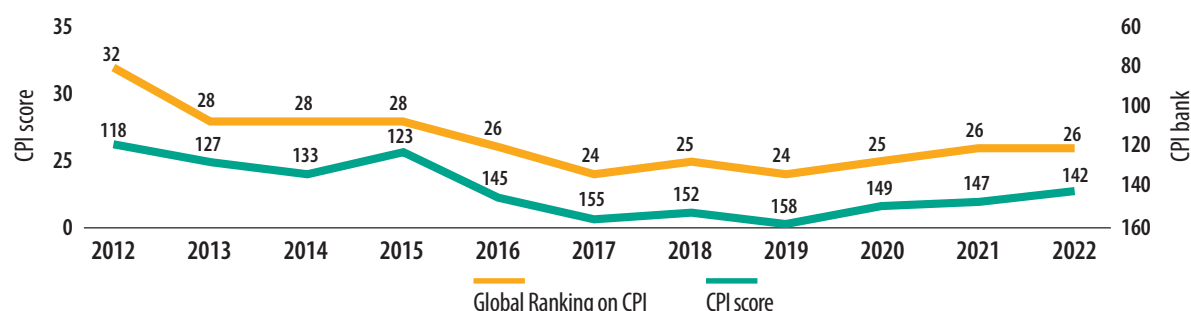
⁸⁸ BIANCO’s 2020 annual report presents the cumulative activity levels since its inception in 2004. In 2008 it received the most grievances at 9,718, of which 1,627 grievances could be investigated. The level of complaints received decreased by 60 percent between 2008 and 2021.

⁸⁹ BIANCO Annual Reports, 2018–2021.

established in 2004, has been able to extend its presence with six territorial branches (one per province), the establishment of PAC has been a challenging process, with only two currently operational out of the six initially envisaged by law.⁹⁰ According to the interviewed stakeholders, the delay in the establishment of the judicial component of the anti-corruption system poses challenges related to the fact that cases that should be investigated by the PAC end up being handled by non-specialized courts.

Interviews revealed a lack of credibility in the political will to combat corruption, which has also negatively impacted the perception of actors within the anti-corruption system. Despite some progress, the corruption perception index in Madagascar has tended to decrease over the past 10 years, clearly reflecting the shared opinions of stakeholders. Revisions to the legislative framework were adopted by the Parliament in 2021, reducing the jurisdiction of PAC over economic and financial offenses and shortening the tenure of PAC magistrates. These measures, along with the establishment of the High Court of Justice in 2018, which has exclusive jurisdiction for cases of large-scale corruption involving high-ranking officials and which is controlled by the Parliament, have created a form of de facto immunity for parliamentarians and the political class, in addition to weakening PAC.⁹¹ In fact, highly publicized cases involving political figures who were not prosecuted have had a negative impact on stakeholders' perception of progress in the fight against corruption in Madagascar. Despite the increasing operationalization of anti-corruption structures and an increase in dedicated personnel, the budget allocated to these structures has decreased in recent years. Over the period 2018–2021 the general budget allocated to anti-corruption structures decreased from 0.25 percent to 0.14 percent of the overall state budget, and from 0.31 percent to 0.08 percent for bodies overseeing public finances and the Republic's ombudsman.⁹²

FIGURE 5. Evolution of the corruption perception index in Madagascar, 2012–2022



Finding 5: Civil society participation. The support aimed at stimulating the participation of civil society and accountability bodies, while sporadic, has contributed to invigorating public debates on transparency, accountability, and enhancing citizen participation, particularly among youth, thus indirectly promoting social cohesion.

The support for civil society participation in accountability efforts had been highlighted in the previous ICPE, which nonetheless emphasized the need to further involve civil society and accountability bodies in anti-corruption initiatives. Since the previous country programme, the participation of civil society and young people in strengthening public accountability and, more generally, in social cohesion efforts has been at the heart of various projects. The involvement of these actors has thus been integrated as a

⁹⁰ At the time of the evaluation the 3rd PAC, located in Fianarantsoa, was being operationalized and expected since 2021. Only the PACs of Antanarivo and Mahajanga were operational.

⁹¹ The World Bank Group in Madagascar Country Programme Evaluation 2022, Fiscal Years 2007–2021.

⁹² Committee for the Safeguarding of Integrity, Annual Report, 2021.

related objective within the support for anti-corruption and good governance in the implementation of PBF projects (in partnership with OHCHR, UNESCO, IOM, and UNFPA).⁹³ Apart from the support directly related to the fight against corruption and public transparency, the involvement of other UN agencies has enabled the operationalization of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, the High Council for the Defense of Democracy and the Rule of Law, and the revitalization of investigative journalism.

In strengthening transparency and accountability, UNDP supported the Parliament and the Court of Auditors with a view to strengthening their accountability and enhancing the role of Parliament in monitoring government action. UNDP supported the operationalization of existing constitutional provisions through the establishment and capacity-building of members of the Parliament's Policy Evaluation Committee and the creation of a guide to simplify the committee's referral process to the Court of Auditors. This work led to the launch of the first evaluation of Parliament-commissioned public policies with the Audit Board on the implementation of the national hygiene and sanitation strategy, which was being finalized at the time of the evaluation (see also Finding 7). While the water, sanitation, and hygiene sector is led by UNICEF, coordination between the Support for Democratic Governance in Madagascar (GOUDMADA) project and UNICEF has, however, been limited beyond collaboration within the scope of this evaluation.

UNDP also supported the Court of Auditors in 2021 by financing audits related to the management of COVID-19 pandemic response funds, as requested by the Court. Among the four audit reports conducted and made public by the Court of Auditors, one raised numerous suspicions regarding certain operations and the management of nearly €400 million of aid received in the context of the COVID-19 response. This information was covered by international media. Despite these suspicions, however, the audit report did not result in legal action.⁹⁴ According to interviews, this initiative by the Court of Auditors, supported by UNDP, nevertheless contributed to shedding light on the challenges of aid management and the management of public funds in Madagascar. Furthermore, the findings of these audits are utilized by the IMF in its efforts to enhance governance and transparency. This experience has also enhanced the credibility of the Court of Auditors among development partners, who now seek the expertise and involvement of the Court in the implementation of their programmes. An indirect effect of UNDP's support is that concerted advocacy by development partners has enabled the Court of Auditors to increase its budget autonomy in the 2023 budget law.⁹⁵

Building on the significant capacity-building efforts of civil society organizations (CSOs) during previous elections, UNDP capitalized on the existence of well-established CSO networks to expand awareness-raising and the mobilization of activities in the fight against corruption and for the support for public transparency and conflict prevention. The OBSMADA project, focused on Citizen Control of Public Action, successfully strengthened the capacities of young CSOs. During the COVID-19 pandemic the project supported the creation of the ARAMASO platform, which gained popularity by enabling better citizen involvement and monitoring of public actions by civil society.⁹⁶ These actions also contributed to mitigating the risks of social conflicts related to potential corruption cases in the management of the COVID-19 crisis, both at the territorial and national levels. The establishment of a participatory citizen monitoring mechanism mobilized 612 young local actors to evaluate 338 public services in six regions, thereby promoting transparency

⁹³ IDIRC, GOUDMADA, OBSMADA, and CAPMADA joint projects.

⁹⁴ The Court of Auditors does not have jurisdiction to prosecute.

⁹⁵ IMF, Country Report No. 23/117.

⁹⁶ It is a platform that can receive alerts and/or reports of COVID-19 incidents launched by citizens via SMS from a toll-free number. It may also process information concerning the activities of members in their constituencies.

and improving the quality of public services.⁹⁷ Additionally, a community conflict monitoring and early warning system, in partnership with a CSO, brought together 2,629 local associations and actors, including authorities, for conflict prevention.

Partnerships with UNESCO and OHCHR led to the drafting and dissemination of the law on access to information and its promotion for increased citizen participation. However, several texts resulting from this law, particularly those concerning whistle-blower protection and human rights, have not been adopted by Parliament and continue to be debated in parliamentary committees. The objective of revising the regulatory framework aiming to improve public information access and whistle-blower protection, which was already included in the objectives of the Integrity, Representative, and Credible Democratic Institutions project that concluded in 2019, had not progressed at the time of this evaluation. Malagasy news is replete with cases of whistle-blowers facing reprisals, including through the judicial system. The lack of progress on these issues remains a significant impediment to the pursuit of a comprehensive societal approach, and also poses risks to the active participation of CSOs and citizens in these efforts, as highlighted in interviews and available project reports.

Finding 6: Electoral support. While UNDP has played a significant role in supporting Madagascar's past electoral processes, notably through the Electoral Support Project for the Electoral Cycle of Madagascar, which mobilized the contributions of development partners and strengthened the National Electoral Commission, current challenges such as tight implementation timelines, political tensions, media restrictions, and the delayed establishment of an electoral assistance programme raise concerns about the effectiveness of this contribution in fostering a climate of trust, ensuring adequate participation, and guaranteeing transparent and peaceful elections in 2023.

In accordance with the mandate given to it by the United Nations General Assembly and under the guidance of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UNDP played a significant role in the various electoral processes in the country. Indeed, UNDP has been an important player in supporting the country's recent electoral cycles, including the 2013 cycles, which allowed a return to the democratic constitution following the political crisis of 2009. It also supported the electoral cycle of 2018, which included the presidential and legislative elections in 2019.

The electoral cycle of 2018, supported by UNDP in the previous programme cycle 2015–2019 through the Electoral Support Project for the Electoral Cycle of Madagascar (SACEM), marked the country's first regular elections since the post-crisis elections in 2013.⁹⁸ As noted in the 2018 ICPE, these elections held significant importance for the country.⁹⁹ SACEM, through the establishment of a common fund, succeeded in mobilizing contributions from 11 development partners, raising a total of \$14 million for its implementation, with nearly 40 percent coming from UNDP's own funds. The significance of SACEM is highlighted by the fact that the programme accounted for 92 percent of the external contributions to the 2018–2019 electoral process,¹⁰⁰ along with an additional allocation of over 50 percent for the presidential and legislative elections supported through internal resources.¹⁰¹ Leveraging these supplementary resources, UNDP supported the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) across various areas. Initially, it contributed to updating and enhancing the electoral register, thereby strengthening CENI's governance and

⁹⁷ ROAR, 2022.

⁹⁸ By capitalizing on the support of the previous electoral support programme the SACEM project aimed to support the conduct of elections in a peaceful, transparent, and inclusive climate. Its implementation focused on four main components: the reliability of the electoral register, the improvement of the legal framework, voter awareness, and assistance for the operational activities of the CENI.

⁹⁹ UNDP IBE, "Independent Evaluation of the Madagascar Country Programme," 2018.

¹⁰⁰ CENI, "End of Term Report of the Permanent Bureau," 2021.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Based on the information reported, SACEM provided an additional allocation of 47 billion Ariary (approximately \$10.4 million) for the period 2017–2019, and the execution of the electoral budget from internal resources was reported as 85 billion Ariary (\$18.7 million) for the presidential (68 percent) and legislative (32 percent) elections.

legal framework. Additionally, UNDP backed CENI's institutional communication efforts and civic and voter education initiatives. The electoral operations were also supported to address delays in the disbursement of national budget allocations designated for CENI.

In general, SACEM has managed to achieve its objectives by supporting the CENI in the conduct of peaceful, transparent, and inclusive elections despite certain shortcomings in the electoral process. Support for the revision of the electoral register has increased the registration rate on the register by 8 percent compared to 2013.¹⁰² Through SACEM the number of people registered to vote has passed the 10 million mark, and an increase of 16 percent between 2017 and 2019 is attributable to the effects of the awareness and registration campaigns. In particular, these have led to a significant increase in the enrolment rate of young people, from 26 percent in 2016 to 41 percent in 2019, though overall registration of women only saw a limited increase (+1 percent).¹⁰³ Beyond the electoral operations and registration on the electoral register, the final evaluation of the project notes that through its governance mechanism SACEM played a critical interface role for national authorities and development partners, and provided an important moral guarantee to the electoral process.¹⁰⁴

SACEM's support promoted political dialogue that allowed, among other things, to provide answers to the post-electoral crisis that erupted at the beginning of 2018. Despite these events, election observation reports produced by international partners such as the European Union and the African Union echoed the relative success of the organization and the conduct of the presidential and legislative elections of 2018 and 2019. In addition, the CENI was able to conduct, with minimal assistance, the municipal and communal elections in 2019, which to some extent confirmed the technical skills acquired by the CENI through successive support and the training of its staff. However, although the elections took place in a relatively peaceful climate, some events somewhat tainted the conduct of the various elections and weakened the credibility of the CENI and the process, in particular with regard to the reliability of the electoral register,¹⁰⁵ which ultimately (and as noted in the final evaluation of SACEM) is closely dependent on broader reforms related to civil registration.

The year 2023 is marked by an upcoming electoral deadline, with the presidential elections scheduled for late November, as confirmed by the announcement of the electoral calendar by the Independent National Electoral Commission in February.¹⁰⁶ After the national authorities requested United Nations assistance, a Needs Assessment Mission dispatched by the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs concluded in March 2022 that the United Nations would not provide support to CENI through an electoral operations assistance programme. Rather, it was decided that support would be limited to creating favourable conditions for inclusivity and the peaceful conduct of the electoral process through good offices activities and support for citizen participation.¹⁰⁷ Although the needs analysis report was not made public, evaluation interviews revealed that this decision was influenced by the lack of progress regarding recommendations from various observation missions following the conclusion of the previous electoral cycle. Additionally, controversial political decisions, including the appointments of members to the

¹⁰² On the basis of the 2018 audit of the electoral register conducted by the international organization La Francophonie.

¹⁰³ UNDP Madagascar, "Final evaluation of the Madagascar Electoral Cycle Support Project," 2020.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Although this was deemed inconsequential for the results of the presidential elections, the results of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie audit were called into question by the 2019 annual renewal of the electoral list, which identified more than 100,000 duplicates in the electoral register – nearly 1 percent against 0.1 percent of duplicates identified by the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie audit in 2018. The 2020 annual renewal of the electoral list also reported more than 1 million registered voters with the same national identity card number.

¹⁰⁶ The dates for the first and second rounds of the presidential elections have been set for November and December, respectively.

¹⁰⁷ Authorized programmatic priorities are: (i) the respect for civic and democratic space (including civic and voter education); (ii) countering disinformation and incitement, and building the capacity of an independent media; and (iii) increased participation, inclusion, and non-discrimination, including of women and youth, persons with disabilities, and minorities.

permanent bureau of CENI and the High Constitutional Court, contributed to this decision.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, a comprehensive revision of the 2018 electoral law was recommended after the previous elections and again in 2022, ahead of preparations for the 2023 presidential elections, but this was not followed up.

Questions persist regarding CENI's readiness to conduct electoral operations in line with the standards of 2018, despite the significant logistical and equipment support that was provided previously. This support had facilitated the timely counting and transmission of results within legal deadlines. However, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs conducted a high-level follow-up mission on the pre-electoral situation in April 2023 (following the IEO evaluation mission), leading to the recommendation to extend United Nations support to strengthen the operational capacity of CENI through "targeted and moderate support for technical electoral operations," as well as to the High Constitutional Court. As a result, a more ambitious \$14 million project entitled 'Renforcement des processus électoral et démocratique à Madagascar' (RPEDEM) has been designed and is in the process of mobilizing resources from donors.

Until the time of the evaluation and before this new development, UNDP's support had been limited to occasional assistance aimed at supporting certain activities of CENI in 2022. This included logistical support for workshops that enabled the new permanent bureau to adopt its multi-year activity plan. Following the guidelines that define UNDP's scope of engagement in electoral processes, UNDP was preparing two projects to support civil society organizations and the media, along with awareness-raising and civic education activities for the participation of women and youth. These initiatives were planned as an addition to activities already underway since late 2022 in the regions of Menabe, SAVA, Haute-Matsiatra, Vatovavy, Fitovinany, and Atsimo Atsinanana.

Based on the experience of the previous electoral cycle, the support initiated by UNDP and other development partners in 2023 might have only a limited impact on participation due to the relatively short implementation timeline and late decisions to establish an electoral assistance programme. The final evaluation of SACEM had noted that such implementation timelines did not ensure the effects of awareness-raising efforts and that voter registration did not necessarily lead to increased participation rates. This was particularly noted regarding women's participation, which had not recorded results deemed commensurate with efforts in the areas of awareness-raising and enrolments. Additionally, a tense political atmosphere emerged following the 2020 senatorial elections, which were boycotted by the opposition in anticipation of the presidential elections. Various civil society actors mobilized to demand the revision of the 2018 electoral code, which, as highlighted by the final SACEM evaluation, was driven more by the need for political consensus at that specific time than by legal considerations. The current context is further marked by media restrictions, including the recent 31 March 2023 announcement banning political demonstrations and gatherings in public spaces for opposition political figures. Given the current circumstances, it remains unclear whether the belated establishment of an electoral assistance programme will be sufficient to foster a climate of trust, ensure a robust participation rate, and result in transparent and peaceful elections.

¹⁰⁸ In its final report, the Union Election Observation Mission of the European Union made 27 recommendations following the 2018 elections. A follow-up mission to these recommendations in 2022 noted 18 of the 27 recommendations, including the need for legislative or constitutional reforms; the empowerment of the CENI; guarantees of freedom of expression and the press; and control of the financing of political life.

2.2 Youth employment and inclusive growth

Outcome 2. By 2030 youth access to decent, productive, sustainable and resilient jobs is promoted through entrepreneurship development and the implementation of measures to accelerate the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

Related outputs

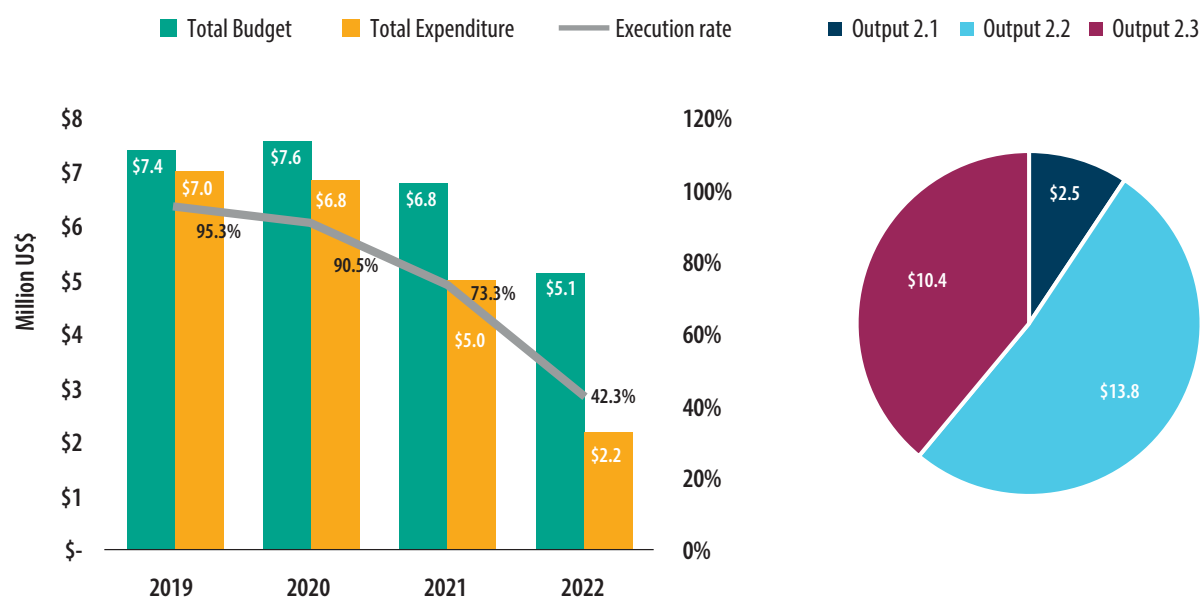
Output 2.1. Innovative measures in place to increase the empowerment of women and youth and their participation in economic development processes in the green and blue economy sector.

Output 2.2. Inclusive and sustainable solutions adopted in intervention areas to increase access to renewable energy.

Output 2.3. Measures in place to provide sustainable business opportunities for individuals and micro, small and medium sized enterprises.

During the period 2019–2023 a total of 10 projects related to Outcome 2 on inclusive growth were implemented. These projects have a total budget of \$26.8 million (30.5 percent of the total programme budget) and an expenditure of \$21 million (30.9 percent of total programme expenditure), corresponding to an average implementation rate of 78.3 percent. In total, four projects (representing 65.9 percent of the expenditure under this purpose contributed to inclusive growth) were implemented by the National Implementation Modality, while the other six projects were executed directly by the UNDP Direct Implementation Modality. Outcome 2 projects were mainly financed by UNDP core funds (87.5 percent of Outcome 2 expenditure), the Government of Russia (6.7 percent), and the Global Environment Facility (3.1 percent).

FIGURE 6: BUDGET AND SPENDING EVOLUTION IN THE AREA OF INCLUSIVE GROWTH, 2019–2022



Source: Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of 17 March 2023.

Finding 7: Planning, monitoring, and evaluation of public policies and aid coordination. UNDP committed to enhancing the strategic policy planning capacities of the General Secretariat of the Presidency for the implementation of the Madagascar Emergence Plan (PEM) 2019–2023. However, this role proved to be quite ambitious in a context of institutional instability, as only a draft version of the PEM, which lacks consensus, was disseminated in 2023. The absence of a final version of the PEM, along with the temporary void resulting from the dissolution of the Secretariat for Aid Coordination, presents challenges that hinder the efforts of development partners to enhance the coherence of their actions. UNDP also aimed to strengthen the capacity of institutional actors in monitoring, evaluation, and results-based management. However, the impacts of these efforts were impeded by political and institutional reshuffles within the government.

UNDP has successfully positioned itself to provide support to the General Secretariat of the Presidency (SGP) through the Institutional Support Project (PAI). UNDP extended its assistance under the PF2, responding to the SGP's request. This request arose following an organizational audit conducted with UNDP's support in 2018, which identified areas requiring reinforcement, particularly for enhancing its strategic policy steering capabilities. The project also aims to support the implementation of the PEM as well as the establishment of economic promotion mechanisms. Consequently, UNDP became the only development partner supporting the SGP in its endeavour to finalize and implement the PEM – an endeavour that holds potential strategic significance but is also fraught with risk. This is due to the fact that the PEM, which should have been fully completed and published in 2019, had not yet reached completion in 2021 when the PAI was launched. The 2019–2023 PEM, which was meant to serve as the nation's development plan, was intended to replace the 2015–2019 National Development Plan. However, at the time of the evaluation the PEM was still unpublished and only existed as a working document.

UNDP therefore provided the SGP with experts in various domains (economic policy management, legal analysis, monitoring and evaluation) as well as materials and equipment (laptops, WiFi, liaison vehicles) to support the production of framework documents that translate the Madagascar Emergence Initiative into the PEM and its derivatives. Several significant achievements were reported by UNDP, including support for the establishment of the Malagasy Sovereign Fund through a knowledge-sharing mission (South-South cooperation) with the Senegalese Sovereign Strategic Investment Fund. The Sovereign Fund, created in 2022, more recently received UNDP technical assistance for the recruitment of its executive body. UNDP also contributed to the creation and operation of a 'Delivery Unit' for the SGP, leveraging the UNDP-SIGOB project from Latin America.¹⁰⁹ The missions of the SIGOB identified five projects to be implemented by 10 ministries. Other smaller contributions were identified, such as producing reports related to the implementation of the PEM vision, the Economic Forum on emergence for national investors, the Southern Madagascar Emergence Plan, as well as presentations to investors and the government's 2022 annual report.

At present, only the 13 general objectives of the PEM have been officially published. However, the absence of a definitive version of the PEM undermines the credibility of the plan according to certain technical and financial partners interviewed. This perception is reinforced by the fact that the most recent versions of the plan predominantly emphasized infrastructure development at the expense of socio-economic development. Furthermore, during an election year the 2023 schedule had not yet been updated. Despite UNDP's contributions to operationalizing the government's vision, it remained partially ambiguous.

¹⁰⁹ UNDP-SIGOB is a regional project with global products that works towards more effective, responsive, and accountable public institutions through innovation in management methods and tools. See Information Systems for Governability, <https://www.sigob.org/index.html>.

At the territorial level, UNDP also supported the development of the Integrated Development Strategy for the Grand Sud in 2019, specifically designed to address the recurring humanitarian crises in the region.¹¹⁰ Focused on early recovery and resilience-building, the strategy's finalization was delayed, and its official launch only occurred in 2021 due in large part to the COVID-19 emergency. Additionally, in the same year UNDP provided to the government experts for the assessment of priority projects in the Southern Madagascar Emergence Plan. This plan was formulated following the Development Colloquium for the Grand South, held in Fort Dauphin in June 2021.¹¹¹ Interviews conducted during the evaluation revealed the government's intention to develop a new plan for the Grand South, namely the Presidential Resilience Programme for the South, despite the limited results and performance of previous plans. Despite UNDP's efforts in national and regional planning, and its contribution to the development of multiple overlapping strategies in the Grand Sud, these actions have not managed to strengthen the consensus among stakeholders working in the Grand Sud regarding these strategies. Therefore, these documents have tended to follow one another without making progress towards their final implementation.

Though the implementation of the project on Strategic Planning and Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (PSMODD, 2022–2023), UNDP supports the Director of Economic Cooperation (DCE), the entity responsible for development aid in Madagascar since 2022, through capacity strengthening.¹¹² UNDP also participates in the coordination platforms of the government and its technical and financial partners in order to improve coordination around the implementation of the 13 Velirano (objectives) of the PEM.¹¹³ Consequently, 13 sectoral platforms, corresponding to each of the PEM objectives, were established. However, only seven of these are operational, and one, concerning decentralization, is co-led by UNDP and the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization.¹¹⁴

Despite the presence of this aid coordination platform that is overseen by the government, technical and financial partners as well as UNDP heavily rely on the PEM for planning and coordinating their endeavours. In the absence of the PEM, the planning and coordination of government and partner actions nationally and in the Grand Sud regionally were adversely affected. Furthermore, the dissolution of the Permanent Technical Secretariat for Aid Coordination at the end of 2021 brought the cooperative platforms' activities to a standstill for almost a year. The responsibility for aid coordination was provisionally and informally shifted to the DCE, established in February 2022, within the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), which also obstructed potential advancements in aid coordination.

Similarly, UNDP continued its support under the PAI – initiated under the Budget Management for Inclusive Growth and the SDGs (GBCI) since 2017 – to the Organism for Coordination and Monitoring of Investments and Financing (OCSIF, within the General Secretariat of the Presidency) to strengthen public funding monitoring. This included developing a public investment management dashboard and integrating Delivery Unit functions.¹¹⁵ However, the OCSIF was dissolved, and its responsibilities were transferred to the DCE within the Presidency on 29 December 2022, undermining public funding monitoring capabilities.

¹¹⁰ See https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=41388.

¹¹¹ See <https://www.presidence.gov.mg/actualites/1268-colloque-regional-pour-l-emergence-du-grand-sud-des-solutions-malgaches-malgaches-pour-une-transformation-radical-des-regions-androy-et-anosy.html>.

¹¹² Previously, the structure responsible for aid was the Permanent Technical Secretariat for Aid Coordination (STPCA), located in the Prime Minister's Office. When the STPCA was dissolved at the end of 2021, the Ministry of Economy and Finances (MEF) temporarily coordinated aid until the end of 2022 (which explains why development aid is attached to the Strategic Planning and Implementation of the SDGs project, which works with the MEF).

¹¹³ UNDP, Annual Work Plan of the Strategic Planning and Implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 project, 15 December 2021.

¹¹⁴ In the framework of monthly meetings at the level of the Cooperation Dialogue Group and Strategic Dialogue Group, as well as biannual meetings with the President of the Republic of Madagascar, ambassadors, and development partners.

¹¹⁵ UNDP, "PRODOC UNDP Institutional Support Project to the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic of Madagascar," 29 June 2021; UNDP, "Interim Final Evaluation Report of the Budget Management for Inclusive Growth and MDG/ODD Achievement (GBCI)-2015–2020 project," 9 February 2021; ROAR, 2021.

Nonetheless, UNDP contributed to the development of the Public Investment Management Manual and Decree 2023–255 (dated 15 March 2023) on Public Investment Management. These documents serve as reference materials and are part of the IMF unlocking conditions.

As part of the implementation of the PSMODD, UNDP, in partnership with UNICEF, supported the development of a National Evaluation Policy (PNEval) through the recruitment of an international firm.¹¹⁶ The adoption of the finalized PNEval, following a consultative process, encountered obstacles within the National Assembly due to differing viewpoints between the Commission for Public Policy Evaluation within the National Assembly and the MEF's National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System, on one hand, and the timing issue given that 2023 is an election year, on the other.¹¹⁷ The support provided by UNDP to the PNEval Committee, which is punctual, and UNDP's coordination with the two key actors, namely, UNICEF and the Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results, could benefit from further strengthening.

Finding 8: Good economic governance. UNDP has supported the development and implementation of a range of digital platforms contributing to the enhancement of economic governance in Madagascar. This has notably resulted in an improved capacity of the public administration for tax collection and procurement processes in certain regions, as well as empowering civil society organizations to monitor the effective implementation of the SDGs. These platforms have encountered operational challenges and implementation delays, and their long-term sustainability is yet to be demonstrated, partly due to the ad hoc nature of this support.

In terms of resource mobilization, both the GBCI project and its extension PSMODD, implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, supported activities aimed at precise localization of taxpayers to facilitate their enumeration. The objective was to broaden the tax base of four districts within the urban municipality of Tamatave.¹¹⁸ The support involved enhancing the capabilities of administration technicians and engaging a consulting firm to develop a software tool (G-IFPB, delivered in 2021) for the utilization of the collected and inputted data. UNDP's support to the real estate tax management system led to a 30 percent increase in property revenues in 2021 compared to 2020 in this municipality.¹¹⁹ Activities are set to continue, with the census of economic activities in the first arrondissement, and data entry for the third and fourth arrondissements.¹²⁰ Delays occurred in the execution of these activities due to a shortage of computers for data input, delays in compensating teams within the municipality, and errors in data input that are currently being rectified. As of now, a software update is necessary for proper data utilization, prompted by an evaluation of its utility.¹²¹ However, the sustainability of these supports, which could be ensured through a strong national ownership of the process, remains to be demonstrated.

In the area of financial monitoring, PSMODD supported the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (ARMP) in operationalizing an e-Government Procurement (e-GP) platform for the dematerialization of public procurement processes. The goal was to enhance transparency and equity in awarding contracts

¹¹⁶ UNDP, "Final Evaluation Report: Development Planning, Private Sector and Employment Project," March 2021; ROAR, 2020.

¹¹⁷ The Constitution of Madagascar stipulates that the evaluation of public policies must be carried out by the National Assembly, without specifying that it is the sole responsibility of the Assembly. The General Secretariat of the Presidency is waiting for the end of the mandate of deputies in the National Assembly to be able to restart the process and finalize the PNEval.

¹¹⁸ UNDP, "Annual Work Plan of the Strategic Planning and Implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 Project," 15 December 2021; UNDP, "Interim Report of the Final Evaluation of the Budget Management for Inclusive Growth and MDG/ODG Achievement (GBCI)-2015–2020 Project," 9 February 2021.

¹¹⁹ ROAR, 2021.

¹²⁰ At the beginning, the support consisted only of the land census. The Tax Department then proposed to include the census of economic activities in the various districts in the spirit of fighting against the informal sector.

¹²¹ The software requires some parameterizations for the exploitation of data related to the census of economic activities, and is currently functional only for the processing of data on real estate income.

while achieving time and cost savings. This was achieved through training sessions and the creation of an instructional video disseminated to 31 central and decentralized ministries and institutions.¹²² The primary objective of the video is to promote platform usage. A basic version of e-GP is operational nationwide, although delays occurred due to resource inadequacies and in the delivery of some key deliverables, the COVID-19 pandemic (travel restrictions), and the adaptation time required by ARMP to take ownership of the platform.¹²³ Training in the use of the e-GP platform is also ongoing at the local government level to enable its utilization over the next three years, although UNDP's assistance at this level remains limited.

UNDP also supports the Director of Economic Cooperation in the collection of data and the creation of a centralized electronic portal, bringing together data on development aid (as well as other information such as the socio-economic profile and development plans in Madagascar), relying in part on existing databases that have been developed with UNDP support.¹²⁴ UNDP support would also be considered for information collection on regions and the Grand Sud.

UNDP has provided support in capacity-building and awareness-raising for non-governmental stakeholders on monitoring the implementation of the SDGs under the PSMODD.¹²⁵ In 2021 the VITRANA platform was created to establish an integrated framework for Malagasy civil society organizations in monitoring the SDGs. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the organization of training workshops, and these CSOs are currently in discussion with UNDP to resume the operationalization of the platform. An integrated platform was also supposed to be developed to involve the private sector in achieving the SDGs, but this could not be put in place due to the difficulty of mobilizing the different private sector groups that have been heavily impacted by the negative effects of COVID-19. Nonetheless, UNDP is in discussions with the Group of Enterprises of Madagascar (Groupement des Entreprises de Madagascar) to push this initiative in the next cycle.¹²⁶ The project also supported the Independent Public Procurement Observatory, a CSO established with UNDP's assistance during the previous cycle through the GBCI project in order to enhance its capabilities in monitoring public procurement. However, the effective functioning of this CSO could not be confirmed by the evaluation.

Finding 9: Strategic support for the promotion of economic activities. While UNDP supported government agencies to promote economic development, the outcomes of this approach are mixed, especially concerning entrepreneurship promotion, owing to the ad hoc nature of the provided assistance. Despite the beneficial pandemic impact assessment model and support to the Directorate-General of Economy and Planning, the Diversification of the Malagasy Economy project targeting the ratification of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) progresses slowly. The non-ratification of the AfCFTA by Madagascar is partly due to limited competitiveness of local industries and a lack of coordination among involved ministries.

The planning component of the Development Planning, Private Sector, and Employment Programme (PDSPE, 2015–2022), implemented by the Directorate-General of Economy and Planning within the Ministry of Economy and Finance, had previously provided a pandemic-related macroeconomic forecasting model

¹²² UNDP, "Annual Work Plan of the Strategic Planning and Implementation of the SDGs"; ROAR, 2021.

¹²³ ROAR, 2020. The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (ARMP) plans to gradually make the necessary improvements to the platform. For example, it was designed for 500 units of need, and adjustments were made by ARMP technicians to add management units to meet the needs of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

¹²⁴ The Permanent Technical Secretariat for Aid Coordination (STPCA) in the Prime Minister's Office managed the development assistance database (the Aid Management Platform, funded by UNDP). With the dissolution of STPCA, the Aid Management Platform was temporarily transferred to the Ministry of Economy and Finance until the end of 2022.

¹²⁵ UNDP, "Annual Work Plan of the Strategic Planning and Implementation of the SDGs."

¹²⁶ ROAR, 2021.

during the prior UNDP programme cycle.¹²⁷ This model was used to assess the economic and sectoral impacts of the pandemic and to refine and direct the economic recovery plan, and has contributed to the development of analytical tools and economic studies focusing on the efficacy of economic policies amid the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²⁸ Furthermore, the project supported training for the Ministry of Economy and Planning, INSTAT, and for Madagascar's Centre for Research and Support in Economic Analysis (CREAM) on macroeconomic forecasting. During the COVID-19 period information technologies were utilized for training purposes.¹²⁹ Despite providing computers to CREAM, the activities aimed at enhancing its research and scholarly publication efforts were not successful, leading to the centre's dissolution in 2020. However, these activities do support the internal economic forecasting initiatives of the Directorate-General of Economy and Planning.

UNDP also supports Madagascar's economic diversification through export promotion under the Economic Diversification of Madagascar (DEM, 2022–2023) project, an extension of the planning component of PDSPE. DEM primarily seeks Madagascar's ratification of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement.¹³⁰ UNDP facilitated a national dialogue in November 2022 concerning the implications and challenges of AfCFTA, involving both the public and private sectors, along with experts from Africa, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the central AfCFTA. This event resulted in a roadmap to guide the integration process. Capacity-building activities were conducted for the private sector, national entities, and the Parliament in preparation for this event.

Despite these efforts, UNDP's advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives were insufficient to tilt the balance in favour of AfCFTA, given that Madagascar, one of the signatory countries, has not ratified it. Moreover, the existence of a roadmap does not guarantee ratification. The immediate integration of the country into AfCFTA, in a context in which Madagascar industries remain insufficiently competitive, presents a significant challenge to swiftly achieving consensus between the public and private sectors.¹³¹ Inconsistent engagement among relevant ministries is also evident, with the Ministry of Commerce taking a lead role, while other key ministries such as Foreign Affairs and Economy and Finance exhibit lesser commitment.

Despite these challenges, UNDP is developing a national strategy for Madagascar's integration into AfCFTA, which will be accompanied by a communication strategy and the establishment of a national AfCFTA council.¹³² UNDP is also negotiating with the African Development Bank to secure financial support (\$1 million) for AfCFTA ratification activities and has facilitated collaboration between the Ministry of Commerce and the Bank to develop their own project.

During this cycle the DEM project had envisioned various activities aimed at promoting an entrepreneur-friendly environment, such as micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises or industries (MSMEs/MSMIs) and cooperatives in blue and green economy sectors.¹³³ However, many originally planned

¹²⁷ The Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP) merged with the Ministry of Finance and Budget to form the Ministry of Economy and Finance in 2019. Prior to 2019 the development planning component of the PDSPE was implemented by the MEP.

¹²⁸ UNDP, "Final Evaluation Report: Development Planning Project, Private Sector and Employment"; ROAR, 2020.

¹²⁹ UNDP, "Final Evaluation Report."

¹³⁰ UNDP, "Portfolio Paper: Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development," February 2022. Madagascar has signed the agreement to establish the AfCFTA, but has not yet ratified it.

¹³¹ Studio Sifaka, "AfCFTA: A competitiveness to review for Madagascar," 24 October 2022.

¹³² UNDP, "Portfolio Paper."

¹³³ Ibid. This component of the project envisaged, inter alia, capacity-building of sectoral ministries (updating and implementation of industrial policy by integrating the green economy and the blue economy), entrepreneurial support and accompaniment structures, financial inclusion through the provision of financial risk mitigation mechanisms, and the professionalization of decent jobs to increase productivity.

activities were not implemented.¹³⁴ Promising sectors were identified through consultations with relevant ministries, complementing the findings of studies conducted under another UNDP project funded by the Rapid Financing Facility on value chains.¹³⁵ UNDP also engaged consulting firms in 2022 to conduct a feasibility study on micro-insurance for Malagasy small and medium-sized enterprises (including digitization of enrolment and beneficiary services) under the DEM project.¹³⁶ Additionally, UNDP is providing visual and digital financial education tools, expected to be available by June 2023. Nevertheless, challenges in operationalizing micro-insurance services through national partners are anticipated.

Finding 10: Access to renewable energy. UNDP's institutional capacity-building initiatives helped to strengthen Madagascar's institutional capacities in the energy sector but still face significant challenges. While these endeavours aim to address institutional instabilities, the anticipated outcomes are not consistently realized. The installation of solar power plants in the Grand Sud region has indeed facilitated electricity access for certain populations. However, financial issues and equipment quality concerns curtail their utilization, casting doubt on the financial sustainability of these projects. Collaborative efforts with other agencies and the ambitious endeavour of establishing the Malagasy Sovereign Fund also present challenges.

UNDP capacity-building activities at the institutional level have helped strengthen Madagascar's institutional capacities in the energy sector. The support targets training for technical staff of the Ministry of Energy and Hydrocarbons (MEH) to overcome challenges posed by institutional instability and to improve the sustainability of results. The institutional component of the Africa Mini-grids Project (2022–2025)¹³⁷ carried out a diagnosis with the MEH, provided a consultant (expert in modelling and in the preparation of tender documents and contracts in renewable energy, including mini-grids),¹³⁸ and supported the MEH in participating in international forums for resource mobilization in the sector (e.g., preparation of membership file to the International Renewable Energy Agency).¹³⁹ It also strengthened the digitization capabilities of the MEH technical department and has recruited an international service provider to set up a digital platform called Enterprise Content Management.¹⁴⁰ UNDP also provided South-South cooperation through its capacity-building of the Rural Electrification Development Agency, where UNDP supported the participation of their staff in pricing training in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. In addition to these capacity-building activities for technical services, UNDP also provided IT equipment and logistical support to the MEH for the organization of events (including World Energy Day in 2022 where UNDP was the second partner of the MEH) as well as two coordination meetings with international partners.

UNDP also contributes to the main indicator of the MEH through its territorial-level activities in the energy sector in the Grand Sud region (Androy and Atsimo-Andrefana), which counts the number of households with access to electricity. UNDP installed six solar power plants in six communes in the Grand Sud region

¹³⁴ The project encountered certain difficulties, particularly in terms of budget, human resources, and procurement, and had to prioritize. For example, the project was originally planned to have a private sector and employment specialist, a value chain and international trade specialist, and an inclusive finance specialist. In the end, the project had a project coordinator and an analyst in the private sector and international trade.

¹³⁵ UNDP, "UNDP COVID-19 2.0 Country Allocation Request, Rapid Financing Facility, Project Revival of the informal sector and resilience through the development of the green and blue value chain (2021–2022)." A consultant hired by UNDP produced an interim report on these studies, but the report was not shared. In addition, the project was also expected to create a fund pooling the resources of several partners to support the development of blue and green economy enterprises operating in the informal sector (including micro-insurance), but this fund did not materialize despite two meetings and the interest of several technical and financial partners. This is explained by the electoral context (with national elections scheduled for 9 November and 20 December 2023) and the lack of ownership by the national party on micro-insurance. The Economy Malagasy is resuming some of the activities planned in the Project Reviving the Informal Sector and Resilience, including micro-insurance.

¹³⁶ UNDP, "Portfolio Paper."

¹³⁷ Africa mini-grid programme, funded by the Global Environment Facility and supported by UNDP.

¹³⁸ UNDP, "PRODOC of the GEF-funded Mini-Networks Programme in Africa." UNDP has formulated several projects, for a total \$6 million, supporting the Ministry of Energy and Hydrocarbons in the preparation of tender documents and calls for expressions of interest, such as the development of micro-power plants and hydroelectric power in different regions of Madagascar.

¹³⁹ The International Renewable Energy Agency membership file has been submitted by the MEH for future membership.

¹⁴⁰ UNDP, "PRODOC Madagascar Project."

through the private sector and employment component of PDSPE (which were not originally planned and were developed with funding from the Russian Development Trust Fund). These energy solutions allowed targeted people in remote areas to moderately reduce their lighting costs. However, UNDP's energy solutions have been designed to serve only 200 households per site and the additional connections involve costs that are reflected in end-user tariffs. This poses affordability issues for the population, which therefore uses only 20 kWh per day per site while daily production reaches 46 kWh. In addition, the quality of the solar equipment installed is uneven and poses difficulties for management by private sector economic operators who have had to increase tariffs to end users (3,000 Ariary instead of 900 Ariary).¹⁴¹ Discussions are ongoing with Madagascar's Energy Regulatory Organization to find solutions to the tariff issues at stake. Among the other identified challenges, technical competence of personnel recruited by power plant managers, harsh working conditions in the Grand Sud, and difficulties in ensuring compliance with tripartite agreements among UNDP, communities, and managers are all noteworthy.

The Africa Mini-grids Project (AMP), partly financed by the COVID-19 response, had also planned for the electrification of five hospitals in Tulear and Fort-Dauphin, two of which are already in place and three are in progress.¹⁴² The essential oil extraction unit by the solar solution, installed under the National Adaptation Plan project (as part of the fight against deforestation), should be re-established with the support of Portfolio 3 of the current programmatic cycle for its upcoming operationalization.

The lack of use of electrical installations by households, for financial and/or sociocultural reasons, pushes UNDP to promote more competitive and productive electrical solutions, to raise awareness, and to encourage households to use the facilities. The AMP project had planned to install six mini-grids, including two in 2022, but these activities could not be carried out due to a lack of resources (especially in terms of co-financing and ownership expected by the different regions of PF 3). Nevertheless, six feasibility studies were conducted. An alternative solution is being implemented with the deployment of solar kits for productive use, although questions remain about the management method for the recovery of funds and the financial capacity of beneficiaries.

The AMP project is also working in synergy with the Integrated Renewable Energy Finance (FIER) project to identify innovative financing models that reduce subsidies in the renewable energy and mini-grid sector. The specificity of FIER is that UNDP works in coordination with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in this project, which is funded by the United Nations SDG Fund. The FIER consists of technical assistance for the implementation of three interconnected initiatives, namely: (i) the establishment of a sustainable energy incubator to support small start-up projects in the renewable energy sector (UNIDO component); (ii) a risk reduction facility for sufficiently mature projects, but for which co-financing is still lacking (provision of concessional loans and loan guarantees by UNCDF and grants by UNDP); and (iii) technical support for the creation of a sovereign wealth fund to finance large-scale strategic infrastructure projects, particularly in the context of public-private partnerships.¹⁴³

Implementation of the FIER project was planned for 2020–2022, but finally started officially in July 2022. The project faced difficulties and delays in the process of recruiting the different teams that had to implement the risk reduction facility. At this stage, only a few coordination meetings have been held, both among the three agencies and with the SDG Fund Secretariat.

¹⁴¹ UNDP has conducted separate calls for proposals for the establishment and management of solar projects. Economic operators did not participate in the call for tenders and the development of technical specifications for the recruitment of solar equipment suppliers.

¹⁴² UNDP, "PRODOC Madagascar Project."

¹⁴³ UNDP, UNCDF, UNIDO, Call for a joint programme on the financing component of SDGs, October–November 2021.

UNDP contributed technically to the drafting of the bill adopted by Parliament in August 2021 that led to the creation of the Malagasy Sovereign Fund, notably through an exchange of experience with the Senegalese Sovereign National Fund for Strategic Investments. This exchange of experience, an example of South-South cooperation, should enable the development of implementing decrees that will clarify the objective and priorities of the Sovereign Fund and its financing modalities, and will put in place adequate governance and transparency mechanisms. UNDP's willingness to support this process and to try to replicate the Emergency and Community Development Programme (PUDC) implemented in other African countries (e.g., Senegal, Togo) is not without risk, especially considering that the PUDC's support in these other countries has yet to be successful.¹⁴⁴

Finding 11: Empowerment of women and youth and participation in the green and blue economy. UNDP's efforts in the Grand Sud to provide economic opportunities to people through job creation, especially women and youth, are having only a modest impact on reducing poverty in target communities despite their strong relevance. The scale of these achievements is diluted by the limited scope, short duration, and fragmentation of the interventions implemented in a context where almost the entire population is in need of humanitarian assistance. It is weakened by the limited involvement of UNDP in the effective transfer of skills and accompanying measures to beneficiaries.

UNDP efforts in the Grand Sud to create an enabling economic environment for employment and income generation for vulnerable populations, especially women and youth, focus on building structures conducive to sustainable development, entrepreneurship, inclusion, and the integration of the private sector in order to improve productivity and incomes. Thanks to the alignment of the PDSPE project with other UNDP projects, UNDP's Labour-Intensive Public Works project (LIPW, Travaux à Haute Intensité de Main d'Oeuvre) has provided an opportunity to rehabilitate/reopen tracks and build small road infrastructures (rafts, bridges) that connect municipalities to the national road, while ensuring the granting of a start-up fund, especially for women and young people, for the launch of income-generating activities (goat breeding, sheep and poultry, small shops, short-cycle agriculture, etc.). This approach has enabled UNDP to materialize its support at the local level and make its interventions tangible for communities.

In 2020 the PDSPE had achieved greater results compared to previous years in terms of the number of vulnerable people who had effective access to income-generating activities (IGAs) and employment in the project intervention areas (8,507 beneficiaries compared to 3,988 in 2018 and 6,040 in 2017).¹⁴⁵ In addition, 60 percent of the beneficiaries of Cash for Work and IGA activities are women.¹⁴⁶ The most significant results in recent years include the rehabilitation of two hydro-agricultural complexes, the rehabilitation of the road between Lavanono and the coast, and the fixation of 700 hectares of dunes (see Annex 8). The hydro-agricultural complexes allowed 1,200 households living from agriculture in Tsihombe (Androy) to have access to water all year round. The road in Lavanono (Androy) allowed the fisherman from Fokontany to improve their access to markets in the district's capital, Beloha.¹⁴⁷ The dunes fixation in Faux Cap (Androy) has increased cultivable areas to 5,585 hectares in the target localities and increased agricultural production (rice, groundnuts, cassava) by about 25 percent, thus improving food security.¹⁴⁸ Collaboration with microfinance agencies has provided training on financial management to LIPW beneficiaries to ensure a lasting impact between LIPW activities and the improvement of their IGAs. Overall, the project shows a considerable gap between the target set at the beginning of the project (80,000 beneficiaries) and the

¹⁴⁴ See the 2022 Senegal and Togo ICPEs.

¹⁴⁵ UNDP, "Final Evaluation Report."

¹⁴⁶ ROAR, 2020.

¹⁴⁷ See video [here](#).

¹⁴⁸ ROAR, 2021. Watch video [here](#). See satellite images for 2023 [here](#).

cumulative result achieved at the end of 2020 (49,708 beneficiaries).¹⁴⁹ Many factors may explain these results, including the limited presence of private sector suppliers in the Grand Sud, the delays in material shipments given the remoteness of the intervention areas, the limited quality of local infrastructures, and delays in disbursing funds to service providers and beneficiaries. Last but not least, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions did not allow the project to complete its activities as planned.

The pooling of actions and activities of the PDSPE and AMP has enabled the establishment of economic transformation zones (ETZ) that give target communities the opportunity to experiment with access to a solar energy source and the possibility of improving the value chain of their products thanks to the proximity of a processing unit adapted to their local context. For example, in order to capitalize on the existence of the solar power plant in Tranoroa (Androy), an ETZ has been erected with a capacity of six rooms that can accommodate six economic income-generating activities. This intervention also includes trainings on the development of a business plan.

Similarly, the PDSPE and DEM projects, which focus on the development of an environment conducive to the promotion of MSME/MSMI entrepreneurship, allowed the setting up of financial mechanisms/services (GVEC) to support young entrepreneurs. These mechanisms, which also include an incubation service for innovative projects, are expected to enable them to develop their IGAs in the green and blue economy sector. GVEC offers an opportunity for vulnerable households who wish to access financial services to manage their household liquidity, cope with life events, and/or invest in IGAs. The partnership with microfinance institutions has provided opportunities for women and men to acquire training on financial management as well as the development of a simplified business plan to ensure a return on investment and the realization of IGAs at the household level. The combination of the two financial tools has facilitated the implementation of business opportunities at the household level.

The implementation of GVECs has started well, but after four years of implementation, community members have adopted the mechanism without observing a change in the behaviour of savings towards investment, especially women who are the most likely to have embraced the concept. The members have in most cases remained in the savings aspect of the mechanism without really practicing the credit aspect. This situation stems from the inadequacy of accompanying and coaching measures by UNDP with the target community so that the latter has time to assimilate the scope of this structure on their ability to invest in the development of their blue and green economic activities for more impact and effects on their IGAs, and thus increase their resilience to potential crises.

The interviews with the target populations and the field visits of the infrastructure sites carried out (tracks, rafts, solar centres, economic transformation zones, dune stabilization, GVEC, etc.) revealed that the PDSPE and AMP projects support the improvement of IGAs and give communities the opportunity to organize themselves into associations/unions in order to increase the development of value chains in promising sectors. However, the community management mode with the establishment of management committees has not made it possible to sustain the activities, except for the maintenance of the dunes.¹⁵⁰ UNDP has therefore handed over the management and maintenance to private operators who rent the facilities (and whose funds, raised by the community, will be used for the development of the locality), with a decentralized technical services framework. Only the fixing of the dunes has been more than satisfactory for the community, especially women, in relation to their level of production and yield in agriculture. However, discussions with interlocutors highlighted a lack of implementation of an effective transfer of skills by UNDP to the target communities so that they can maintain the infrastructure put in place and acquire the inputs

¹⁴⁹ "PDSPE Annual Report 2019."

¹⁵⁰ UNDP, "Final Evaluation Report."

necessary for their proper functioning. It can be noted that this situation stems from the fact that UNDP's approach is more oriented towards the implementation of activities and not towards the achievement of expected results, despite the fact that the selection committee has judged the financial viability of the proposed projects. In addition, this approach has a detrimental impact on the sustainability of the actions undertaken, as it leaves the beneficiary community feeling disillusioned.

Finding 12: Transition from the informal to the formal economy. UNDP support has made it possible to carry out a number of actions aimed at providing young people with administrative and financial mechanisms (YouthConnekt, basket fund) to support them in the creation and formalization of their micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises or industries. However, the late inclusion of the private sector and the lack of a joint and concerted strategic approach between UNDP and the private sector has undermined the potential of this approach to achieve meaningful results.

UNDP had supported the government in the creation of a basket fund in 2021, in complementarity with another initiative on the establishment of a national industrial development fund set up by the Industrialization and Financial Sector Support Project financed by the African Development Bank. Indeed, the COVID-19 health crisis has highlighted the fragility of the Malagasy economy, characterized by a significant level of informality. It became necessary for the government-UNDP partnership to stimulate the transition to a formal economy. The establishment of this basket fund prompted the identification and prioritization of the informal sector in the fields of the green and blue economies, with the holding of a sector prioritization workshop that counted on the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

With a view to improving the business environment and promoting entrepreneurship, UNDP strengthened the capacities of intermediary bodies (Union of Industries of Madagascar and Malagasy Employers' Association) and contributed to the creation of Approved Management Centres to encourage financial de-risking for the benefit of MSMEs, MSMLs, and cooperatives. Within the Malagasy Employers' Association, the Management Centres that were created have two objectives: (i) to allow its members to have accounting and financial statements up to standards to facilitate group negotiations with the administration, financial partners, and potential investors; and (ii) facilitate the formalization of companies operating in the informal sector in order to ensure their access to the banking system and thus allow them to develop their business.¹⁵¹ Training was organized and carried out in the capitals of the Analamanga and Atsimo Andrefana regions in order to strengthen the capacity of MSMEs/MSMLs operating in different areas of the informal sector and to encourage their formalization. This approach supports the government's initiative to formalize the private sector and its MSMEs/MSMLs, and addresses an observation made by intermediary bodies highlighting the deindustrialization and increased informality of the Malagasy economy. Indeed, the intermediary organizations have noted two salient points on entrepreneurship in Madagascar, namely: (i) a significant number of enterprises and/or industries in the formal sector have moved into the informal sector, due to unfair competition from the informal sector in the market in the face of the inaction and passivity of the State; and (ii) the disappearance of industries in Madagascar, pushing economic actors to focus on the export of raw materials. This disappearance of the industry is largely due to the lack of tax incentives to replace obsolete industrial machinery with newer, more efficient, and more profitable machines for market-competitive products. It is also due to the lack of adequate financial provision that would allow investment in more efficient machines. Finally, there is a lack of non-tariff barriers to protect infant industries vis-à-vis imported products.

¹⁵¹ Madagascar Newsroom, "Business promotion: Launch of the MPMA CGA," <https://www.madagascarnewsroom.com/2022/04/madagascar-promotion-entreprises-MPAMA-CGA-FIVMPAMA.html?fbclid=IwAR07TMnEKCSuFqRihucgVJFYZChI0uFfZdPUXQ0SxFO5thQG4mEj7I5-QMs>.

However, based on the interviews with key informants, the performance of this UNDP partnership with intermediary agencies was limited by the late inclusion of intermediary agencies in the implementation of PF2 interventions. Indeed, even though the private sector is represented on the steering committee, interventions were implemented over a short period of time. The short timeframe given to the initiative did not allow them to develop a common vision and strategy to support a collaborative and seamless transition from the informal to the formal economy. This gap has not led to a transformational change in attitudes within the informal sector, or in the perception of economic operators vis-à-vis the quality of governance and its ability to provide sustainable business opportunities.

Implementation of the project Revival of the Informal Sector and Resilience through the Rapid Financing Mechanism with the Ministry of Innovation, Trade, and Entrepreneurship also facilitated the realization of a study and the prioritization of the promising sectors to be supported to facilitate their formalization. However, the delay in the provision of resources for the implementation of activities has limited the supervision and support of individual entrepreneurs and MSMEs/MSMIs in the informal sector designed to improve their business model, functioning, market access, and integration into key value chains. These efforts and processes were nonetheless important in incentivizing formalization.

For several years, support organizations such as international NGOs and United Nations agencies have set up pilot village financial structures in their respective areas of intervention. This situation stems from the fact that there was an institutional and regulatory vacuum governing this community financial structure, considering it de facto in the informal economy. To protect and formalize these village financial structures, UNDP's support to the Ministry of Economy and Finance led to the promulgation of Order No. 632/2023 of 12 January 2023¹⁵² on the management of Non-Subject Entities, with Article 2.3 of the Law on Microfinance and Savings Groups. This initiative aimed to ensure the security of funds at the community level and to encourage the pooling of savings within the framework of an investment mechanism available and accessible at the local level. For the time being, this regulatory text has not been promulgated or disseminated at the local level, which prevents the analysis of its impact and effects at the community level. However, at the central level this promulgation allowed the formalization of the village financial structure.

2.3 Environment and climate change

Outcome 3. By 2030 actors at different levels effectively implement measures to conserve, preserve and enhance biodiversity and natural capital so that the environment and natural resources are pillars of economic growth, sustainable development and improved living conditions.

Related outputs

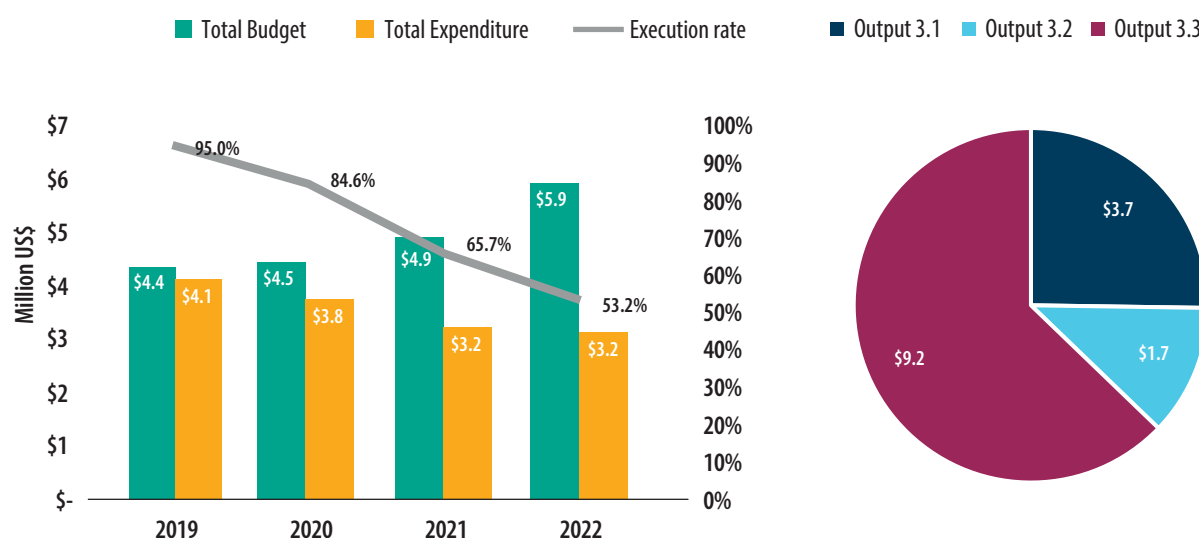
Output 3.1. : Comprehensive solutions for sustainable landscape management, including terrestrial and marine protected areas, labelled areas, wetlands, and catchment areas, through reforestation and forest fire prevention.

Output 3.2. : Targeted communities supported to access land, capital, and water; and to sustainably manage natural resources.

¹⁵² Guide for the authorization to practice entities, referred to in article 2.3 of the Microfinance Law, <http://www.tresorpublic.mg/tresorpublic/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/GUIDE-ENS.pdf>.

During the period 2019–2023 a total of seven projects related to Outcome 3 on environment and climate change were implemented with a budget of \$19.7 million (22.4 percent of the total programme budget) and expenditure of \$14.3 million (21 percent of total programme expenditure), representing an average implementation rate of 72.7 percent over this period. Projects under this outcome were mainly implemented by the National Implementation Modality, with five projects representing 78.2 percent of Outcome 3 expenditure, while two projects representing 21.8 percent of expenditure were implemented directly by the UNDP Direct Implementation Modality. Outcome 3 projects were largely funded by the Global Environment Fund (GEF) (55.6 percent of outcome expenditure), UNDP (39.3 percent), and the Green Climate Fund (4.5 percent).

FIGURE 7: Evolution of budget and expenditure for environment and climate change, 2019–2022



Source: Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of 17 March 2023.

Finding 13: Climate change adaptation planning and financing. Desertification and curbing biodiversity loss has fallen short of expectations, primarily due to challenges faced by UNDP in effectively collaborating with key national stakeholders, limited financial management capacities of partners, external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and internal bureaucratic hurdles within UNDP related to recruitment and procurement.

With the financial support of the Green Climate Fund and the involvement of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) and the Bureau on Climate Change and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (BN-CCCREDD+), UNDP designed and initiated the project ‘Medium-term planning for adaptation in climate-sensitive sectors in Madagascar’ (or NAP Project). This project, launched in 2020, aimed to reduce the country’s vulnerability to climate change by strengthening the integration of adaptation into development planning, mid-term planning, and budgetary frameworks. The final evaluation of the project, however, noted that its effectiveness was unsatisfactory and that its relevance was put into question by the lack of involvement of the national partners.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Congo, Y. and Andriamparanony, M., “Évaluation finale du projet: Planification à moyen terme pour l’adaptation dans les secteurs sensibles au climat à Madagascar,” 2022.

The underlying objective of this project was to support the government's efforts to complete its NAP, which despite initial efforts dating back to 2012 had not yet been completed. However, national partners, namely the MEDD, unilaterally decided to move forward with the finalization of its NAP, with the support of other international partners, and without informing or waiting for the contributions of the NAP-GEF project, thereby undermining the purpose of this project. At the heart of this disagreement lies the reluctance of the MEDD (to which the BN-CCCREDD+ is attached) to collaborate with UNDP under the Direct Implementation Modality, most notably when vertical funds are into play.

The micro-assessment conducted under the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) highlighted that the financial management systems and control frameworks of the MEDD posed a major risk to the project implementation, a finding that prohibits UNDP and agencies adhering to the HACT to rely on the National Implementation Modality. This fact was known by the MEDD when the project document was signed.

While MEDD reports that it has been able to work with other development partners that do not subscribe to the HACT (such as UNEP), this stance towards UNDP severely jeopardized UNDP's efforts surrounding this project, and also in the field of environment and climate change.

The NAP project nonetheless achieved a few relevant activities, such as the production of a risk and vulnerability assessment of the water sector in the Grand Sud that was used to propose adaptation options for the region. The project also sensitized local actors from the Grand Sud, including private sector actors, on the NAP. Apart from building the capacities of the actors concerned, the project produced information to facilitate advocacy with the government for the drafting of the finance law, including the review of the law's nomenclature.

As the NAP was adopted in 2021 prior to the completion of this project, its work plan had to be amended and many activities were cancelled. According to the final evaluation of the project, it executed only 19 percent of its budget and will have to reconstitute part of the unused funds. In addition to these challenges, project implementation was affected by lengthy recruitment processes, staff turnover, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Rio project was the other strategic project implemented by UNDP during this cycle. It aimed at strengthening capacities at systemic, institutional, and individual levels in Madagascar so that the country is able to meet its commitments under the three Rio Conventions. Started in 2017 in collaboration with the MEDD, the project obtained \$1.95 million in funding from the Global Environment Fund and \$200,000 from UNDP.¹⁵⁴

The expected results of this project included: (1) the production of a national sustainable development strategy/plan fully integrating the obligations of the Rio Convention; (2) the mobilization of funding resources for activities to build capacities developed under the project; (3) the establishment of an Environmental Management Information System to improve monitoring and evaluation of global environmental impacts and trends at the national level; (4) the establishment of strengthened institutional structures and mechanisms for the application of obligations taken under the Rio Conventions and in sectoral and regional development planning frameworks; and (5) public awareness and sensitization on the application of the Rio Conventions. However, implementation of this project was "severely delayed"

¹⁵⁴ The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, also commonly known as UN Climate), the Convention on Biological Diversity (also known as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

for various reasons, including the “slow and complex decision-making and approval processes” according to its mid-term evaluation conducted in 2021.¹⁵⁵ As for the NAP project, the contentious relationship with the MEDD also complicated project implementation.

For instance, the first objective aiming to produce a national sustainable development strategy is unlikely to be achieved as the project could only sensitize the members of a Working Group so that they support the Rio obligations integration during the development of the Madagascar Emergence Plan. The project has also analysed national sectoral policies and strategies (water, mining, oil and gas, local governance) and their degree of alignment to the three Rio conventions. UNDP also contributed to the mapping of potential funding partners and to the development of a resource mobilization strategy, but the latter was still being finalized at the time of the evaluation.

Progress towards the goal of establishing an information system for environmental management, of strengthening institutional structures, and of raising public awareness on the conventions was also limited. Regarding the environmental information management system, the project was still at the stage of defining a strategy for setting up such a system in 2021. Yet two years later the evaluation team observed that, while multiple information systems existed, the country still lacked a centralized environmental information system. In terms of institutional strengthening, a strategy for the Inter-Ministerial Environment Commission for each province as agreed with the Environment and Sustainable Development Managing Board, with the participation of 24 men and 21 women, was put in place and a capacity-building plan is being developed. In terms of awareness-raising, the project broadcasted a few communication campaigns via radio and television as well as through direct sensitization efforts at the local level by working with youth and women associations. A sensitization guide is also being developed with the World Wide Fund for Nature. Lastly, the project included a component aiming to promote IGA and job creation, which was scaled up after the pandemic by intervening in the Itasy region, where women helped to put in place composters and nurseries.

This project implemented by the MEDD has experienced its share of delays, notably due to the lengthy recruitment process. For example, the project was officially launched in November 2017, whereas the recruitment of the project team was not completed until mid-2018. It was also noted that the project was without a coordinator for nearly six months in 2020, further delaying its implementation. The key bottleneck noted by the evaluation is, however, that the initial approach for the implementation of this project, which consisted in the hiring of five consultants to lead each of the five components of the project, was inadequate, as the project implementation required a much broader range of expertise than what was initially planned. Unable to recruit all the individual experts in a timely manner, in particular because of COVID-19, UNDP finally opted, in 2023, to hire a consulting firm to finalize the project. This procurement process was still underway at the time of the evaluation.

In relation to the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity, UNDP finally supported the government in the implementation of the BIOFIN project, a global programme piloted by UNDP and the GEF that is currently being implemented in Madagascar with a budget of \$650,000 over seven years.¹⁵⁶ Its key objective is to (a) support the design of a biodiversity financial plan, and (b) to support its rollout. At the moment of the evaluation, UNDP was only completing the design of a biodiversity financing plan. While this project was still ongoing, its implementation has also been significantly hampered by lengthy recruitment processes attributable to UNDP’s red tape, but also to the high turnover at the level of the MEF and the MEDD, the

¹⁵⁵ UNDP Madagascar and GEF Mid-term Evaluation Final Report, “Building National Capacities to Meet Global Environmental Obligations within the Framework of Sustainable Development Priorities – RIO Project.”

¹⁵⁶ BIOFIN is a \$58 million programme managed by UNDP-GEF under the Ecosystems and Biodiversity Team implemented in partnership with the European Commission and the Governments of Belgium, Flanders, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

project's two main partners. Indeed, since 2019, when the project coordinator was recruited, there have been four Secretary-Generals heading the MEDD and three heading the MEF. It consequently took nearly two and a half years to put in place a steering committee. In addition, the MEDD's reluctance to work with UNDP, as mentioned above, is negatively affecting the implementation of this project, although to a lesser extent than the projects mentioned above, since the MEF is, in this case, the key counterpart.

Finding 14: Sustainable landscape management. UNDP has capitalized on the achievements of its previous support aimed at strengthening the national system of Protected Areas (PA) by contributing to the creation of the first seven Community Protected Areas in the country. Although community-based management mechanisms for the latter still need to be strengthened and the support in peripheral areas to reduce atrophic pressures on the Protected Areas has not been fully successful, the innovative nature of this approach should be emphasized.

UNDP capitalized on the achievements of the Managed Resources Protected Areas project of the previous cycle, which had extended the PA system¹⁵⁷ and had substantially amended the PA management code.¹⁵⁸ These reforms had notably created new types of PAs, including that of Community Protected Areas (CPAs) that could be established and managed voluntarily by local communities.

The Landscape Approach for the Conservation and Management of Madagascar's Threatened Biodiversity, focusing on the dry and thorny forest landscape of the Atsimo Andrefana region (APAA), a five-year project implemented in partnership with the MEDD, initiated the creation of seven CPAs in the region. In 2021, 131,907 hectares of CPA had been demarcated (exceeding the project's target of 100,000 hectares), of which 81,197 had communal development plans.¹⁵⁹ At the time of the evaluation, these seven CPAs were expected to obtain temporary protection status, a necessary step for obtaining their full protection, although that step was still in the hands of the government.

In addition, UNDP has provided various frameworks and tools for different regional and local institutions and CSOs partnering with the project to manage newly created CPAs, such as the Environmental Threat Management Guidance Document, the Spatial Reporting and Monitoring Tool for Law Enforcement Monitoring, the Observatory of Biodiversity and Regional Ecosystems, the Biodiversity-Sensitive Territorial Planning Tool, and the Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool (METT). In 2022 four CPAs were managed using the METT.¹⁶⁰

At the time of the evaluation, UNDP and its local partners were working to mobilize and train the communities that will be managing these CPAs. Each site already has a management committee composed of a social committee (in charge of the application of the Dina), an environmental committee (which conducts forest patrols, monitoring, and afforestation), and a development committee (responsible for IGAs).

Malagasy legislation allows for the transfer of natural resource management and PAs to communities. In these cases, as is the case for the CPAs supported by the project, the Dina is used as a legally recognized governance tool. The Dina covering the CPAs are supported by the project for their certification by the Court of First Instance, but these processes conducted with the social committee of the CPAs have not yet been concluded.

¹⁵⁷ Ten new Protected Areas have been granted final status, covering a total area of 1,464,973 hectares.

¹⁵⁸ Law No. 2015-005 of 26 February 2015 revising the Protected Areas Management Code.

¹⁵⁹ See http://ober.mg/ober/wp-content/uploads/elementor/thumbs/Zone_Etude_Ir-scaled-p75rpoiqr2ctbw8pqyyclnh91t4gnxzupbg3j4l8u8.jpg.

¹⁶⁰ See <http://ober.mg/>.

The environmental committee has worked, with the support of UNDP, to strengthen the capacity of forest guards and patrols that operate in 13 communes peripheral to the CPAs. The objective of these patrols is to reduce anthropogenic pressures on CPAs, which are still subject to intrusion for firewood cutting, charcoaling, land clearing, etc. The success of this support remains mixed and is hampered by insecurity, the voluntary nature of patrols, and a lack of resources.

Finally, the development committee responsible for IGAs works on the economic resilience of populations to reduce anthropogenic pressures on CPAs. To this end, in partnership with the Regional Directorate of Environment and Sustainable Development, six ecovillages have been created and are functional around the CPAs of the Atsimo Andrefana region. These have been equipped with improved stoves and recycling/composting bins but also with equipment to enable them to undertake IGAs, including solar kits and beekeeping equipment. However, the IGA component of the APAA project was unsuccessful according to field visits to the region. Indeed, beekeeping equipment was not used, as the practice was not well assimilated by the populations, while solar kits were not used for commercial purposes.

Despite these efforts, the governance of each CPA remains weak, and communities do not yet have control over environmental conservation. Indeed, from July 2021 to June 2022 the average CPA score was 52 percent on the METT. The lowest score was 46 percent and the highest score was 57 percent, indicating that communities and their management committees still require coaching.

Despite the relatively long duration of the project, the achievement of the expected results has been delayed by the slow recruitment process of teams, by cumbersome administrative procedures that are centralized at the UNDP office in Antananarivo (the APAA project is not part of PF3), by turnover among staff of project partners, as well as by rural insecurity, crime, and theft.

Finding 15: Climate resilience. UNDP has deployed various strategies at the local level to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations to climate change. Despite the usefulness of such contributions as hydrometeorological stations with weather forecast panels for local fisherman, these efforts tended to have a limited reach and a low sustainability prospect.

Through the Improving Adaptive Capacity and Resilience of Rural Communities to Climate Change (PACARC) project, UNDP contributed to the establishment of meteorological and hydrological stations in collaboration with the Directorate General of Meteorology (DGM). The stations are part of a national network that significantly improves the country's ability to generate scientific information needed to cope with the effects of climate change. However, some stations no longer send data to the national information system, and the DGM does not have a budget for their operation and maintenance. The DGM's provision of a car was not sufficient to allow it to follow up. Installations at some stations experienced long delays or did not occur at all. The acquisition of this equipment coincided with the COVID-19 crises and the supplier was unable to travel to Madagascar. In the meantime, the project was closed and could no longer support the cost of installing the stations. In the wake of PACARC, PF3 plans to install new hydrometeorological stations in the Androy and Anosy region. However, it is not clear whether lessons from the implementation of PACARC were considered for the iteration of this initiative in those regions.

The use of the weather forecasting information system through SMS and agrometeorological information panels (Mitao Forecast) with the NGO Aquatic Service has reduced material and human damage among fishermen. The SMS information system continues to be operational, but this is not the case with the information panels, which have not been updated for a long time (estimated at several months at the time of the ICPE). Nonetheless, their presence was highly appreciated by the population when they were updated and utilized.

Through PF3, 144 local actors participated in trainings on promoting climate change and risk and disaster management in their localities, notably through the development of management and monitoring tools in 2022. Local structures (prefectures, regions, districts, and communes) of the three southern regions of Madagascar have also been trained on the texts governing disaster risk management (DRR). As a result of the capacity-building workshops, local DRR committees were set up in the communes targeted by the interventions and members were appointed. The decree establishing communal risk and disaster management committees in the Anosy region has been signed.

Thanks to a partnership with the regional branch of the National Bureau for Risk and Disaster Management in Androy, 82 local structures learned their roles and responsibilities on DRR and climate change. UNDP has also strengthened risk and disaster management capacity in the Analamanga region through the provision of materials and equipment.

Due to lack of resources, the establishment of a drought early warning system in the Grand Sud was not carried out in 2022, although it is supposed to contain contingency plans and harmonized and operational frameworks for early actions. Thanks to financial support from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, implementation of the system will start in 2023. Several other operations depend on the implementation of this activity.

Through PF3, six local fire management structures were established and strengthened. In partnership with the Regional Directorate of Environmental and Sustainable Development branch in the region of Analamanga, a capacity-building workshop on wildfire and bushfire prevention and management was attended by local fire committees and environmental management committees. The prefecture of Toliara coordinated this multisectoral approach, the objective of which is to facilitate the implementation of the regional firefighting strategy, also developed with UNDP support. It is estimated that this support would have reduced by 15 percent the number of fires in protected areas and natural resource management transfer sites in the Atsimo Andrefana region between 2021 and 2022.

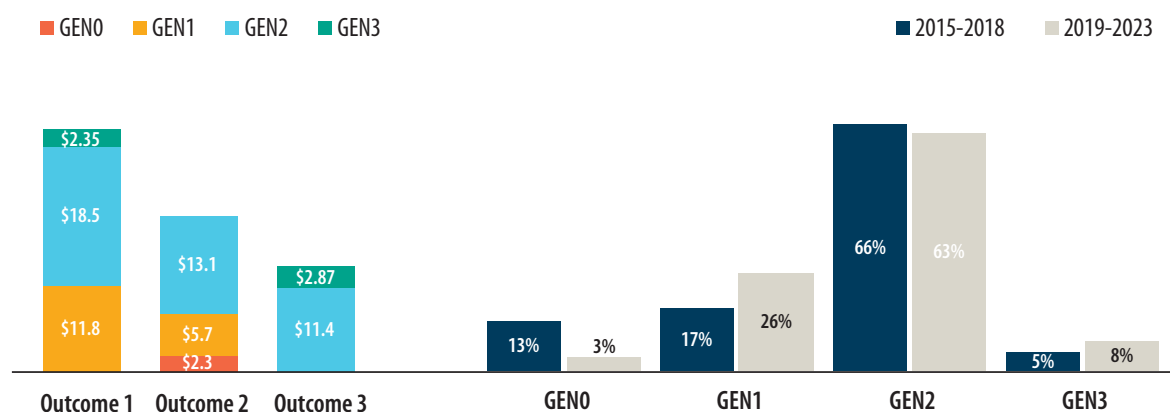
2.4 Cross-cutting issues

Finding 16: Gender equality. UNDP has reported dedicating a major part of its resources to interventions that contribute significantly to gender equality, but the available data does not confirm this. Consequently, gender mainstreaming in project planning, monitoring, and implementation still needs to be strengthened. By failing to address the underlying causes of gender inequality, the transformative reach of UNDP interventions remains limited.

UNDP's engagements in the area of gender equality are reflected in its financial commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment for the period 2019–2023. For example, the country office reported that 70.6 percent of its programme expenditure was devoted to interventions that were expected to contribute significantly to gender equality (GEN2) or have gender equality as its main objective (GEN3). Data presented in Figure 8 below shows that 63.2 percent of expenditure was classified as GEN2 and 7.7 percent of expenditure as GEN3. UNDP's global strategy for the promotion of gender equality (2022–2025) sets the objective that 70 percent of financial expenditures by the country office be devoted to gender equality through GEN2 and GEN3 interventions, which means that UNDP Madagascar has achieved this objective over the period 2019–2023. Outcome 1 has the most GEN2 expenditures, followed by Outcome 2 and then Outcome 3. In contrast, Outcome 3 has the most GEN3 expenditures.

The proportion of programme expenditures based on gender markers for the period evaluated (2019–2023) is comparable to allocations in the previous cycle (2015–2018), with a notable exception related to the 10 percentage-point decrease in the proportion of expenditures that do not contribute to gender equality at all (GEN0). On the other hand, the proportion of expenditures contributing to a lesser extent to gender equality (GEN1) increased approximately in line with the decrease in GEN0 expenditures.

FIGURE 8: Distribution of expenditures by gender marker and outcomes of the country programme in US\$ millions (left) and comparison of the share of programme expenditures by gender marker 2015–2018 and 2019–2023 (right)



Source: Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of 17 March 2023.

However, the analysis of GEN3 projects and their respective results raises doubts about the validity of the project classification in Atlas, the corporate information system. For example, the NAP-GEF project is categorized as a GEN3 project with gender equality as its main objective (it is the only GEN3 project under Outcome 3). However, the project document and its evaluation refer to a project whose contribution to gender equality is at best indirect, even if, at the level of its outputs, it sought to conduct risk and vulnerability analyses in the Grand Sud. A similar analysis could be made for the PROSUD project under Outcome 1, which is also rated as a GEN3 project, but the project is ranked as score 1 on the PBF's gender analysis scale, which corresponds to a contribution to gender and women's empowerment issues, but not a significant one.¹⁶¹ Although the results of the PROSUD project remain significant, these examples raise questions about the rigor of the analysis and reporting of the contribution of UNDP projects on gender issues. As such, the actual GEN3 expenses are much lower than what the office has reported.

In terms of planning, there is no in-depth analysis of the underlying causes of gender inequality and discrimination in Madagascar or, more specifically, in UNDP areas or areas of intervention. UNDP, like the entire Country Team, relies on the 2019 Common Country Analysis, which, according to the 2022 Gender Scorecard exercise, does not meet the minimum requirements for gender mainstreaming. Analyses on this issue are limited to brief contextual descriptions in project documents, which are insufficient to develop a strategic and integrated response to gender issues in the UNDP country or regions of intervention. The Country Programme Document (CPD) mainstreams gender in its results framework at the indicator level

¹⁶¹ PBF projects are classified on the basis of the same criteria as the gender marker used by UNDP, with the exception that it includes a budgetary requirement. GEN3 requires that over 80 percent be aimed at gender equality and women empowerment, GEN2 requires 30–79 percent, and GEN1 require 15–30 percent. The PROSUD Project is considered as score 1, especially owing to the fact that the level of budget foreseen for gender issues is 22 percent, i.e. less than the 30 percent threshold.

adequately. The CPD also has two outputs out of ten targeting women, youth, and marginalized groups (Outputs 1.2 and 2.1), although no gender specific output was developed under Outcome 3. The portfolio monitoring system is currently being established, which prevents the evaluation from making a statement on the issue. Monitoring at the project level is generally of limited quality, which consequently affects the quality of monitoring of gender issues at this level (see Finding 23).

Within the governance portfolio there is a deliberate consideration for gender mainstreaming and support for women's empowerment through various direct and indirect interventions. A notable instance is the utilization of counseling and mediation services provided by legal clinics, predominantly accessed by women. This underscores the initiative's commitment to fortifying the respect for women's rights. The initiative to regularize civil servants also aims, for example, to achieve a representation of over 50 percent women. The participation of women in elections, as voters, is also an area where UNDP is intervening prior to the upcoming 2023 presidential elections. However, and as noted above, the achievements of the SACEM project highlight that awareness-raising and electoral registration are insufficient to enable the effective participation of women in elections. Indeed, despite the efforts of UNDP'S other development partners, the participation rate of women increased by only 1 percent between the 2013 and 2018 elections. This last point highlights that simply targeting women does not guarantee significant results in terms of gender equality, unlike interventions that seek to take into account the differentiated needs between men and women (gender-sensitive approach) or that seek to transform the norms, values, and cultural and power structures at the root of inequalities and discrimination (gender transformative approach).¹⁶²

In the areas of growth and environment (Outcomes 2 and 3), UNDP's approach to gender has focused on targeting women rather than sensitive or transformative interventions for women. Indeed, this targeting has been mainly articulated within the framework of IGAs, while UNDP has ensured women's participation in these activities by facilitating their access to equipment (solar kits, improved stoves, etc.), savings, and capacity-building for the preservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Between 2019 and 2022 the UNDP country office did not have a gender specialist or a gender strategy. However, the position was created for the very first time in 2022 and is laying groundwork for the development of a gender strategy. Indeed, analyses have already been carried out internally and suggest that additional efforts are needed to integrate gender issues more systematically into programme interventions, in particular through closer support for programme teams and capacity-building. These analyses also point out the importance of providing the office with a strategy and mechanisms to strengthen gender mainstreaming.

Finding 17: Adaptation and response to COVID-19. UNDP was prompt to adapt its programme and to contribute to the country's preparedness, response, and recovery from the health crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 by deploying activities that were relevant and aligned with the main outcomes of its Country Programme Document. At the operational level, the implementation of some activities, particularly those requiring new partnerships and procurement, were delayed by internal procedures and sometimes ineffective coordination and communication with these partners. However, UNDP was successful in modifying existing projects to ensure they provide relevant solutions to the emerging challenges that the targeted populations faced.

Since 2020, UNDP has positioned itself to contribute to the preparation, response, and recovery of the country following the COVID-19 pandemic. At the strategic level, UNDP contributed to the realization of the macroeconomic study on the impact of COVID-19 on Madagascar's economy, the rapid assessment of

¹⁶² IEO, Gender Outcomes Effectiveness Scale (GRES), http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/gender/GRES_French.pdf.

the specific impacts on young people, and the mitigation plan of the impacts on the private sector. The objective of these studies is to better understand the effects of the pandemic on the population in order to provide an appropriate response. UNDP also contributed to the UN immediate socio-economic response plan for 2020–2021.

In terms of operational response, UNDP supported the national health system by facilitating the acquisition of medical equipment, such as masks, gowns, ventilators, oxygen concentrators, and screening tests. In addition, 15 ambulances were acquired. The hospitals in the UNDP intervention areas, such as those in Antanambao-Toliara, Betroka, Fort Dauphin, Ambovombe, and Analankinina-Tamatave, were supported with this material assistance. The hospitals in Tamatave and Tulear were also equipped with solar panels to reduce their electricity expenses and carbon footprint while reducing the risks of power outages. The installation of photovoltaic systems is also underway in the three other hospitals in the southern regions. Four mobile clinics intended for the hospitals in Toliara, Betroka, Ambovombe, and Fort Dauphin were handed over to the Ministry of Public Health in February 2023, after considerable delay. This was due to the slow process of UNDP's procurement and to the complex procedures of local partners, which resulted in the equipment not being cleared in a timely manner and thus remaining stored for a period of time, incurring storage and clearance fees. Despite the enormous challenges facing the Malagasy health system, UNDP had little collaboration with the Ministry of Health before the pandemic.

Similar material support was provided, through the Ministry of Justice, to four prisons in order to minimize the spread of the virus in these facilities, housing 4,966 detainees. For example, UNDP supported the Antanimora Central Prison in the rehabilitation of some of its infrastructure and built four quarantine rooms, two treatment rooms, a doctor's office, and a screening room from eight containers. Prisons, especially Antanimora, remain overcrowded, which means that, despite these interventions, the underlying causes of the health risks faced by the prison population remain unchanged.

UNDP provided some government partners, including the National Bureau for Risk and Disaster Management (BNGRC, which assumed the functions of an Operational Command Centre to respond to the pandemic with five subregional hubs), with computer equipment and Zoom licenses facilitated through the Decentralization and Community Resilience Support Programme. UNDP also contributed, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), to the rehabilitation of the BNGRC headquarters in Antananarivo. The evaluation could not ascertain whether UNDP's support strengthened the operational and coordination capacity of this entity during the pandemic. The BNGRC, with whom the UNDP has been collaborating for several years, was already responsible for responding to disasters. This facilitated the implementation of UNDP support, which in retrospect was relatively modest.

Awareness-raising efforts were also carried out, including by modifying the broadcasting schedule of Radio Sifaka (a PBF project), and mobilizing additional resources to inform listeners about COVID-19. According to the project evaluation, the decryption of COVID-19 particularly interested young listeners. Communication and awareness-raising material was also developed by the CAPMADA (2021 Construction Work of a COVID-19 Treatment Centre and Rehabilitation of Sanitary Facilities in the Central House of Ambatavoahangy) project and used with some success (according to the project evaluation) to strengthen trust between communities and security forces.

In terms of recovery from the pandemic, an unconditional cash transfer programme called Tosika Fameno was implemented by the Ministry of Population and BNGRC in partnership with UNDP, the World Bank, UNICEF, WFP, and other development partners. Eligible households could receive 100,000 MGA (\$25) per month with bi-monthly payments. In 2020 and 2021, according to data compiled by the UNDP office, UNDP and its partners supported 19,636 households (70 percent of which were led by women) in selected districts

in the regions of Analamanga and Androy. In some cases, mobile transfers were used to minimize direct contact between people. These cash transfers were accompanied by efforts to raise awareness on financial education and on preventive measures to contain the spread of COVID-19.

In the Grand Sud these transfers specifically targeted migrants from the Androy region who, fleeing famine, had in some cases moved westward to the Menabe region, which according to situation analyses exerted undue pressure on the Menabe Antimena Protected Area and increased the risk of social conflicts in the region. The integration of these efforts into the REAP (Responding to Threats to Peace and Social Cohesion Related to Uncontrolled Migration by Empowering and Promoting Women in Madagascar) project, financed by the Peacebuilding Fund, facilitated the implementation of the programme.

In order to assist informal sector populations who have lost their livelihoods due to the crisis, UNDP implemented cash-for-work and agricultural livelihoods projects in the areas where it was already operating. Some of the initiatives already mentioned in this evaluation (PF2, PDSPE, Rio project), such as sand dune repair, were part of this effort.

Through the project to Consolidate and Accelerate Peace Achievements in Madagascar (CAPMADA), which was specifically developed to address peace and governance issues during the pandemic, UNDP supported the Court of Auditors in carrying out four specialized audits related to the government's response to COVID-19, which revealed significant irregularities (see Finding 5). This project also contributed to the study of the legal framework of the state of emergency in the context of the COVID-19 crisis to take note of the analyses, criticisms, and recommendations issued by various national and international entities during the state of exception in force since 21 March 2020. This work made it possible to draw an informed picture of the concept of a 'state health emergency' and to formulate recommendations to ensure a balance between maintaining the rule of law and respecting citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms.

UNDP also supported Transparency International – Initiative Madagascar in conducting studies on this subject, including a report highlighting that corruption in the health sector persisted during the pandemic, forcing citizens to pay bribes to fully enjoy their right to health. Through the GOUDMADA project, Transparency International also developed a guide for parliamentarians to strengthen their roles in managing the health crisis and during the state of emergency. Additionally, a webpage allowing citizens to receive alerts or submit incident reports (to strengthen citizen control and parliamentary accountability) related to the pandemic had some success, but was no longer accessible at the time of this evaluation.

2.5 Coherence and strategic positioning

Finding 18: Strategic positioning (external coherence). As the international development community and UNDP fell short of achieving major, tangible, and transformative development results over the last two programme cycles, UNDP's notable engagement with the presidency and strong positioning in the area of governance on issues such as decentralization and anti-corruption, while necessary, proved to be insufficient to have a meaningful impact on the development trends of the country. Similarly, UNDP's central-level positioning on environmental issues has considerably weakened during this cycle due to political reasons.

It can be seen that in addition to the World Bank, which has significant influence and financial resources, UNDP is a privileged partner of the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization in the field of decentralization. For example, UNDP co-leads with the Ministry the platform on decentralization and is one of the only development partners to participate in the latter's inter-ministerial steering committees for decentralization. As discussed in the initial findings, UNDP is at the forefront of developing key strategic documents such as the emerging decentralization policy letter, which may not have seen the light of day without its leadership.

As discussed in the previous finding, UNDP's positioning at the territorial level is undermined by the lack of financial resources and real political will to advance decentralization or strengthen deconcentration. On the other hand, the relevance of UNDP support, such as the efforts that led to the development of the inclusive and integrated local development plans (DLII), is confirmed by the fact that the Mionjo project will resume the work initiated by UNDP and support their implementation (in municipalities with a DLII) as well as their scaling up for all the municipalities of the Grand Sud.

UNDP is also strategically positioned in the fight against corruption. Here, UNDP's positioning stands out for the continuity of its support to the actors of the anti-corruption system, being one of the only international development partners still involved in supporting the operationalization of the overall country's anti-corruption apparatus. While other key partners supported the anti-corruption system, the risks associated with the highly sensitive nature of the work induced them to withdraw.

The evaluation also recognized the strong positioning of UNDP in the context of support to the presidency, in particular by the fact that it is the only one to support them in the drafting of the Madagascar Emergence Plan. It should be noted, however, that this strong positioning can be perceived, on the one hand, as a form of substitution for the role of the State and, on the other hand, as a partnership at the highest level, but which does not make it possible to unblock the thorniest issues (decentralization, corruption, natural resources management). The work in the field of access to energy, both at the strategic and territorial level, is promising, while the needs of populations in terms of access to energy are immense. However, UNDP's positioning at the strategic level in the broader area of blue and green economic growth remains to be strengthened. The latter's support is more local and operational than strategic.

UNDP's positioning in the field of environment and climate change is threatened by the reluctance of the government and the MEDD to work with UNDP to access vertical funds and, more specifically, the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Fund, for which UNDP is one of only two UN agencies accredited and present in the country. Although UNDP has been able to work with regional management, this issue puts the implementation of new projects at risk in the short term.

Finding 19: Portfolio approach (internal coherence). UNDP has adopted a portfolio approach aimed at moving away from the traditional project-focused approach to intervene more holistically in its areas of operation and reduce transaction costs. While the organizational changes required to implement this approach are still ongoing, challenges remain regarding human resources management, coordination between portfolios, and communication. Thus, although some steering committees have improved visibility on interrelationships between projects, the portfolio approach has not yet succeeded in reducing transaction costs.

As presented in Chapter 1, the Country Plan has structured its programme around three portfolios, two of which (PF1 on governance and the rule of law, and PF2 on inclusive growth and sustainable development) emphasize strategic issues and central/institutional-level advisory support, while the third (PF3) focuses on territorial interventions. Due to its territorial nature, PF3 is organized around four axes (local governance, local economy and means of production, biodiversity and natural resource management, and resilience to risks and disasters). Notably, PF3 is exclusively implemented through three field teams in the three regions of the Grand Sud: Androy, Anosy, and Atsimo-Andrefana, with a fourth team in Analamanga, managed under the Direct Implementation Modality by a project regional director appointed by the regional governor. The evaluation observes that in addition to steering a portfolio approach, the office is concurrently moving towards the implementation of an area-based approach, covering 35 municipalities in 16 districts across these four regions (see Annex 9). However, the fact that portfolios were created based on both thematic (governance, growth, sustainable development) and geographic (central/upstream and territorial/downstream) criteria introduces some managerial complexities related to the organizational structure.

Indeed, the office's organizational chart still consists of two programmatic teams (Governance and Poverty/Environment) as well as the Strategy and Policies Unit (SPU), which de facto oversees PF2. Thus, PF1 is led by the Governance team leader (currently vacant), PF2 by the international economist (head of SPU), while PF3 is led by the Poverty/Environment team leader. However, since the portfolios are not strictly thematic, the PF3 team leader finds him or herself supervising all thematic areas covered by the country office, thus assuming the roles of thematic environmental expert, intra-portfolio manager, and inter-portfolio coordinator, which is a heavy burden to bear.

At present, the strengthening of coordination and communication between projects has not yet reached the desired levels. Within the same portfolios, including PF1 and PF2, projects and annual work plans are not designed with the full participation of the entire UNDP team and project leaders. Instead, efforts are made to share information at the time of reporting on the results of interventions. The main factors explaining the lack of joint planning are the lack of time of project coordinators and, primarily, the turnover of staff at the level of team leaders who are responsible for overseeing the entire portfolio. At the time of the evaluation, one of the three team leader positions was vacant while another was on a detail assignment.

In addition to this intra-portfolio challenge, there is also evidence that portfolio creation has not eliminated the silos that existed between outcome teams and projects. The boundaries of these silos have simply changed and are now apparent among portfolios, across which coordination and communication remains a challenge. Indeed, while interactions may have improved within portfolios (especially for national partners), there is still room for improving complementarities between portfolios themselves, a fact that was highlighted by office staff and national partners consulted. In the field of decentralization, for example, the Decentralization and Community Resilience Support Programme (which dates from the previous cycle, before the portfolio approach) intervened at the strategic, central, and local levels. The successor project, the AIDE project, intervenes only at the strategic level, leaving the work at the local level in the regions targeted by PF3 to a steering committee and a different project committee. This has the effect of reducing the coherence of interventions that were previously a little more integrated and for which partners could have better visibility on what was being done at different levels.

The governance and management of portfolios is orchestrated through three steering committees, each dedicated to a specific portfolio, and which includes both the key sectoral ministries involved in the projects implemented under a portfolio and the UNDP teams. From the outset, the establishment of steering committees has already shown its benefits by allowing UNDP's national partners to have better visibility on all the projects implemented in a portfolio, which lays the essential foundation for a better linkage between the various projects implemented in partnership with the national side. However, these committees have not replaced the project committees that also continue to operate, which in principle means that transaction costs related to project management (one of the objectives of the portfolio approach) have not necessarily decreased.

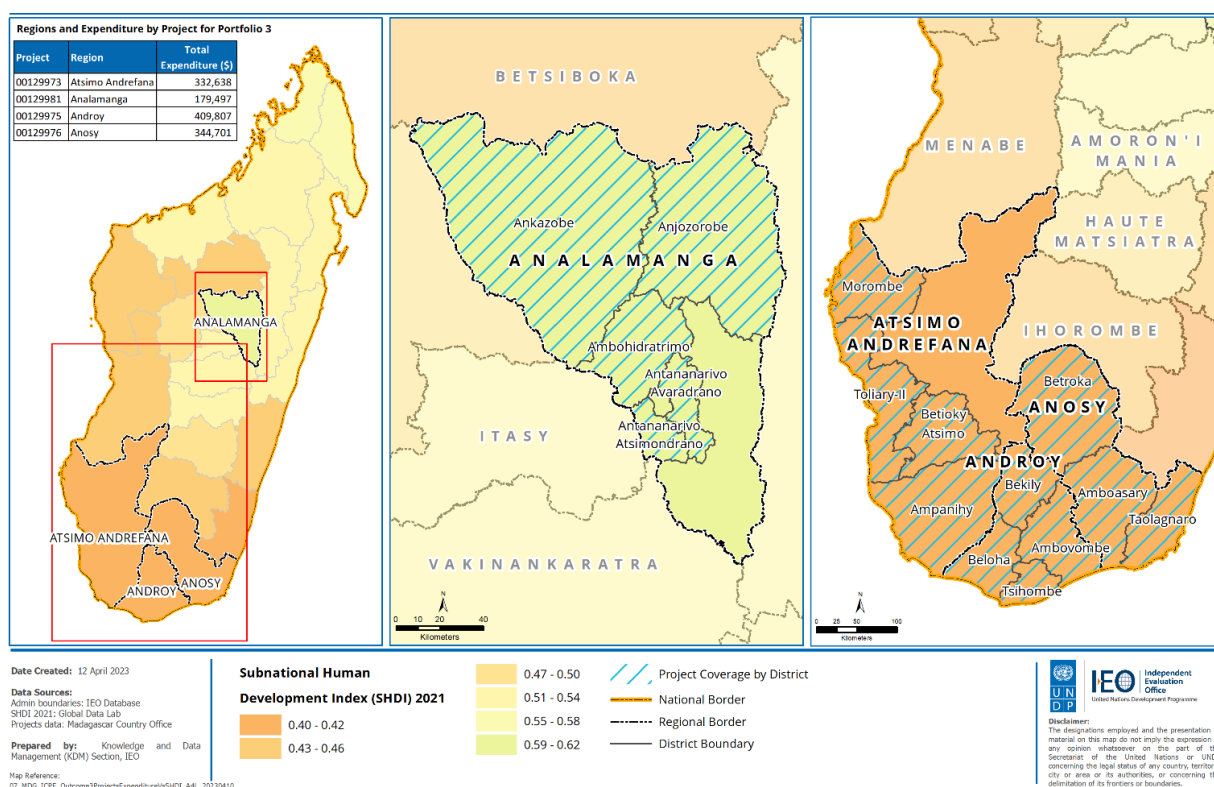
Finally, it can be seen that implementation of the portfolio approach has been greatly facilitated by the use of UNDP's own funds (Track), which have facilitated the structuring of projects in each portfolio. It is important to stress, however, that the sustainability and scaling up of the portfolio approach remains dependent on the willingness of donors to subscribe to such an approach and, more particularly, to the strategic vision of UNDP in the country. Indeed, some projects financed by the funds of other donors, in particular the projects of the Peacebuilding Fund as well as the RINDRA (Strengthening Governance in Madagascar) project financed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), do not follow the portfolio logic put forward by the country office.

Despite these challenges, the initiatives taken by the country office to strengthen the coherence of its programme through the portfolio approach have the merit of putting into practice innovations that must be tested before being scaled up at the regional and global levels.

Finding 20: Territorial positioning and leaving no one behind. By strengthening its position in the Grand Sud, UNDP is prioritizing the country's most vulnerable populations, fully aligning itself with the principle of leaving no one behind. However, despite the proven intention to promote its development agenda in a region largely dominated by humanitarian actors, the weight of UNDP interventions seems insufficient to significantly influence the region's development trajectory and to bridge the gap between short-term humanitarian responses and longer-term development.

The previous ICPE 2015–2018 recognized the relevance and even recommended that UNDP strengthen its presence in the Grand Sud. Since 2015 this region has been the scene of recurrent droughts and famines, the most severe in 40 years having occurred between 2019 and 2021.¹⁶³ Furthermore, with the exception of 2018–2019, seasonal rains that fall in the south from October to May have been particularly low and are among the driest years since 1981.¹⁶⁴ The direct consequences for populations are disastrous, as evidenced by the fact that the entire Grand Sud remained in a situation of severe food insecurity in 2022–2023 (IPC Phase 3), which corresponds to a crisis situation that has prevailed seasonally since at least 2015.¹⁶⁵ In addition to being exposed to recurrent shocks, as well as being geographically isolated and underserved by basic public services, available data (see Figure 9 and Annex 10) clearly shows that the populations of these southern regions are among the poorest in the country. UNDP's decision to prioritize these regions is therefore in line with the principle of leaving no one behind, and is therefore highly relevant. The decision also to intervene in the Analamanga region does not, for its part, follow this same logic.

FIGURE 9: HDI and UNDP Geographic Positioning/Portfolio 3 (2023)



¹⁶³ See <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/madagascar>.

¹⁶⁴ See <https://theconversation.com/comment-le-changement-climatique-a-contribue-a-la-crise-alimentaire-a-madagascar-168842>.

¹⁶⁵ See <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/f/c/1152969/?iso3=MDG>.

The issues mentioned above also explain why the Grand Sud is at the centre of humanitarian efforts in the country. As of June 2021, 14 humanitarian organizations were working there (see Annex 11) and had mobilized nearly \$149 million to provide multisectoral responses to humanitarian needs specific to the Grand Sud.¹⁶⁶ Bridging the gap between humanitarian responses and long-term development solutions has become one of the objectives of UNDP in the region since the previous cycle. However, it is through the PF3 and its territorial approach that UNDP is attempting to play this role more effectively this time.

The New Way of Working requires both humanitarian and development actors, including international partners and government, to define collective results to be achieved in the medium term and for a division of labour on the basis of comparative advantage.¹⁶⁷ Although such common objectives have been defined in both the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the government's Plan for the Emergence of the Grand Sud, effective coordination of these multi-stakeholder efforts has been slow to materialize. Indeed, while development partners, including UNDP in the area of governance, are making significant efforts to strengthen aid coordination at the central level, these efforts do not have the level of granularity sufficient to trickle down to the territorial level, particularly in the south, where development indicators in most sectors have shown no signs of improvement for nearly a decade.

For UNDP, despite the existence of some joint projects, including those funded by the PBF, the coordination needed with humanitarian actors to operationalize a Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus or New Way of Working remains limited. The reasons behind this lack of cooperation could not be identified in this evaluation. However, UNDP is well involved with the Resident Coordinator Office in the pilot initiative 'convergence zones' (*area-based approach*) whereby joint initiatives would be implemented, but these efforts are still in the preliminary phase.

Nevertheless, PF3 operated with a budget of \$3,463,000 during its first two years of implementation, which represents only 2 percent of the humanitarian resources available for 2021. Also, UNDP intervened in 35 communes and 16 districts for a total expenditure of \$1,266,643, corresponding to about \$36,000 per commune or \$80,000 per district. This highlights the fact that, while working with relatively limited resources and with few conclusive examples of humanitarian-development interventions, the scope of UNDP's influence in the Grand Sud remains limited.

The above finding (Finding 11) as well as the previous ICPE nevertheless demonstrate results that UNDP has helped to achieve, particularly to stimulate the recovery of the populations that participated in the projects – at least in terms of increased income generation. Some of these results are so relevant that they are being taken up and scaled up by the World Bank's Mionjo project in the Grand Sud which, with a budget of \$100 million over an eight-year horizon, supports the transition from humanitarian to development support by focusing on development interventions such as local governance, infrastructure for resilience, and livelihood support. The European Union also wants to deploy a similar intervention in the south. At the time of the evaluation, UNDP did not appear to be positioned to work on the implementation of the Mionjo project or as part of the EU intervention. In the case of Mionjo, UNDP's delicate positioning with the MEDD (see Finding 13) did not allow the World Bank to work with UNDP as an implementing partner.

The scope of the results that can be achieved are also limited and hampered by the difficulties inherent in working in the Grand Sud, such as remoteness and geographical isolation, lack of infrastructure (roads, access to water, etc.), the very weak capacities of local actors, and the stagnation of decentralization that perpetuates the underfunding of municipalities and regions. According to interviews and field visits, the years of humanitarian interventions in this area have, according to some, crystallized the dynamics

¹⁶⁶ See <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/1047/summary>.

¹⁶⁷ See https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/NWOW_percent20Booklet_percent20low_percent20res.002_0.pdf.

of dependence on external aid, creating expectations among local actors that support will come unconditionally while being complemented by the payment of daily subsistence allowances. These same dynamics would make long-term development solutions or solutions requiring the active involvement of participants (capacity-building, cash for work, IGA, etc.) less attractive than humanitarian interventions offering immediate short-term solutions. In this context, it becomes easier for development agencies to intervene elsewhere in the country where the potential for more convincing and replicable results is higher, which UNDP (as well as other development partners) is doing through the RINDRA project (which does not operate in the south) and through its interventions in Tamatave, as mentioned above.

Finding 21: Operational partnerships. Since the last ICPE, UNDP has deepened its partnerships with the Malagasy administration by strengthening its positioning with local administrations (STDs) and authorities (CTDs). It has also relied more frequently on CSOs to extend the reach of its intervention, an approach that contributed to strengthening their capacities. Yet inter-agency collaboration at the UN-level has been mainly donor driven and concentrated around peacebuilding projects, with little collaborations in the areas of inclusive growth and environment, including in the Grand Sud regions.

UNDP in Madagascar benefits from a very close partnership with national actors, which is illustrated by its strategic positioning and the continuity of the organization's support, which gives it a relationship of trust and proximity with the national authorities and allows it to work at all levels of the Malagasy administration (presidency, prime minister, ministries, STDs, CTDs, institutions, and agencies), except for the MEDD. The lack of involvement of CTDs in UNDP's partnership strategy at the local level was highlighted as a weakness in 2018 in the previous ICPE. This trend has since been reversed, notably with the establishment of the governance mechanism for Portfolio 3, which places local authorities at the centre of portfolio management and interventions (see Finding 18).

At the strategic level, UNDP is recognized as an important player by all technical and financial partners active in the country because of its capacity to mobilize national counterparts and all partners, which was particularly illustrated during the management by UNDP of the 2018 electoral support programme (SACEM), and more recently by supporting the resumption of planning for decentralization, which earned UNDP the co-leadership of the working group on decentralization.

As discussed under Finding 7, the coordination and integration of development partners' interventions in Madagascar have been highlighted by the respondents of this evaluation as a significant challenge. Indeed, interviews have highlighted the lack of vitality within the consultation and coordination mechanisms, which, as an illustration, have been hindered by changes in government counterparts as well as the dissolution of the Permanent Secretariat for Aid Coordination. In fact, according to interviews, coordination efforts among technical and financial partners allowed for better delineating intervention areas, rather than the mobilization of strategic partnerships and joint programming. However, initiatives are currently underway by major donors (EU and World Bank), particularly in the Grand Sud, where all partners acknowledge the coordination deficit, instances of effort duplication, and the lack of progress in operationalizing the humanitarian-development nexus (see Finding 19).

At the programmatic level, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund has not only provided funding for priority activities but also facilitated joint programming within the UN system. UNDP has been a significant beneficiary of this funding mechanism and has played an important role in achieving the objectives outlined in the priority peacebuilding plans. Since 2014, UNDP has participated in the implementation of 13 of 21 projects in the PBF portfolio in Madagascar, collaborating with other agencies such as IOM, UNICEF, OHCHR, and UNESCO. As noted previously, partnerships developed under the PBF have broadened the thematic scope of interventions and enabled the implementation of multidimensional responses by leveraging the mandates and positioning of other agencies.

In the area of good governance, collaboration with UNESCO and OHCHR has expanded the scope of interventions to include media and civil society participation. With IOM, UNDP has combined its support for social cohesion with strengthening local governance and justice with security forces. The two agencies have also piloted a joint approach to address the growing challenges of uncontrolled internal population displacement. In the area of inclusive growth, infrastructure projects to provide access to clean water, irrigation, and reforestation efforts have been carried out with UNICEF in the watersheds of Androy, Anosy, Atsimo Andrefana, Analamanga, and Atsinanana. With UNIDO and the United Nations Capital Development Fund, UNDP collaborates under the SDG fund project aimed at identifying and implementing solutions for mobilizing domestic resources for the energy sector, although implementation has experienced significant delays. In the area of environment, UNDP collaborated with UNESCO to support multiple-purpose reforestation and a diagnosis of promising economic activities to promote local community development in a 200-hectare site called Kalanoro, located in the Alaotra-Mangoro region.¹⁶⁸ The efforts in these two areas are nascent and relatively limited in scope.

Despite some criticisms raised in interviews and evaluation reports regarding the effectiveness of UN coordination efforts in implementing joint projects or initiatives, available sources have provided compelling evidence of successful results from these partnerships. However, it is important to note that inter-agency collaboration was mostly catalysed by the PBF funds related to governance and social cohesion. UN coordination did not rely on joint programming, particularly in the areas of inclusive growth and the environment. The lack of UN coordination at the territorial level, especially in the Grand Sud, may explain the absence of formal joint projects and partnerships in these areas. Joint programming between UN agencies has been primarily guided by the availability and conditionalities of vertical funds.

Since the previous ICPE report, which identified UNDP's partnership approach as a weakness due to a lack of focus on capacity-building for NGOs and community-based organizations, UNDP has improved its partnerships with these organizations. This has included a greater emphasis on capacity-building rather than sole participation in direct project implementation. PBF projects have focused on promoting citizen engagement and have thus pushed UNDP to collaborate more effectively with CSOs (see Finding 5). UNDP notably strengthened its partnerships with well-established NGOs and associations, which has facilitated project implementation and extended project reach through the positioning of these structures within CSO networks. UNDP supports the Independent Observatory of Public Procurement, piloted by CSOs, to strengthen citizen supervision in public procurement. The national chapter of Transparency International in Madagascar is also a UNDP partner in the fight against corruption. However, stakeholders' strategic commitment and participation in project design could be strengthened. UNDP is working to build the networking and capacities of local CSOs, leveraging the proven expertise of Malagasy associations. The private sector has been involved in UNDP interventions in the areas of inclusive growth and environment, but not in governance. UNDP is exploring opportunities to involve the private sector in the fight against corruption and advocacy for transparency. Discussions are ongoing with the Group of Enterprises of Madagascar for private sector mobilization in implementing the SDGs.

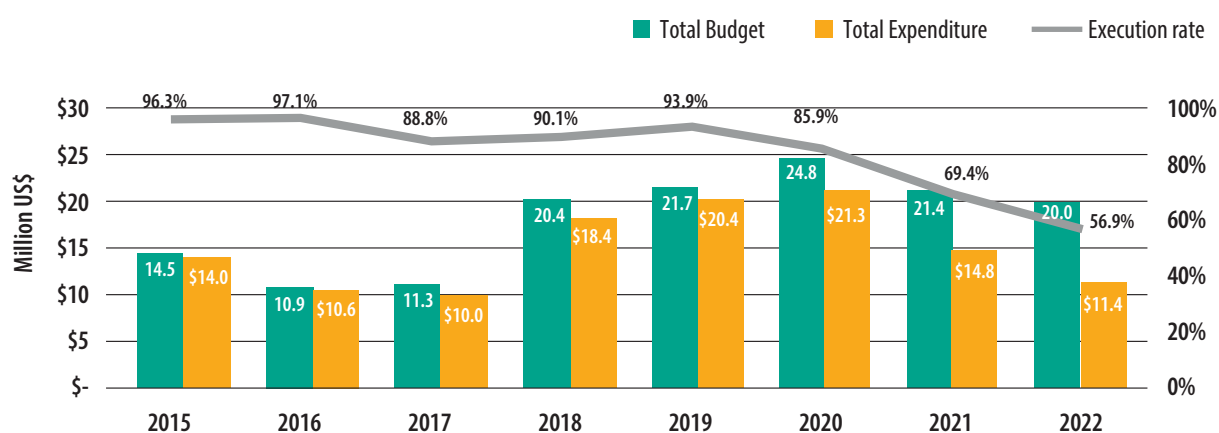
Finding 22: Resource mobilization. The mobilization of resources by UNDP in Madagascar has experienced ups and downs. After seeing its budget and expenses double between 2017 and 2020, the execution rate has since dropped, mainly due to delays in the initiation and implementation of projects. In the last year of implementation, the country office had mobilized less than 60 percent of the resources needed to fully realize its programme. The decline in its external donor base and the absence of a clear resource mobilization strategy make achieving its financial mobilization goals a challenge.

¹⁶⁸ District de Moramanga, dans la Commune rurale d'Andasibe.

The budget for the current programme (2021–2023) is as ambitious as the previous one. In the previous programme cycle (2015–2019) the projected budget in UNDP’s Country Programme Document reached \$100.3 million and finally operated with a budget of \$82 million. As of the current cycle (2021–2023), the CPD expected a budget of \$78.4 million, of which \$42.3 million (53.9 percent) was expected from UNDP core resources.¹⁶⁹ However, the country office managed to mobilize \$41.4 million over the period 2021–2023 or 52.8 percent of its initial target (of which 57.6 percent was from regular resources), making it unlikely to meet its resources mobilization targets.¹⁷⁰

The average annual budget over the period 2019–2022 was \$22 million (see Figure 10) coming from resources mobilized in 2020, which were partly received in the context of the COVID-19 response.¹⁷¹ UNDP’s average implementation rate stood at 77.3 percent during 2019–2022, but it decreased from 93 percent during the 2015–2019 period to 71 percent during the 2020–2022 period, an issue seemingly related to the delays the office faced in launching and implementing its projects throughout the period evaluated. The average implementation rate for the 2019–2022 period is higher for the implementation of Outcome 1 (78.8 percent) and Outcome 2 (78.3 percent) compared to Outcome 3 (72.7 percent).

FIGURE 10: Programme budget and expenditure with implementation rate, 2015–2022



Source: Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of 17 March 2023.

UNDP relied mainly on core resources (TRAC funds) to implement the current programme. Specifically, 59 percent of UNDP’s budget over the period 2019–2022 came from regular resources from Headquarters, 15 percent from vertical funds, 10 percent from PBF, and 5 percent from the Government of Madagascar. Its main bilateral donors are, respectively, the United States, Russia, and the European Commission, although their joint contributions represent only 7 percent of the total UNDP budget (see Figure 11).¹⁷² These bilateral donors mainly financed Outcomes 1 and 2 with the exception of Russia, which also financed UNDP energy access initiatives under Outcome 3.

¹⁶⁹ Madagascar Country Programme Document results framework 2021–2023.

¹⁷⁰ As of 17 March 2023. Data disaggregated by outcome indicate that UNDP mobilized 41.9 percent of planned financial resources for governance (Outcome 1), 55.8 percent for inclusive growth (Outcome 2), and 83.6 percent for environment (Outcome 3).

¹⁷¹ UNDP COVID-19 Scorecard, 6 January 2023. The country office mobilized and reallocated \$10.5 million in 2020, \$5 million in 2021, and \$2.3 million in 2022 for the COVID-19 response.

¹⁷² According to the Atlas/Quantum IEO Datamart as of 17 March 2023.

FIGURE 11: Donors by funding, 2019–2022

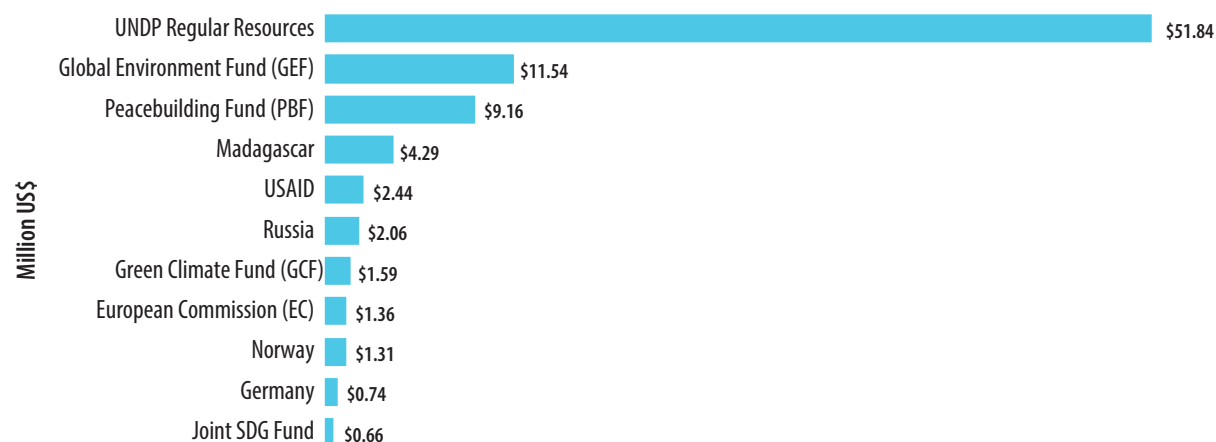


FIGURE 12: ODA in Madagascar, 2019–2022

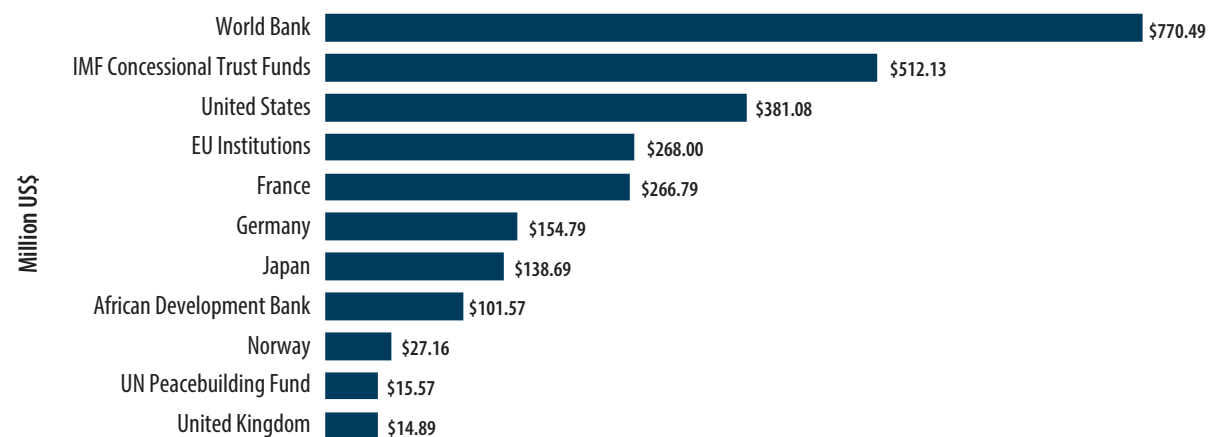


Figure 11 shows the top 10 UNDP donors in Madagascar between 2019 and 2021. These data highlight that, in addition to collaboration with USAID, UNDP has found challenges to mobilize funds meaningfully with major donors working in the country. Nevertheless, the PBF is slipping into 10th place, which has enabled UNDP to finance much of the work done under the PF1/Outcome 1, and notably most of its support for the fight against corruption and its interventions in the district of Anosy.

Additional analyses also show that Madagascar is the penultimate country in the East African region receiving the lowest level of official development assistance (ODA) per capita (\$106/inhabitant compared to a regional average of \$266) between 2019 and 2021. Only Eritrea, another LDC, receives less ODA than Madagascar, while all other countries in the region, including non-LDCs, receive more aid.¹⁷³ This clearly shows that UNDP operated in a context where the scope for mobilizing resources was limited.

¹⁷³ These countries are Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

It should be noted, however, that the country office did not have a resource mobilization strategy analysing and identifying the opportunities to be exploited, and this in a context where the mobilization of green funds (which tend to represent a significant part of the budgets of UNDP country offices) may be difficult to access in the short term given the strained relationship with the MEDD.

2.6 Knowledge management and operations

Finding 23: Monitoring, evaluation, and learning. The country office has taken strong and innovative measures to strengthen its monitoring and learning mechanisms, though results are not yet fully visible due, in particular, to the disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the office continued to generate monitoring data of mixed quality at the project level, which has been incorporated poorly into detailed reports. The country office effectively covered an adequate sample of key thematic projects and expenditures over the period 2019–2021.

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the previous ICPE highlighted some of the weaknesses of the office's monitoring and evaluation system, including that the system was not able to "provide **evidence-based** and timely information" and that it did not integrate knowledge management. The country office has since taken relevant actions to address this weakness by strengthening its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit, initially composed of a single national M&E specialist, with the addition of an M&E international specialist. The unit therefore developed an integrated M&E plan establishing the goal to carry out three monitoring missions per year for all projects, whether carried out at the national or subnational level, to cross-check the data that was reported from the field. While this was done for the first time in 2020, the pandemic and the ensuing travel restrictions did not allow for the continuation of the roll-out of this approach in 2021 and 2022.

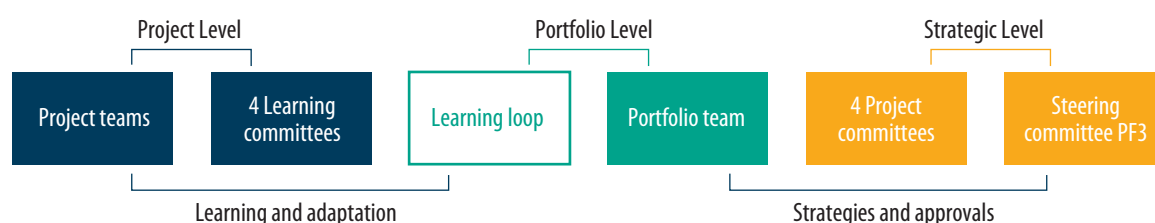
The M&E Unit now aspires to put more emphasis on the quality of monitoring data reported by portfolios and on identifying good practices for scaling it up by carrying out monitoring missions itself to corroborate what is being reported jointly with the Communications Specialist (for better internal knowledge sharing). In addition, monitoring missions will be carried out by an external firm through a real-time monitoring system (the firm is currently collecting data to establish the baseline) and which is expected to conduct regular field surveys. The collected data will be made available to internal users on a digital online platform, but are not yet available since the implementation of the system is in progress.

With regards to projects, portfolios, and programme implementation, the monitoring reports generated for the period under review do not yet provide the level of detail necessary for decision-making or effective knowledge management. According to the country office, this situation prevails because the new systems are still not in place and because the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow carrying out the expected monitoring visits. Moreover, as mentioned above, the alignment between portfolio outputs and indicators and those of the CPD is far from intuitive. The CPD and portfolio products and indicators do not fully align, reflecting the fact that the CPD results framework was developed prior to the country office's transition to the portfolio approach. As a result, the office now has to collect data on project, portfolio, and CPD indicators, without optimal alignment among these three levels.

Process in place during the beginning of the programme cycle did not yet allow the country office to generate knowledge and lessons learned in a way that would facilitate evidence-based decision-making and organizational learning. To respond to this situation, the country office has volunteered to pilot an adaptive management approach for 2023. Piloted within the framework of PF3 (i.e. at the territorial level), adaptive management requires the establishment of a learning committee responsible for "identifying adaptation needs at the project level and capturing emerging lessons" by collecting project data directly from beneficiaries and field partners. Bimonthly learning and reflection sessions, called 'learning loops', will be used to propose and adopt, where appropriate,

adjustments to interventions under new delegation of authority arrangements. These would give authority to project committees and the portfolio team leader to make changes to activities below a certain threshold. Figure 13 illustrates how learning committees and the learning loop fit into the teams and committees already in place following the adoption of the portfolio approach. The approach was being deployed at the time of the evaluation, as adaptive management training was being conducted in the Grand Sud.

FIGURE 13: PF3 PILOT LEARNING COMMITTEE AND MECHANISM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



In terms of evaluation, the country office’s decentralized evaluation plan for the period 2019–2023 has been fully implemented. It aimed to produce eight decentralized evaluations (all at the project level), including six in 2021 and two in 2022. All eight evaluations were completed, with a total budget of \$207,000 and expenditures of \$173,000 (equivalent to an overall utilization rate of 84 percent). Of the eight evaluations conducted, five were quality checked (all in 2021). Four received a rating of ‘moderately satisfactory’ and the other received a rating of ‘satisfactory’. None of the eight evaluations was an evaluation of the Global Environment Fund, and one (completed in 2021 and rated ‘moderately satisfactory’) was an evaluation of a joint project.¹⁷⁴ The current evaluation plan adequately reflects the composition of the programme’s portfolios as the number of project evaluations is evenly distributed among the three outcomes (three per outcome). In terms of coverage, 60 percent of total programme expenditure between 2019 and 2021 was covered by an evaluation, which is an adequate coverage rate. More specifically, 46 percent of expenditure under Outcome 1 (with the largest budget during this period) was covered by an evaluation (compared with 64 percent and 88 percent for Outcomes 2 and 3, respectively).

Finding 24: Operations and human resources. Human resource management within the country office presents persistent challenges. Reliance on fixed-term contracts and United Nations Volunteers has led to a high turnover rate and delays in project implementation. Several key strategic positions have remained vacant, particularly in the areas of governance and environment, reflecting the fact that recruiting international staff is difficult and has hindered the office’s ability to achieve gender parity. The absence of senior governance experts affects UNDP’s capacity to effectively advocate for sensitive issues, such as anti-corruption efforts and decentralization, potentially undermining its credibility as a preferred partner in the country.

The ICPE 2018 highlighted issues in human resources management, issues that, five years later, still persist. On the one hand, the programme is dependent on fixed-term contracts (51 percent of the office staff work on a service contract basis) and on United Nations Volunteers (19 percent of staff). Interviews indicated that the short-term nature of service contracts coupled with inflation affected staff morale, most notably of the

¹⁷⁴ In addition, one evaluation conducted in the previous CPD cycle received a ‘moderately satisfactory’ rating in 2021.

staff assigned to the Grand Sud, and has contributed to the high staff turnover rate. The recruitment of an international coordinator to cover the Grand Sud as well as that of an international M&E specialist is a step in the right direction, as it has stabilized those functions.

The findings of the ICPE and of the country office audit conducted in 2018 noted difficulties in retaining the workforce in the Grand Sud. This evaluation now observes that three key strategic positions were vacant at the time of the evaluation: Deputy Resident Representative, Governance Portfolio Team Leader, and Governance Advisor. Further, in recent months the position of Team Leader of the Environment portfolio (in detail assignment) was also vacant. The position of Gender Specialist had recently been filled after being created a few months earlier.

Some senior level interviewees noted that UNDP, without an international and senior governance expert, was not sufficiently equipped to strengthen the high-level advocacy needed to address the issues sensitive to the fight against corruption, access to justice, and decentralization. Interviews with the various UN System entities in Madagascar all pointed to the difficulties of recruiting international staff and consultants in the country, suggesting that the complexity of working in Madagascar was generally underestimated by incoming staff, and that the cost of living was not well reflected in the post-adjustments. The same challenge applies to the recruitment of personnel assigned to the Grand Sud.

The office has achieved gender parity in fixed term posts and volunteers, but not for staff on service contract where only 25 percent of recruited staff are women. This reality, according to the interviews, is particularly visible in the field where the consultants under contract tend to be men. In addition, with the exception of the post of Resident Representative, eight of the remaining nine professional posts are filled by men. This is partially offset by the fact that seven out of 12 national professionals are filled by women.

In general, the difficulty in recruiting staff for the various projects of the programme was a central factor in the implementation delays often experienced by the office, even before the transition to UNDP's new corporate management system. For example, while almost all environment-related projects have been delayed due to recruitment delays, the full deployment of PF3 is also hampered by delays in recruiting teams to be deployed in the regions. These administrative delays are increasingly visible to UNDP partners, including current and prospective donors, UN System partners, and government partners, posing a growing risk to UNDP's credibility as a partner of choice in the country.

2.7 Rating of country programme performance

The table below presents a summary of UNDP's country programme performance ratings based on the OECD's Development Assistance Committee country evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability). The ratings are based on a four-point scale, with 4 as the highest score and 1 as the lowest. This scoring table should be read bearing in mind the findings presented in the previous sections, which provide a more detailed justification for the scores awarded. **The overall performance of the country office is (2) moderately satisfactory/results partially achieved.**¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ 4 = satisfactory/achieved; 3 = mostly satisfactory/mostly achieved; 2 = moderately unsatisfactory/partially achieved; 1 = unsatisfactory/not achieved.

TABLE 1. Overall country programme performance score

Main criteria and parameters	Overall rating	Remark/Rationale
1. RELEVANCE	3	The priorities covered by the UNDP programme are aligned with the country's SDG-related development priorities despite the lack of a clear national development plan. By prioritizing interventions in the Grand Sud, UNDP also aspires to address the needs of groups most at risk of being left behind. However, there are some shortcomings in the degree of prioritization and integration of gender issues.
1.A Adherence to national development priorities	3	
1.B. Alignment with UN and UNDP goals	3	
1.C. Relevance of programme priorities	3	
2. COHERENCE	2	The internal coherence of the programme has been strengthened to some extent by the adoption of a portfolio approach that includes a territorial convergence component, while some challenges remain in terms of organizational structure and alignment between portfolios and the CPD.
2.A. Internal programme coherence	3	
2.B. External programme coherence	2	The external coherence of the programme has been strengthened by the establishment of steering committees for the portfolios, by greater involvement of NGOs in the implementation of the programme, and by collaboration with other UN agencies around PBF projects. However, major challenges remain in UNDP's support to strengthening aid coordination at the territorial level and in bridging humanitarian responses and development in the Grand Sud.
3. EFFICIENCY	2	Several cases of implementation delays were noted, due to both the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the administrative burden and deficiencies in financial management.
3.A. Timeliness	2	
3.B. Management and operational efficiency	2	

4. EFFECTIVENESS	2	<p>UNDP has achieved its best results in terms of governance-related outputs (decentralization, access to justice, fight against corruption). Relevant contributions were also noted in support of income-generating activities in the Grand Sud, the establishment of socio-economic infrastructure through cash for work, the piloting of energy access initiatives, and community management of protected areas. In addition to contributing to the creation of new CPAs, there are few convincing results in the field of the environment. Across all three outcomes, it is evident that UNDP has been more effective in strengthening frameworks, policies, and systems than in their operationalization.</p> <p>In general, the magnitude of political, administrative, institutional, and infrastructure challenges has significantly limited the possibility for bringing about larger changes (effect, impact) in the short term, especially in the Grand Sud.</p>
4 A. Achievement of stated outputs and outcomes	2	
4.B. Programme inclusiveness (especially those at risk of being left behind)	2	
4.C. Prioritization of gender equality and women's empowerment	2	
4.D. Prioritization of development innovation	2	
5. SUSTAINABILITY	1	<p>Possible changes in government during the election year pose a threat to the sustainability of the initiatives rolled out in the current programme cycle. Added to this is the weak capacity of some national partners, the lack of sustainable funding, as well as the tendency of UNDP to replace the roles of the State, due to lack of alternatives. However, increased collaboration with national NGOs and CSOs, as well as scaling up some UNDP initiatives by other technical and financial partners, are steps in the right direction.</p>
5.A. Sustainable capacity	1	
5.B. Financing for development	1	

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Good Governance: UNDP's support builds on the continuity of efforts initiated during the previous country programme. It has played a central role in invigorating decentralization, promoting access to justice, combating corruption, stimulating civil society, and aiding electoral processes in Madagascar. Its endeavours have bolstered strategic frameworks, encouraged community participation, and enhanced justice services in remote and insecure regions, all while contributing to more transparent public debates and social cohesion. Although these interventions are well-aligned with the country's development objectives, they do not address the underlying socio-political bottlenecks that hinder significant progress in these sectors. Similarly, the operationalization and sustainability of these contributions are hindered by a political context unfavourable to the full national ownership of these efforts, thereby limiting the potential to strengthen social cohesion.

The objectives to strengthen good governance established in the previous cycle were extended to the current cycle, which allowed UNDP to make relevant contributions in this area despite the challenges noted in this evaluation. For example, UNDP supported the creation of the anti-corruption structures provided for by the law which, despite operational challenges, were all put in place during this period. It also revitalized the decentralization process, strengthened the actors of the criminal justice chain in the locations where it intervened, and to a lesser extent strengthened civil society participation in all these processes.

In Madagascar good governance is the cornerstone of the country's development due to its connection with maintaining social cohesion and economic growth. It is also imperative to enable transparent, fair, and equitable management of national resources for poverty reduction. However, the socio-political context, particularly the lack of political will, still hinders the possibility of intensifying these efforts and ensuring that the aforementioned mechanisms are fully operational and adequately resourced. In this context, UNDP often had no choice but to assume a more operational role, in some cases even stepping in to replace the State in service delivery functions (such as legal clinics in the Grand Sud). In other cases, such as decentralization, the support and influence of UNDP did not lead to the operationalization of the supported policies and plans. Nevertheless, these scenarios still highlight the persistent dependence of the State on UNDP's support and other development partners, as well as the limitations to the scope of change induced by such assistance.

Conclusion 2. Growth and sustainable development: UNDP's objectives in Madagascar to contribute to inclusive growth are quite ambitious considering the complex challenges the country faces. Despite its efforts to enhance planning, economic governance, women's and youth empowerment, as well as the transition to the formal economy, the achieved results remain mixed due to factors such as institutional instability, limited intervention scope, the intricacies of the context, and the absence of coordinated and strategically aligned approaches with the private sector. Implementation delays, financial constraints, and sustainability issues also present significant challenges.

This evaluation highlights several crucial findings regarding UNDP's efforts in promoting inclusive growth in Madagascar. Despite commendable ambitions and initiatives aimed at strengthening institutional capacities, enhancing economic governance, supporting economic activities, and facilitating access to renewable energy, persistent challenges have been identified. On one hand, some of UNDP's initiatives lacked scale or had insufficient scope to achieve the desired effects. On the other hand, difficulties stemming

from institutional and political instability, as well as the lack of consensus on public policies, hindered coherent planning and implementation of interventions. Moreover, the overall mixed results in promoting entrepreneurship, women's and youth empowerment, and the transition to a formal economy underscore the importance of a more strategic and concerted approach, along with enhanced sustainability and action coordination.

Despite these challenges, UNDP's efforts have yielded positive outcomes, particularly in improving economic governance through digital platforms and providing access to renewable energy for specific communities. Nevertheless, the need to address underlying issues and develop more comprehensive and enduring approaches remains essential in order to achieve a significant and sustainable impact on inclusive growth in Madagascar.

Conclusion 3. Biodiversity and energy: UNDP's efforts in the areas of environment and climate change have been hindered by difficult relations with one of its key partners. Despite these challenges, significant efforts have been made in ecosystem protection and could lead to the creation of seven Community Protected Areas, building on the organization's previous cycle of work. There is an opportunity for UNDP to position itself more strongly in piloting innovative approaches to promote access to energy in the Grand Sud, where some approaches have already been tested.

UNDP's work in the environmental field at the strategic level has been greatly hindered by an uneven collaboration with the MEDD, which has contributed to delays in the implementation of some projects and calls into question their relevance (e.g., National Adaptation Plan, Rio Convention). In this context, the potential for national ownership of the outputs of these projects is limited. Collaboration with the Regional Directorate of the Environmental and Sustainable Development within the framework of the PF3 and the Atsimo Andrefana region (APAA) project has been more fruitful, although apart from the APAA project, UNDP's contributions have been rather ad hoc. Nevertheless, the efforts to establish the first seven Community Protected Areas in Atsimo Andrefana must be emphasized for their innovative nature and their ambition to strengthen community-based territorial management. The lack of access to energy remains a pressing need in Madagascar, a country where only 14 percent of rural populations have access to electricity (even lower in the Grand Sud), making UNDP's efforts, which have somewhat increased access to electricity for populations, very relevant.

Conclusion 4. Programme coherence: UNDP has piloted the deployment of a portfolio approach which, in terms of internal coherence, has laid the foundation for strengthening synergies and complementarities between UNDP projects, although in the short term the transition from a project to a portfolio approach has altered the initial country programme logic. Externally, this approach has helped streamline communication on UNDP's various interventions with some of its key government partners. Still at the inception phase, this approach has not yet yielded more tangible results that would make it possible to assert the superiority of this approach over the traditional project-centred approach.

UNDP had a Theory of Change (ToC) accompanying its CPD and results framework. However, the introduction of a portfolio approach has altered this ToC, which has not been updated since. To date, the country office must therefore deal with the CPD results framework, the portfolio framework, and the project framework, which, in the absence of a ToC, complicates the understanding of the programme's internal logic (inter-portfolio) and of each portfolio (intra-portfolio).

The operational architecture for the portfolio approach is now in place and allows steering committee members to have a clearer view of what UNDP is doing in the areas and regions covered by a portfolio, thereby enhancing the quality of UNDP's partnerships with them. These mechanisms offer the potential to design projects that better integrate UNDP's existing areas of interventions with the actions of what its national partners are already doing in a given area.

However, silos between portfolios and between projects in different portfolios were noted, indicating that while silos between projects have been reduced, there is still room for improvement. In part, the persistence of silos is due to an organizational chart that does not yet reflect changes in programme structure. There are currently three portfolios, but two programmatic teams. Overall, the evaluation did not find an improvement in the effectiveness of the office as a result of the adoption of the portfolio approach.

Conclusion 5. Territorial approach in the Grand Sud: UNDP pursued its geographic repositioning started in the previous cycle by strengthening its presence and potentially increasing the coherence of its interventions in the Grand Sud in order to maximize its ability to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable populations in the country. However, achieving significant results in the Grand Sud, which is dominated by humanitarian interventions and has limited local development aid absorption capacity, remains challenging. Balancing humanitarian approaches with sustainable development and resilience is an ambitious task, especially as no concrete collaboration with humanitarian agencies was initiated during this cycle.

The findings of this evaluation highlight that while the results achieved by the PF3 in the Grand Sud are highly relevant for local populations, they remain largely ad hoc. Yet the extent of these contributions has to be put into context. First, the costs associated with intervening in remote regions with limited infrastructure, public and private service providers, and exposed to climate hazards are very high. Second, achieving transformative and sustainable results while CTD and STD financial resources are limited, local actors' capacities are weak, and humanitarian crises are ongoing is an ambitious goal, especially when coordination between different actors on the ground is insufficient. Despite this, UNDP's presence in the Grand Sud meets the moral imperative of leaving no one behind. Also, the fact the World Bank has replicated and scaled-up initiatives initiated by UNDP in the Grand Sud as part of its Mionjo project demonstrates the relevance and added value of UNDP in the region.

Recognizing that humanitarian and development efforts have not adequately advanced Madagascar, particularly in the Grand Sud, towards achieving the SDGs, this evaluation underscores the essentiality of operationalizing the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus for sustainable progress. Yet, despite UNDP's commitment to bridge the gap between humanitarian responses, sustainable development, and resilience, it has engaged in limited or no tangible collaborations with humanitarian agencies.

It is important to highlight that prominent development partners such as the European Union and the World Bank have proactively engaging in the humanitarian-development nexus in the Grand Sud, boasting considerably larger financial resources. Although the World Bank is expanding upon initiatives previously piloted by UNDP, it does not intend to establish an official partnership with UNDP, nor does the European Union.

Conclusion 6. Gender: UNDP's expenditure on interventions that significantly contribute to gender equality were found to be lower than what the country office reported and, consequently, lower than in the previous programme cycle. As only a handful of projects have gender equality as a primary objective, results in this area have been relatively modest, having had no compelling impact on the underlying causes of gender inequalities.

While the country office reported having spent almost 70 percent of its resources on projects expected to contribute significantly to gender equality (GEN2) or to have gender equality as its primary objective (GEN3), the evaluation found that the expected contribution of some projects to gender equality were inflated. The analysis of the so-called GEN3 projects raises doubts about the accuracy of the attribution of this marker to key UNDP projects. While most UNDP territorial interventions, such as income-generating activities, have sought to deliberately include women (the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale ‘targeted’ approach), others have provided support more tailored to the specific needs of women (the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale ‘responsive’ approach), such as counselling and mediation services in legal clinics. The absence of a gender strategy and a gender specialist at the country office level for most of the cycle contributed to the limited integration of gender into the office programmes and operations.

Conclusion 7. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning: For the 2019–2023 period the data generated from project monitoring was of uneven quality and was not structured in a way that facilitated the identification of key results, challenges, and lessons learned from their implementation. The country office is adopting promising approaches that in the future may strengthen the programme monitoring system.

The data collected by the office’s monitoring system during the evaluation period was sometimes incomplete and not organized or synthesized in a way that facilitated the identification of results, challenges, and lessons learned stemming from the implementation of the programme and its projects. The reports normally used for this purpose (the Results-oriented Annual Reporting, known as ROAR) are relatively superficial as is the content of the annual reviews (in PowerPoint format) conducted by the office.

The country office is implementing a new system to collect more credible and systematic monitoring data at the output and outcome levels. UNDP also began piloting an adaptive management approach so that lessons from portfolio implementation can be used in real time to make adjustments to ongoing interventions. While the system has just been launched and its effectiveness and results are yet to be seen, the evaluation recognized the office’s proactivity in piloting innovative management approaches, including the portfolio approach, which could potentially feed into UNDP’s global-level reflections.

3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. UNDP should take advantage of its privileged position with the presidency to scale up its policy dialogue and advocacy efforts to ensure that the operationalization of the Madagascar Emergence Plan, or the plan that will follow this one, prioritizes the marginalized and the most vulnerable. Specifically, UNDP must advocate for the implementation of key structural reforms in governance and inclusive economic growth.

UNDP holds a privileged position that allows it, among other things, to engage at the presidential level and provide support in aligning the country’s development objectives. Given that the development and implementation of the Madagascar Emergence Plan and its territorial variations have not achieved consensus, and a final version of the document is still missing, UNDP should enhance its advocacy efforts with the presidency to address these weaknesses, ensuring that the marginalized and the most vulnerable are targeted.

UNDP’s support for good governance, although relevant, has not found a strategic foothold enabling the implementation of the decentralization/deconcentration agenda or the ownership and scaling up of the efforts to fight corruption and facilitate access to justice. The national context has been marked by

political changes that limited the effectiveness of UNDP's governance-strengthening interventions. In the post-electoral context in which the next country programme will take place, it will be necessary for UNDP to engage in high-level advocacy efforts, to support the production and dissemination of knowledge, and to strengthen its internal expertise so as to be able to effectively influence the implementation of major structural reforms in the areas of democratic and economic governance.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should strengthen its programmatic offer in the field of access to energy by seeking new donors and by brokering viable public and private financing solutions to scale up its efforts. At the local level, UNDP should further integrate these initiatives with its ongoing efforts to establish community protected areas and improve the livelihoods of populations.

Access to water, health, food security, and livelihoods are central issues for the populations of the Grand Sud. These issues are also closely linked to access to energy, an area in which UNDP has begun to position itself during this cycle. Since the country office has only recently started focusing on access to energy, it should take advantage of its global experience in this area to give more prominence to this issue in its next country programme. At the strategic level, UNDP should strengthen its partnerships and technical support to the relevant sector ministries while continuing to pilot concrete and integrated solutions at the territorial level.¹⁷⁶ More specifically, it should seek to scale up the Africa Mini-grids project after carefully evaluating what works and what does not, and in which specific context. Such efforts should be carried out in conjunction with those related to community-based natural resource management with the aim of reducing anthropogenic pressures on natural environments, as well as those that aim to improve livelihoods through micro-entrepreneurship.

Additional donors should be convened around these issues, and public-private financing solutions should be sought to ensure the financial viability of the solar business model in the Grand Sud.

Recommendation 3. UNDP should place greater emphasis on interventions that strengthen the capacities of its national partners both at the central and territorial levels to ensure national partners are better positioned to manage development funds by themselves and, more generally, to improve the absorptive capacities of development aid at the national level.

Acknowledging that access to vertical funds by UNDP and MEDD during the next cycle remains uncertain, UNDP should use this as an opportunity to design capacity-strengthening projects in specific ministries with the aim to build their capacities to manage funds. In the medium-term, the National Implementation Modality for projects carried out in partnership with the government can bolster national ownership of processes put in place and of results achieved, while also reducing the administrative burden incurred by UNDP, which has delayed the implementation of certain projects during this cycle. In the meantime, UNDP should continue to adhere to the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers in order to maintain donor confidence.

Strengthening local authorities (CTDs) in areas such as procurement should also be prioritized (in coordination with development already operating in these areas, as well as with national institutions responsible for training civil servants) in order to minimize the risks of misuse of funds, and to promote good governance from the bottom-up. Since effective decentralization could still be delayed, local branches on national ministries (STDs) that have the responsibility of providing essential social services to local

¹⁷⁶ Specifically, the MEH (Ministère de l'Énergie et des Hydrocarbures); DREAH (Direction Régionale de l'Énergie, de l'Aménagement et de l'Électrification Rurale); ADER (Agence de Développement de l'Électrification Rurale); and JIRAMA (Jiro sy Rano Malagasy, i.e. the Malagasy Water and Electricity Company).

populations should be strengthened more systematically, notably in the Grand Sud, through dedicated projects or through PF3. More broadly, strengthening the managerial capacity of STDs and CTDs could also improve the rate of absorption of development aid in the country.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should review and clarify the contours of its territorial strategy and intervene in an even more targeted way in the Grand Sud in order to move towards a full-fledged area-based approach. This territorial or area-based approach should further integrate governance, inclusive growth, and biodiversity conservation efforts. UNDP should prioritize intervening in the Grand Sud where it has been most successful, where the Resident Coordinator Office plans to pilot its area-based approach, and where humanitarian actors might be willing to effectively collaborate.

Even though achieving tangible results in the Grand South is more difficult and costly than elsewhere in the country, UNDP has a moral obligation to reach the furthest behind first. However, since previous approaches adopted by the UN and development partners have failed to bear fruit, UNDP must move away from traditional approaches (short-term mono-sectoral projects) and instead test innovative approaches.

While the portfolio approach is promising, it is currently more of a managerial approach than an integrated multisectoral programmatic strategy. Therefore, UNDP should develop a more coherent territorial approach that could evolve into an area-based approach by focusing its efforts in the districts where it has achieved its more compelling results during this cycle. This could mean focusing on areas where community protected areas, solar power plants, Economic Transformation Zones, legal clinics, etc. have been more successful or have generated more enthusiasm in the Grand Sud region. Local/territorial ToCs should also be developed to clarify the scope of action for UNDP and other development partners, enhancing the connections between its various interventions.

UNDP should also dedicate additional efforts to intervening where the Resident Coordinator Office plans to pilot its one area-based approach and where humanitarian agencies might be willing to collaborate. It should strengthen its partnerships at the local level, particularly with humanitarian agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners, while also making increased efforts to prevent aid fragmentation in the Grand Sud region.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should ensure that the results framework of its next country programme document mentions and reflects the continued deployment of its portfolio approach in the next cycle. Most importantly, the country office should clarify whether the defining criteria of its portfolios are thematic or geographic. The organizational structure of the office should then be adapted and reflect the configuration of the portfolio, while management performance indicators should be defined and monitored to ascertain the benefits of the new arrangements. For example, the office should assess the feasibility of using a matrix management model to reduce silos and the workload of some portfolio managers.

To facilitate the dissemination and programmatic results of the portfolio approach, each of them should have distinct yet nested and interconnected TOCs, which should be updated annually if needed based on contextual changes or the addition of new projects. These ToCs should help define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) indicators to track progress towards the expected outcomes in terms of management and development, and should enable a clearer articulation of the anticipated benefits of the organizational change.

Regarding the portfolio approach, the office should clarify whether the distinguishing feature of its portfolios is geographic (in which case there could be two portfolios – upstream and downstream) or thematic (with X portfolios corresponding to the X outcomes of the CPD). For the former option, the country office should consider separating the positions of portfolio coordinators from those of thematic experts

(currently team leaders) to allow thematic experts to work in a substantive and cross-cutting way across the different portfolios. For the latter option, such an approach might imply that the office would operate with X number of thematic teams in its central Antananarivo office with their respective thematic team leaders (who can also pilot local approaches in Analamanga and in the Urbane Commune of Antananarivo), while relying on three 'integrated' subregional offices in the Grand Sud, with staff reporting to regional coordinators and to the thematic team leaders (dual reporting lines).

Regardless of the option chosen, UNDP should continue to strengthen its human resources and organizational structure to respond to the shift to the portfolio approach initiated during the current cycle. It should seek to make available the additional human resources required to fully implement this approach while strengthening the strategic linkages and operational interactions between the upstream and downstream interventions. In addition to filling its vacancies rapidly, the country office should consider the addition of an international expert in the field of governance able to carry out the most sensitive high-level advocacy work.

Recommendation 6. UNDP should strengthen its commitment to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment by defining a gender strategy for the implementation of its next country programme. This strategy should be informed by the conduct of gender-transformative analysis that can identify root causes of gender inequalities in the country and the social norms limiting the rights of women and girls.

UNDP's position on gender issues in Madagascar has mainly focused on targeting women in its interventions, but without attempting, in general, to offer solutions to their specific needs and vulnerabilities. Nor has the country office worked to change the norms, values, and power structures that underlie social inequalities. Therefore, more often than not, UNDP Madagascar has offered solutions to the consequences rather than addressing the causes of inequalities.

Based on this, UNDP should seek to enhance its contribution and establish programmatic partnerships to identify entry points within its existing areas of intervention to address and reverse social norms that are detrimental to the rights of girls and women, particularly in the Grand Sud. These interventions should be underpinned by efforts to generate evidence (disaggregated by gender) that accurately assesses the situation of women and identifies the discriminations they face. This approach should be guided by a gender strategy for the office, which would include a ToC, and by a better integration of gender-related outcomes within the results framework of the upcoming CPD.

Recommendation 7. UNDP should ensure that its monitoring and evaluation system generates evidence that will be effectively taken into account to improve ongoing projects and develop new projects building on good practices. In particular, it should strengthen the quality of its reporting, ideally at the portfolio level, so that results, lessons learned, and good practices are better documented and shared with national and international development partners.

UNDP should continue to implement its M&E system and pilot adaptive management. This should be done by trying (as much as possible) to integrate the two systems so that the envisaged 'learning loops' can capitalize on the data generated by the new monitoring system implemented by the office and feed into the portfolio governance established in the targeted regions, as well as between the upstream and downstream components of the country programme. The M&E system should be aligned with the individual portfolio ToCs as well as with the programme-wide ToC.

In terms of monitoring, it will be essential for the office to strengthen its reporting practices so they more accurately capture and more broadly share the results, lessons learned, and good practices that emerge from implementation. With the adoption of the portfolio approach, reporting should analyse in great detail the synergies and innovative results that arise (or not) from the adoption of this approach while identifying the factors that contribute/inhibit the expectation of expected results.

3.3 Management Response

RECOMMENDATION 1.



UNDP should take advantage of its privileged position with the presidency to scale up its policy dialogue and advocacy efforts to ensure that the operationalization of the Madagascar Emergence Plan, or the plan that will follow this one, prioritizes the marginalized and the most vulnerable. Specifically, UNDP must advocate for the implementation of key structural reforms in governance and inclusive economic growth.

Management Response: (Fully accept)



The strategic support project to the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic was set up as part of the 2021–2023 programmatic cycle in the spirit of (i) strengthening national mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of government action and (ii) influencing the public policy reform agenda in key areas. In line with the renewed will of the new authorities established at the end of the current electoral cycle, UNDP will endeavour to continue and strengthen this support in accordance with its role as strategic support and advice to the government.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Continue to support implementation of the project to support the Presidency with the framework of the new CPD 2024–2028 so as to strengthen the strategic steering capacities of the General Secretariat of the Presidency, taking into account: (1) institutional capacity-building; (2) the steering, monitoring, and implementation of public policies; (3) the strategic monitoring of the country's programmatic priorities (DU/SUGIB); and (4) resource mobilization for the implementation of national/ subnational development strategies.	December 2024	Strategic and Policy Unit (SPU)		

◀ Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

1.2 Support the development and implementation of key structural reforms in economic and financial governance, inclusive growth, and sustainable development to prioritize the marginalized and most vulnerable, leaving no one behind.	June 2025	Strategic and Policy Unit (SPU)		
---	-----------	---------------------------------	--	--

RECOMMENDATION 2.



UNDP should strengthen its programmatic offer in the field of access to energy by seeking new donors and by brokering viable public and private financing solutions to scale up its efforts. At the local level, UNDP should further integrate these initiatives with its ongoing efforts to establish community protected areas and improve the livelihoods of populations.

Management Response: (Fully accept)



UNDP will expand access to clean, sustainable, and affordable energy, focusing on (i) productive solutions powered by renewable energy to boost economic development, (ii) social services (education, health), and (iii) job creation, especially in rural areas. Support to the government on green energy policies, strategies, and public mechanisms will also be integrated into the package of interventions supported by UNDP in this sector.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Within the framework of the Africa Mini Grids (AMP) project, expand the intervention areas and beneficiaries to the protected areas of the previous project (APAA) in the Atsimo-Andrefana region.	June 2025	Environment Unit/ Energy Team		
2.2 Support the government in strengthening the regulatory and institutional framework for the energy efficiency sub-sector (National Energy Efficiency Policy, Strategy and Action Plan).	December 2024	Environment Unit/ Energy Team Poverty Unit		

◀ Recommendation 2 (cont'd)

2.3 Increase resource mobilization efforts for UNDP's energy supply, particularly for rural electrification (mini/ nano-grids, solar home systems, existing local solutions) through the development of compelling concept notes and Showcase Success Stories to attract potential donors.	June 2025	Environment Unit/ Energy Team Oversight/ Communication		
2.4 Strengthen the intersectorality of UNDP's green energy offer and complementarity with other sectors of intervention through the establishment of a transversal working group and, if necessary, a programmatic 'portfolio'.	June 2024	Energy Team Governance, Environment and Poverty Units		

RECOMMENDATION 3.



UNDP should place greater emphasis on interventions that strengthen the capacities of its national partners both at the central and territorial levels to ensure national partners are better positioned to manage development funds by themselves and, more generally, to improve the absorptive capacities of development aid at the national level.

Management Response: (Fully accept)



The next country programme 2024–2028 will make it possible to fully deploy the National Implementation (NIM) modality from the start of the cycle and with the necessary accompanying measures in terms of adaptation of the job profiles of project experts, capacity-building, and sequential approach. If necessary, national execution may be replaced by direct execution for all or part of the programme in order to meet a case of force majeure or operational or legal requirements expressed in particular by the technical and financial partners. The Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) will be used in close coordination with other UN agencies to manage financial risks.

◀ Recommendation 3 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Finalize the macro-assessment and conduct the capacity assessment (micro-assessment) of national partners.	June 2024	Oversight/PMSU		
3.2 Update and validate the Full NIM transition strategy as part of the 2024–2028 DPC.	March 2024	Oversight/PMSU		
3.3 Implement the Full NIM strategy in a sequential approach.	June 2025	Oversight/PMSU		
3.4 Develop and implement a Programme Support Project to strengthen the ownership of the Ministry of Economy and Finance in the overall management of the country programme, quality assurance, and learning.	June 2024	Oversight/PMSU		

RECOMMENDATION 4.



UNDP should review and clarify the contours of its territorial strategy and intervene in an even more targeted way in the Grand Sud in order to move towards a full-fledged area-based approach. This territorial or area-based approach should further integrate governance, inclusive growth, and biodiversity conservation efforts. UNDP should prioritize intervening in the Grand Sud where it has been most successful, where the Resident Coordinator Office plans to pilot its area-based approach, and where humanitarian actors might be willing to effectively collaborate.

Management Response: (Fully accept)



For the next country programme, the country will geographically target intervention areas guided by an integrated development approach, continuing a system-wide transformation to leave no one behind. In this regard, UNDP will support the implementation of the United Nations country team's pilot 'zone of convergence' (area-based approach) model. Programmatic modalities for the implementation of the CPD will be improved based on lessons learned to ensure vertical and horizontal integration of different sectoral service lines into a coherent and context-specific set of interventions

◀ Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Identify the areas of intervention for the next country programme 2024–2028.	April 2024	Programme/ Oversight		
4.2 In the case of maintaining interventions in the Great South, identify the areas according to the potential for convergence of the different interventions.	April 2024	Programme/ Oversight		
4.3 Proceed with the formulation of the operational framework of the 2024–2028 CPD by capitalizing on the integrated portfolio approach piloted during the previous cycle.	December 2023	Programme/ Oversight		

RECOMMENDATION 5.



UNDP should ensure that the results framework of its next country programme document mentions and reflects the continued deployment of its portfolio approach in the next cycle. Most importantly, the country office should clarify whether the defining criteria of its portfolios are thematic or geographic. The organizational structure of the office should then be adapted and reflect the configuration of the portfolio, while management performance indicators should be defined and monitored to ascertain the benefits of the new arrangements. For example, the office should assess the feasibility of using a matrix management model to reduce silos and the workload of some portfolio managers.

Management Response: (Fully accept)



During the previous programme, UNDP piloted an integrated 'portfolio' approach, which enhances complementarities and synergies at the strategic (upstream) and operational (downstream) levels and applies a 'systems thinking' approach to programming. UNDP has also worked to ensure relevant and consistent results, taking into account contextual changes and emerging challenges through the 'adaptive management' approach. As part of the implementation of the next cycle, UNDP will ensure that its operational structure reflects the organization of its portfolios, built around a mix of thematic and geographical clusters.

◀ Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Carry out a rapid assessment of the current structuring of portfolios/cycle 21–23 (assessment & outlook).	November 2023	Programme/ Oversight		
5.2 Review the results framework of CPD 24–28 and reflect on its portfolio structuring.	November 2023	Programme/ Oversight		
5.3 Define the learned backbone of the portfolios by integrating lessons learned, with the support of regional/global teams (regional portfolio bootcamp).	December 2023	Programme/ Oversight		
5.4 Proceed with the formulation of the operational framework of the 2024–2028 DPC by capitalizing on the integrated portfolio approach piloted during the previous cycle.	December 2023	Programme/ Oversight		

RECOMMENDATION 6.



UNDP should strengthen its commitment to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment by defining a gender strategy for the implementation of its next country programme. This strategy should be informed by the conduct of gender-transformative analysis that can identify root causes of gender inequalities in the country and the social norms limiting the rights of women and girls.

Management Response: (Fully accept)



The country office conducted a gender transformation analysis to identify the root causes of gender inequalities addressing areas and levels of intervention with staff, partners and stakeholders. The results of these analyses will serve as a basis for the development of the gender strategy, which is aligned with UNDP's overall strategy, closely addressing the strategic priorities of the programme and portfolios. Initiatives for the promotion of gender and women's empowerment will be carried out in a consistent manner, integrated into projects and cross-cutting, taking into account the strategy.

◀ Recommendation 6 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Conduct a gender analysis and develop the office's gender strategy, aligning with the overall UNDP gender strategy, and aiming to implement the 2024–2028 CPD.	March 2024	Oversight/Genre		
6.2 Integrate transformational gender outcomes into all structuring portfolios/projects of the new CPD.	June 2024	Oversight/Genre Programme		
6.3 Proceed with the implementation of the gender strategy by involving all key stakeholders.	June 2025	Oversight/Genre		

RECOMMENDATION 7.



UNDP should ensure that its monitoring and evaluation system generates evidence that will be effectively taken into account to improve ongoing projects and develop new projects building on good practices. In particular, it should strengthen the quality of its reporting, ideally at the portfolio level, so that results, lessons learned, and good practices are better documented and shared with national and international development partners.

Management Response: (Fully accept)



The monitoring and reporting system set up as part of the implementation of the current country programme is done (1) at the project level (in the ATLAS platform and then Quantum) and (2) at the portfolio level through an elaborate framework that takes into account all the headings mentioned in the recommendation.

However, UNDP will strengthen its innovative evidence-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanism from the previous cycle. This will be enhanced by a digital intervention geolocation and monitoring platform, enabling reliable and timely data/information for real-time learning and decision-making. In addition, 'adaptive management' will be consolidated and enhanced to ensure feedback loops that allow for timely and rapid adjustments based on clear evidence and input from government stakeholders.

◀ Recommendation 7 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
7.1 Develop and validate a new Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the new SCP that integrates adaptive management and scales it up based on the experiences of other country offices.	June 2024	Oversight/M&E		
7.2 Strengthen support to project managers for the preparation of reports in Quantum and their dissemination to the CP/TL and to the national party.	June 2025	Oversight/M&E		
7.3 Ensure the operationality and systematic updating of the digital M&E platform to enable learning loops to be used in the context of adaptive management.	June 2025	Oversight/M&E		

* Implementation status is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) database.

ANNEXES



Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the Independent Evaluation Office website at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/detail/22972>.

Annex 1. Evaluation terms of reference

Annex 2. List of projects for review

Annex 3. Evaluation Matrix

Annex 4. Documents consulted

Annex 5. People consulted

Annex 6. Country at a glance

Annex 7. Status of country programme document (CPD) and output indicators matrix

Annex 8. Dune Fixation, Faux Cap (2017 vs 2022)

Annex 9. Portfolio 3 intervention map



Independent
Evaluation
Office

United Nations Development Programme

Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme
One UN Plaza, DC1-20th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel. +1(646) 781 4200



[/www.undp.org/evaluation](http://www.undp.org/evaluation)



[/UNDP_Evaluation](https://twitter.com/UNDP_Evaluation)



[/evaluationoffice](https://www.youtube.com/evaluationoffice)



[/in/undp-ieo](https://www.linkedin.com/company/undp-ieo)

Evaluations for a #strongerUNDP