



Independent  
Evaluation  
Office

United Nations Development Programme

# INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION UKRAINE





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

This is the Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) for Ukraine. The evaluation was conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2021, which examined the UNDP programme period 2018-2022.

Conducted at the penultimate year of a country programme cycle, IEO's evaluations serve as an important tool for strengthening UNDP's organizational accountability and learning. This was also the case for the ICPE for Ukraine, which was completed with significant support from UNDP country office and the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC), as well as the participation of the Government and relevant national stakeholders in Ukraine. Results of the evaluation were used to inform the development of UNDP Ukraine's next country programme strategy. The present ICPE report included UNDP Ukraine's Management Response, setting the course of its actions moving forward.

Unfortunately, the conflict in Ukraine intensified by the invasion over the last few months, significantly altering the course of its history and development trajectory. At the time of publishing the report, UNDP is faced with a monumental task of recalibrating and redrawing the nature of its work in the country in the coming years.

The present ICPE report captured UNDP's work up until the end of 2021. UNDP supported the acceleration of Ukraine's progress on sustainable development, advancement of democratic policies, and meeting the needs of conflict-affected populations. UNDP was strongly positioned in the country during the period under review, owing to an array of comparative strengths, including high-level rapport with the Government, technical and financial capacity, and a regional presence. UNDP was entrusted to support Ukraine's health procurement system, digital transformation and green economy. Its response to the pandemic was swift, and well-coordinated with the Government and development partners. In eastern Ukraine, UNDP established itself as an important provider of development services, managing a multi-sector, multi-donor recovery and peacebuilding programme, enhancing the resilience of conflict-affected communities.

Encouraged by the programme accomplishments and results gained over the country programme cycle, I hope that this report will be useful in showcasing the dedication and commitment of our colleagues and national partners, as well as underscoring the importance for UNDP to coordinate and collaborate with humanitarian, development and peace actors, ensuring its focus on national and community crisis prevention, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, with robust linkages to sustained peacebuilding.

I would like to thank our colleagues at UNDP Ukraine country office and the RBEC, the Government of Ukraine, and national development partners, for their engagement and support during this evaluation exercise.



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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ASC</b>	Administrative Service Centre
<b>BMO</b>	Business membership organization
<b>CAB</b>	Citizens' Advice Bureau
<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	Carbon Dioxide
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>CPA</b>	Central Procurement Agency
<b>CPD</b>	Country Programme Document
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>CSWG</b>	Community Security Working Group
<b>DIM</b>	Direct implementation modality
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster risk reduction
<b>EEF</b>	Energy Efficiency Fund
<b>EIB</b>	European Investment Bank
<b>ESCO</b>	Energy Service Company
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FSM</b>	Financial support mechanism
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GCA</b>	Government-controlled area
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender equality and women's empowerment
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse gas
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic information system
<b>Global Fund</b>	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
<b>GRES</b>	Gender Responsive Effectiveness Scale
<b>HCFC</b>	Hydrochlorofluorocarbon
<b>HOA</b>	Home Owners association
<b>HOUSES</b>	Home Owners of Ukraine for Sustainable Energy Solutions
<b>HRP</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced persons
<b>IDRPB</b>	Inclusive Development, Recovery and Peacebuilding

<b>IEO</b>	Independent Evaluation Office
<b>IFI</b>	International financial institution
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IMRP</b>	Integrated Monitoring, Reporting, and Planning Platform
<b>INFF</b>	Integrated National Financing Framework
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>LULUCF</b>	Land use, land-use change and forestry
<b>MDT</b>	Ministry of Digital Transformation
<b>MEPNR</b>	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprise
<b>NACP</b>	National Agency on Corruption Prevention
<b>NGCA</b>	Non-government controlled area
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>ODS</b>	Ozone-depleting substances
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PSC</b>	Project Steering Committee
<b>RBEC</b>	Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>RBM</b>	Results-based management
<b>RDP</b>	Regional Development Programme
<b>RESURFACE</b>	Responding to Strengthen Ukraine's Resilience in the Face of COVID-19 Epidemic project
<b>ROAR</b>	Results-Oriented Annual Report
<b>RPB</b>	Recovery and Peacebuilding component of IDRPB
<b>RPP</b>	Joint United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme
<b>RRF</b>	Rapid Recovery Facility
<b>SCORE</b>	Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>UAH</b>	Ukraine hryvnia
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund

<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>UNOPS</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services
<b>UNPF</b>	United Nations Partnership Framework
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UOO</b>	Ukrainian Ombudsperson’s Office
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>UWC</b>	Ukrainian Women’s Congress
<b>VET</b>	Vocational education and training
<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review
<b>VRU</b>	Verkhovna Rada or Parliament of Ukraine
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

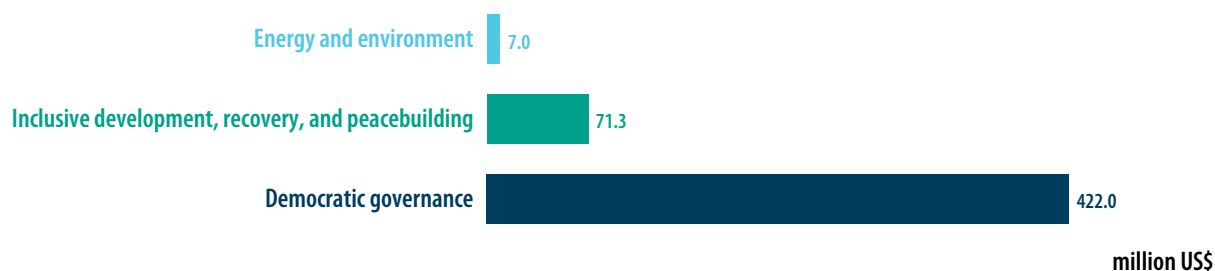


# Evaluation Brief: Ukraine

Ukraine is a lower middle-income country with a population of 44 million and a high level of human development. Widespread citizen grievances over the lack of political accountability and corruption culminated in the so-called “Revolution of Dignity” in 2014, a pivotal event for the country which sparked a range of national reform processes. The European Union (EU) Association Agreement with Ukraine, signed in 2014, has framed the country’s development direction for the future. Following the establishment of the new Government in 2019, the country prioritized economic revival, an end to the conflict, the digitalization of public service delivery, improvements in energy efficiency, and the eradication of corruption.

The Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted the Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) for Ukraine in 2021. The ICPE examined the UNDP country programme 2018–2022 based on the goals envisaged in its Country Programme Document (CPD) and any changes made in response to the emerging context, such as the Presidential and Parliamentary elections and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Programme expenditure by thematic area, 2018–2021



## Findings and conclusions

Based on the broad CPD programme goals for the period (democratic governance, energy and environment, and inclusive development, recovery and peacebuilding), UNDP Ukraine has focused on supporting the country to accelerate progress on sustainable development, advance democratic policies, and address the needs of its conflict-affected population. Since 2019, the new country office management has introduced various internal initiatives to revamp the core business and programme operations and exercised adaptive management to address the new Government’s immediate priority areas in line with the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, while effectively responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

UNDP enjoyed strong positioning in Ukraine during the period under review, owing to an array of comparative strengths, including high-level rapport with the Government, technical and financial capacity, and a regional presence. UNDP was entrusted to support Ukraine’s health procurement system and advance digital transformation and the green economy, placing particular emphasis on piloting and demonstrating innovative solutions through digitalization. The UNDP response to the COVID-19 pandemic was swift and well-coordinated with the Government and other national partners.

UNDP made significant contributions to various portfolio areas. It has established itself as a major player, managing a complex, multi-sector, multi-donor recovery and peacebuilding programme in eastern Ukraine to build the resilience of conflict-affected communities. UNDP supported government institutions in the areas of human rights, parliamentary reform and anticorruption, contributing to government accountability, transparency and efficiency, while also supporting the role of civil society. UNDP played a major role in climate change mitigation through promoting energy efficiency in public and residential buildings and renewable energy, and supported the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

The strong relevance of the UNDP programme, alongside its attention to meeting the needs of target populations and leveraging its comparative strengths, were indispensable in achieving these results. At the same time, fundamental programme management and design issues, such as implementation delays, programme fragmentation and limited consideration for sustainability, affected programme performance in some cases.

UNDP contributed to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reaffirmed as a priority by the Government. Various efforts and initiatives have been made at national and local levels, resulting in the country's first SDG Voluntary National Review in 2020, the development of a framework for securing financing mechanisms, and keeping the SDG agenda in national dialogue amid the complex operational environment. To fully address the SDG agenda, there was room for improvement in SDG localization efforts, programme coordination within the country office, partnerships with other United Nations agencies, engagement with relevant government offices, and outreach to international financial institutions and other donors.

UNDP efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment had some tangible results. For example, UNDP successfully advocated for the application of a 40 percent gender quota in recent elections. Programme results during the period were mostly gender-targeted or -responsive, falling short of being transformative. UNDP Ukraine launched a robust gender strategy in 2019, including gender champions and gender analysis in all new projects.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1. Strategic focus.** Operating in a complex conflict setting, UNDP should continue to use the SDGs as a unifying framework for its country programme in the next cycle, with due consideration for emerging issues in the country. At thematic level, UNDP should explore issues drawn from the evaluation.

**Recommendation 2. Programme implementation.** UNDP should address programme implementation issues in the country office: continuing to ensure cross-portfolio synergy; ensuring greater programmatic partnership with other United Nations agencies working on similar areas; and addressing delays in project implementation, time-consuming procurement processes, and limited project oversight. Gender initiatives launched in 2019 should be fully implemented.

# CHAPTER 1

# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION



This chapter presents the evaluation purpose and methodology, as well as the development context of Ukraine and a summary of the UNDP country programme.

## 1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

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

Conducted in the penultimate year of a country programme cycle, ICPEs are intended to strengthen UNDP accountability to government and national stakeholders, as well as its Executive Board, and to enhance organizational learning.

This is the second country-level evaluation conducted by the IEO for Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> The ICPE examined the current UNDP Ukraine programme covering the period 2018–2022, with a view to contributing to the preparation of the new Country Programme Document (CPD) for the upcoming cycle (2023–2027). The ICPE was conducted in close collaboration with the Government of Ukraine, UNDP Ukraine country office and UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC).

## 1.2 Evaluation methodology

The ICPE was conducted in accordance with the methodology and process outlined in the terms of reference (Annex 1 available online). It was underpinned by four key evaluation questions (Box 1). First, it sought to define the objectives of UNDP Ukraine for the current programme cycle, which was influenced by the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, with armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, and was delivered in the context of a series of structural changes in the country office. The evaluation then assessed the effectiveness of the UNDP programme, by examining progress made towards the achievement of expected outputs and their contribution to outcome-level goals, based on the CPD results and resources framework.<sup>3</sup> This included the extent and quality of the UNDP response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the degree to which it has supported the Government of Ukraine in the preparedness, response and recovery process. Factors behind the overall performance of UNDP were assessed in each area.

### BOX 1. Evaluation questions

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

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

<sup>2</sup> The first evaluation, 'Assessment of Development Results in Ukraine,' was conducted in 2004 for the period 1997 – 2004.

<sup>3</sup> UNDP Ukraine Country Programme Document 2018-2022.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions, the ICPE was conducted remotely. Data and information were collected through the following means:

- Desk review of reference material, including programme and project related documents, past evaluation and audit reports, country office/ RBEC strategy notes, and available corporate financial data and self-reported results through Results-Oriented Annual Reports (ROARs) (see Annex 3 online for full list of documents).<sup>4</sup>
- A questionnaire for the country office and a survey of the SDG Regional Coordinators, located in all 24 *oblasts* (regions) of Ukraine.<sup>5</sup>
- Online interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders. The ICPE engaged a total of 221 stakeholders, including government officials, national implementing partners, United Nations agencies, development partners, international financial institutions (IFIs), civil society, private sector and beneficiary groups.
- Geo-tagged photographs of project activities, collected by UNDP Ukraine field staff, in collaboration with the UNDP Geographic Information System (GIS) team and country office.

The ICPE team examined 20 of the 45 projects in the system, which were selected for in-depth review based on the following criteria: a balanced representation of issues addressed under each of the portfolios; budget size; project maturity; and inclusion of both successful and challenging interventions (see Annex 4 online for full list of projects reviewed).<sup>6</sup>

The team triangulated the assembled information before arriving at the final analysis. It developed a theory of change for each portfolio to understand the overall programme construct, logic and assumptions. The status of progress made against performance indicators as defined in the CPD Results and Resources Framework was tabulated by year (see Annex 5 online for a summary of the status of CPD outcome and output indicators).

Based on the terms of reference, the evaluation used a four-point rating system to assess the overall country programme, across the following criteria: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.<sup>7</sup> Results were tabulated and presented with brief justifications (see Section 2.6). Outcome-level ratings were aggregated to country programme level.

The evaluation adhered to United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.<sup>8</sup> Particular attention was paid to the country's vulnerable populations, whose needs were expected to be addressed through the country programme. They included women, youth, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and those affected by the ongoing conflict, and people with disabilities. In line with the UNDP principle of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), the ICPE examined the level of gender mainstreaming across

<sup>4</sup> UNDP Ukraine conducted 11 decentralized evaluations (of projects) in the 2018-2022 programme cycle. Of these, eight evaluations were quality assessed: three as Satisfactory and five as Moderately Satisfactory.

<sup>5</sup> A survey was administered to the SDG Regional Coordinators (originally personnel of the 'HOUSES' project, recruited as community development associates/ regional coordinators) to understand their roles, responsibilities, achievements and challenges. 17 Coordinators responded to the survey.

<sup>6</sup> For Ukraine, the term 'project' in Atlas represents a broader programme framework that comprises multiple projects.

<sup>7</sup> **4 = Satisfactory/ Achieved** means that outcomes exceed expectations/ all intended programme outputs and outcomes have been delivered; **3 = Moderately satisfactory/ Mostly achieved** means that there were some limitations in the contribution of UNDP programmes that prevent an excellent rating but no major shortfalls. Many of the planned programme outputs/ outcomes have been delivered and expected results are likely to be achieved. Overall, the assessment is substantially positive, and problems were small relative to the positive findings; **2 = Moderately unsatisfactory/ Partially achieved** means that significant shortfalls have been identified, but there were also some positive findings. Only some of the intended outputs and outcomes have been completed/ achieved. Overall, the assessment is less positive; **1 = Unsatisfactory/Not achieved** means that the contribution of the UNDP programme faced severe constraints and the negative assessment outweighs any positive assessments. There has been limited or no achievement of planned outputs/ outcomes.

<sup>8</sup> See: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>.

the country programme. Sex-disaggregated data were collected, where available, and assessed against programme outcomes using project expenditure data (the Gender Marker), as well as the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES).<sup>9</sup>

The first draft of the ICPE report was shared with the country office and RBEC, and revised based on their feedback. The second draft was shared with the Government and national stakeholders. A final stakeholder debriefing was cancelled, unfortunately, due to the deteriorating situation in the country. The draft report went through a quality assurance process before finalization, including IEO internal peer review and external reviews.

## 1.3 Limitations

The evaluation team was unable to conduct a mission to Ukraine due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Securing planned interviews was also challenging due to the remote nature of data collection. To mitigate these limitations, the team engaged to the extent possible with external teams conducting similar assessments for Ukraine, such as the United Nations Partnership Framework evaluation, the European Union (EU) programme evaluation in Ukraine (with field visits to conflict-affected regions in eastern Ukraine), and the UNDP country audit. Information and assessment results collected by these external teams were used as part of the ICPE analysis. With support of the GIS team at UNDP headquarters, the team arranged with the country office to collect geo-tagged photos from various field sites, which provided useful visual accounts of UNDP activities on the ground. The recruitment of national consultants, including for an in-depth analysis of country context, facilitated the overall data collection and country analysis.

## 1.4 Country context

With a population of 44.38 million in 2019, Ukraine is a lower middle-income country with a high level of human development.<sup>10</sup> Since the declaration of independence in 1991, the country has been on a challenging journey towards the democratization of political and social life and liberalization of the economy. The breakdown of the Soviet system brought the economy into a state of collapse, casting a large segment of the population into poverty. By the year 2000, gross domestic product (GDP) was US\$ 700 per capita, around 50 percent of what it had been a decade earlier.<sup>11</sup> The past 30 years have also been characterized by significant political instability and frequent changes of government. The “Orange Revolution” of 2004 failed to deliver the improvements in governance and living conditions that Ukrainian citizens had expected. Instead, the political and economic spheres were dominated by oligarchic interests, and corruption became rife. The governance and economic reforms touted by all incoming governments have failed to deliver significant improvements in living conditions.

<sup>9</sup> **The Gender Marker** is a corporate gender rating assigned to all UNDP projects during design phase and used to track planned project expenditures related to gender efforts in this report. The rating is awarded as follows: GEN3 = outputs that have gender equality as the main objective; GEN2 = outputs that have gender equality as a significant objective; GEN1 = outputs that will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly; and GEN0 = outputs that are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality.

**The Gender Results Effectiveness Scale** is used to classify gender results into five groups: (i) result had a negative outcome that aggravated or reinforced existing gender inequalities and norms (gender negative); (ii) result had no attention to gender and failed to acknowledge the different needs of men, women, girls and boys and/or marginalized populations (gender blind); (iii) result focused on numerical equity (50/50) of women, men and marginalized populations (gender targeted); (iv) result that addressed the differential needs of men and women and equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status and rights, but did not address root causes of inequalities (gender responsive); and (v) result contributed to changes in norms, cultural values, power structures and the roots of gender inequalities and discrimination (gender transformative). UNDP IEO (2016) ICPE How-to Note on Gender.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank data (WDI 2021) and UNDP (2020) Human Development Report for Ukraine. Ukraine’s Human Development Index value for 2019 was 0.779, ranking 74 out of 189 countries and territories.

<sup>11</sup> UNDP (2004) Assessment of Development Results – Ukraine.

In 2014 the country experienced the so-called “Revolution of Dignity”, which stemmed from widespread citizen grievances about the lack of political accountability and corruption, predicated on the hope for a more responsive government. This pivotal event introduced a wide-ranging national reform process aimed at bolstering democratic governance and approximating Ukraine to EU standards.

The Association Agreement signed between the EU and Ukraine in 2014 has framed the country’s development direction.<sup>12</sup> The National Economic Strategy 2030, approved in 2021, further defined Ukraine’s vision and strategy for priority reforms in key areas, including energy, industry, agriculture, mining and infrastructure, as well as cross-cutting issues such as digitalization, the Green Deal, entrepreneurship development and balanced regional development.

In 2019, the newly-elected President of Ukraine issued a decree “On Sustainable Development Goals of Ukraine for the period till 2030,” which has placed the SDGs at the forefront of the country’s development agenda.<sup>13</sup> Subsequently, the Government established a national SDG monitoring system consisting of 183 indicators and 86 targets.<sup>14</sup> An Inter-Agency Working Group on the SDGs was established as an advisory body to the Cabinet of Ministers, and to coordinate the efforts of executive authorities to achieve Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

While important institutional frameworks have been put in place since 2014, various development challenges remain:

**Protracted conflict in eastern Ukraine.** The armed conflict, which started in 2014 in Donetsk and Luhansk, has been a major destabilizing force, drawing significant resources and attention from Ukraine’s domestic development challenges. The conflict has resulted in more than 10,300 dead, 24,000 injured, and 1.5 million internally displaced people.<sup>15</sup> Over 3 million people require humanitarian assistance, including 1.5 million in the Government-controlled area (GCA), 1.7 million in the non-government controlled area (NGCA), and 0.2 million elsewhere in Ukraine.<sup>16</sup> A 500 kilometre ‘contact line’ currently separates the GCA and NGCA. The conflict has destroyed public and private infrastructure, disrupted social services, restricted people’s movement, and resulted in widespread human rights violations, including gender-based violence (GBV).<sup>17</sup>

**Weak public institutions with reforms to complete.** Ukraine has made progress in the area of governance since 2014. World Bank indicators measuring voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption have all seen improvement since 2014 (see Table 1). Perceptions of corruption have improved, and Ukraine dropped from 130<sup>th</sup> in 2015 to 117<sup>th</sup> in 2020 out of 180 countries.<sup>18</sup> However, several governance indicators remain low, in particular rule of law (27<sup>th</sup> percentile) and control of corruption (24<sup>th</sup> percentile), as well as political stability (12<sup>th</sup> percentile), below the average for lower middle-income countries (35<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> percentiles, respectively).<sup>19</sup> Citizen trust in public institutions remains low.<sup>20</sup> The Government’s reform agenda is underway in areas such as

<sup>12</sup> The EU Association Agreement calls for the approximation of Ukraine’s standards and legislation to EU directives, including energy and environmental legislation.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/cili-stalogo-rozvitku-ta-ukrayina-eu>.

<sup>14</sup> Government of Ukraine (2020) Voluntary National Review.

<sup>15</sup> Sources: UNDP. Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Report – Ukraine. The civilian death toll has topped 3,090 with over 7,000 injured since 2014. OCHA (2020) Humanitarian Response Plan – Ukraine 2021: [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ukraine\\_hno\\_hrp-en.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ukraine_hno_hrp-en.pdf). UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en/internally-displaced-persons>

<sup>16</sup> OCHA (2020) Humanitarian Response Plan – Ukraine 2021.

<sup>17</sup> UNFPA (2018) Gender-based violence in the conflict-affected regions of Ukraine. [https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/gbv%20in%20the%20conflict-affected%20regions%20of%20ukraine\\_eng.pdf](https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/gbv%20in%20the%20conflict-affected%20regions%20of%20ukraine_eng.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Transparency International: Corruption Perception Index (2020 data) and Baseline (2015).

<sup>19</sup> The World Bank. 0 is the lowest and 100 the highest rank.

<sup>20</sup> UNDP (2019) Integrity and Inclusiveness of the Democratic Process in Ukraine: Analysis of Interim Research Findings in the Regions.

anticorruption, public administration, procurement, decentralization, health care and justice. Progress has been made on anticorruption,<sup>21</sup> in the healthcare sector,<sup>22</sup> and on the decentralization process.<sup>23</sup> However, the implementation of these reforms has been challenged by political backlash, a deep-rooted nexus between business and political interests, and security challenges in the eastern region.<sup>24</sup>

**TABLE 1. Ukraine governance related indicators**

World Bank Governance Indicators Estimate of Governance (ranges from approximately -2.5 [weak] to 2.5 [strong] governance performance)			
Governance Indicators	Baseline (2014)	Most Recent Value (2020)	Direction
Voice and Accountability	-0.14	0.09	Progress
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/ Terrorism	-2.02	-1.16	Progress
Government Effectiveness	-0.41	-0.36	Progress
Regulatory Quality	-0.63	-0.30	Progress
Rule of Law	-0.79	-0.67	Progress
Control of Corruption	-0.99	-0.78	Progress

Source: World Bank

**Energy efficiency and environment.** Ukraine's energy sector is highly dependent on the importation of fossil fuels (natural gas, oil and coal), which is considered a major risk to the country's energy security. Traditional resources such as natural gas and coal account for over 60 per cent of the national energy balance. With limited domestic fossil energy sources, Ukraine currently relies on foreign energy suppliers to meet its energy needs. Access to energy is affected by the conflict, as most of its coal (a main energy source) comes from the eastern regions. Ukraine is one the least energy-efficient countries in Europe,<sup>25</sup> with an intensity rate of 0.25 tons of oil equivalent/ \$1000.<sup>26</sup> Buildings account for over 5 percent of energy use and two million tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, making the average energy-efficiency of buildings approximately three to four times lower than in western Europe. Improving the energy performance of buildings is a key factor in improving Ukraine's energy security. Ukraine has committed to develop

<sup>21</sup> Such as establishing a solid institutional framework comprising a number of key specialized government agencies, setting new integrity standards in the public sector and increased transparency on elected representatives and political parties. OECD (2017) Anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine, fourth round of monitoring of the Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan, Fighting Corruption in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

<sup>22</sup> The healthcare sector, in particular, has undergone significant improvement in transparency underpinned by more efficient procurement of medicines, which has afforded citizens a wider choice and lower prices in their access to medical services.

<sup>23</sup> The decentralization reform started in 2014, aimed at improving public service delivery and rural development. Since the adoption of the law on 'Voluntary Amalgamated Territorial Communities' in 2015, about 1,029 amalgamated communities were created, impacting 11.7 million people, together with budget decentralization. However, the amalgamation process remains incomplete, and power-sharing between central and local authorities requires further clarification and constitutional amendments. Communities in the eastern region have not been fully amalgamated. There are a total of 18 communities (10 in Donetsk and 8 in Luhansk *oblasts*) that have a different legal status and are managed by civil-military administrations. As of September 2021, all heads of the civil-military administrations in both Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* have been appointed.

<sup>24</sup> For example, the majority victory of the 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his party was followed by a setback in the 2020 local elections and a government reshuffle in March 2020, resulting in a major reorganization of the Government. Anticorruption reform has met resistance and led to a clash between the President and the Constitutional Court, which escalated with the firing of two constitutional judges by the President in early 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Antonenko, A. et al. (2018) Reforming Ukraine's Energy Sector: Critical Unfinished Business. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2018/02/06/reforming-ukraine-s-energy-sector-critical-unfinished-business-pub-75449>.

<sup>26</sup> International Energy Agency (2021) Ukraine Energy Profile. <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/ac51678f-5069-4495-9551-87040cb0c99d/UkraineEnergyProfile.pdf>.

a framework for achieving energy efficiency through a market-based approach.<sup>27</sup> The Energy Strategy envisages that, by 2035, biomass in the heating and cooling sector will account for up to 5 million tons per year, comprising 85 percent of all renewable energy sources. Environmental degradation has been exacerbated by the conflict, which puts pressure on natural resources and damages forest ecosystems.<sup>28</sup> Water and air pollution, chemical and waste management, and contamination from the Chernobyl disaster are among other environment-related challenges. Climate change poses a significant risk, especially in agriculture, one of the biggest sectors of the country's economy. Areas vulnerable to drought are rapidly growing, compromising Ukraine's food security and economic growth.<sup>29</sup>

**Socioeconomic challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.** GDP per capita, which peaked in 2013 at \$4,029, declined significantly between 2014 (\$3,105) and 2015 (\$2,125), and had gradually recovered by 2020 (\$3,727).<sup>30</sup> However, Ukraine remains one of the poorest countries in Europe.<sup>31</sup> Unemployment has been in decline (from 9.5 percent in 2017 to 8.2 percent in 2019), although the rate increased among women (from 7.7 to 7.9). In Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*, while male unemployment fell between 2017 and 2019, the rate for women rose over the same period, from 7.4 to 12.7 percent in Donetsk, and 14 to 16 percent in Luhansk. Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) constitute 60 percent of Ukraine's employment and 20 percent of its GDP.<sup>32</sup>

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Government issued quarantine and lockdown measures. The impact of the pandemic was significant; real GDP declined by 4 percent and unemployment rose to 10 percent by the end of 2020.<sup>33</sup> The Government set up a special fund, with 80.9 billion Ukrainian hryvnia (UAH) allocated in April 2020 to respond to the crisis. As of November 2021, there had been 3.1 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ukraine with over 73,000 deaths, and 17.7 million vaccines had been administered by October 2021.<sup>34</sup>

**Ukraine faces significant social inequalities.** The 2020 Ukraine Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports that SDG 10 (Reduce Inequalities) has a low probability of being achieved by 2030.<sup>35</sup> More than 60 percent of Ukrainians identify discrimination as a serious issue,<sup>36</sup> and many feel excluded from genuine and inclusive participation.<sup>37</sup> While progress has been made, women and vulnerable groups suffer from discrimination and limited political participation. The 2019 Gender Inequality Index value was 0.234, ranking Ukraine 52<sup>nd</sup> out of 162 countries.<sup>38</sup> Although women's representation in Parliament reached an all-time high of about 21 percent in the current convocation,<sup>39</sup> female participation in the labour market is 46.7 percent,

<sup>27</sup> OECD (2019) Policy Insights: Enhancing Competitiveness in Ukraine through a Sustainable Framework for Energy Service Companies. <https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/countries/Enhancing-Competitiveness-in-Ukraine-through-Sustainable-Framework-for-Energy-Service-Companies-2019.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> UNEP (2018) Ukraine's Donbas bears the brunt of toxic armed conflict. <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/ukraines-donbas-bears-brunt-toxic-armed-conflict>.

<sup>29</sup> With some of the richest farmland on the planet, Ukraine could see its agriculture sector hit hard by rising temperatures. With higher annual average temperatures and more frequent drought, crop productivity might be severely impaired in southern parts of the country. Temperature rises could also increase crop pests, further impacting crop yields. <https://eu4climate.eu/ukraine/>.

<sup>30</sup> World Bank Data. GDP per capita (current US\$) – Ukraine. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=UA>.

<sup>31</sup> IMF (2021) World Economic Outlook Database. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO>.

<sup>32</sup> UNDP COVID-19 data. <https://data.undp.org/country/ukraine/>.

<sup>33</sup> OECD (2022) The COVID-19 Crisis in Ukraine. <https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/competitiveness-programme/eastern-partners/COVID-19-CRISIS-IN-UKRAINE.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Ukraine: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard. <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/ua>.

<sup>35</sup> Government of Ukraine (2020) Voluntary National Review. [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26295VNR\\_2020\\_Ukraine\\_Report.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26295VNR_2020_Ukraine_Report.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2020) Human Rights Observance in Ukraine. [https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/library/democratic\\_governance/what-ukrainians-know-and-think-about-human-rights--assessment-of.html](https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/library/democratic_governance/what-ukrainians-know-and-think-about-human-rights--assessment-of.html).

<sup>37</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2019) Analysis of the Integrity and Inclusiveness of the Democratic Process in Ukraine.

<sup>38</sup> UNDP (2020) Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Report – Ukraine; Human Development Report Data Centre.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

compared to 63.1 for men. The participation of women, youth, IDPs, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender community, Roma, people with disabilities and other marginalized populations in decision-making processes remains limited.

## 1.5 The UNDP programme under review 2018-2022

UNDP has operated in Ukraine since 1993, two years after the country's independence.<sup>40</sup> Through its programmes over the years, UNDP has supported the Government of Ukraine in a range of development areas, including the country's transition to a market economy and democratic processes.

The UNDP Ukraine programme for 2018-2022 was guided by the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPF) of the same period, which reflects Ukraine's development priorities in line with the EU Association Agreement and Agenda 2030/ the SDGs.<sup>41</sup> The UNPF rests on four programme pillars, with an estimated budget of \$676 million for the five-year period. As the largest of the 23 United Nations agencies operating in Ukraine, UNDP was envisaged to deliver 35 percent of UNPF resources (\$239 million), addressing democratic governance (Pillar 3 with \$92 million), support to eastern Ukraine (Pillar 4 with \$77 million), and sustainable growth and environment (Pillar 1 with \$71 million).<sup>42</sup>

- Pillar 1: Sustainable economic growth, environment and employment
- Pillar 2: Equitable access to quality and inclusive services and social protection
- Pillar 3: Democratic governance, rule of law and civic participation
- Pillar 4: Human security, social cohesion and recovery with a focus on eastern Ukraine

The UNPF underscores the importance of strong coherence between the humanitarian, recovery and development programmes of the various agencies. The United Nations Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) serves as a joint framework for humanitarian agencies, setting out \$186 million in humanitarian assistance for 2021.<sup>43</sup>

The UNDP CPD 2018-2022 comprises four outcome areas: (i) democratic governance; (ii) energy and environment; (iii) inclusive development; and (iv) recovery and peacebuilding.<sup>44</sup> After the launch of the CPD, UNDP Ukraine underwent a series of programmatic and operational restructuring processes.<sup>45</sup> It reorganized the programme into three pillars, merging the inclusive development and recovery and peacebuilding outcomes under a single pillar (inclusive development, recovery and peacebuilding, or IDRPB) (Box 2).

<sup>40</sup> Standard Basic Framework Agreement. [http://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/operations/legal\\_framework/jcr%3acontent/centerparsys/download/file.res/agreement\\_SBFA.pdf](http://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/operations/legal_framework/jcr%3acontent/centerparsys/download/file.res/agreement_SBFA.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> Government of Ukraine (2018) United Nations Partnership Framework 2018-2022.

<sup>42</sup> By the end of the third year, UNDP programmes accounted for 69 percent of actual UNPF expenditure, covering \$444 million of the total \$644 million addressing the four pillars. United Nations country team/Resident Coordinator Office data (Ukraine UNPF Funds by pillar).

<sup>43</sup> OCHA (2021) Ukraine 2021: Humanitarian Response Plan.

<sup>44</sup> Each of the outcomes is linked to the relevant SDGs: Outcome 1 with SDGs 5, 10, 16; Outcome 2 with Goals 1, 8, 9, 10; Outcome 3 with Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15; and Outcome 4 with Goal 16.

<sup>45</sup> Internal restructuring led by RBEC (2018) and change management (2019).

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## BOX 2. UNDP three thematic pillars with four CPD outcomes

### Democratic governance

- CPD Outcome 1 (UNPF Outcome 1). By 2022, women and men, girls and boys participate in decision-making and enjoy human rights, gender equality, effective, transparent and non-discriminatory public services.

### Energy and environment

- CPD Outcome 3 (UNPF Outcome 4.2). By 2022, national institutions, private business and communities implement gender-responsive policies and practices to achieve sustainable management of natural resources, preservation of ecosystems, mitigation, adaptation to climate change and generation of green jobs.

### Inclusive development, recovery and peacebuilding (IDRPB)

- CPD Outcome 2 (UNPF Outcome 4.1). By 2022, all women and men, especially young people, equally benefit from an enabling environment that includes labour market, access to decent jobs and economic opportunities (Inclusive development).
- CPD Outcome 4 (UNPF Outcome 3.1). By 2022, communities, including vulnerable people and IDPs, are more resilient and equitably benefit from greater social cohesion, quality services and recovery support (Recovery and peacebuilding in eastern Ukraine).

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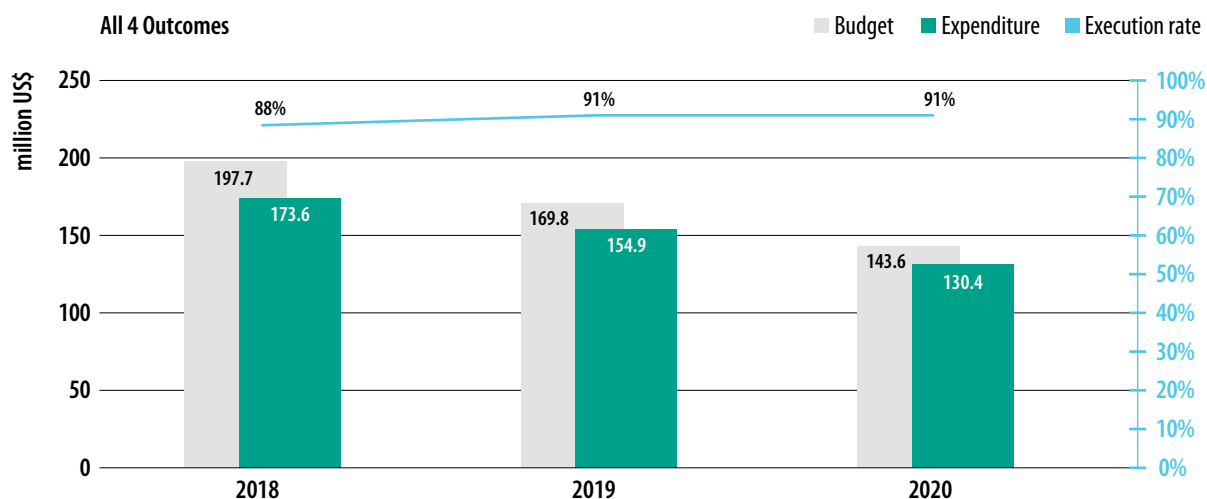
The total budget for the period 2018-2022 is \$631.2 million, far larger than the indicative programme budget of \$239 million estimated at the time of the CPD launch. Democratic Governance (Outcome 1) is the largest portfolio, with 86 percent of total programme expenditure from 2018 to 2020. Over 90 percent of Outcome 1 expenditure has been under the health governance reform and procurement activities, funded by the Ministry of Health (MoH), partially supported by a World Bank loan to the Government of Ukraine.<sup>46</sup> Support to the conflict-affected regions in eastern Ukraine (Outcome 4) accounted for 12 percent of programme expenditure, followed by Inclusive Development (Outcome 2) and Energy and Environment (Outcome 3), both with 1 percent of expenditure. The country office maintained a high delivery rate of 90 per cent between 2018 and 2020.

The total programmatic expenditure of UNDP Ukraine exceeded \$500 million at the time of the evaluation in 2021 (see Table 2), the fourth year of the programme cycle. In the current cycle, UNDP is delivering a total of 45 projects, all implemented through the direct implementation modality (DIM), reflecting weak national institutional capacity.

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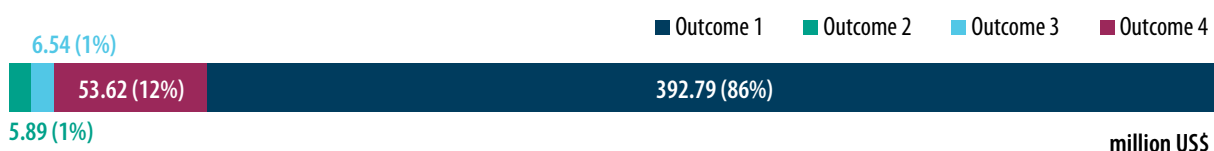
<sup>46</sup> The share of the World Bank loan in the 2021 democratic governance portfolio budget was about 1.5 percent.

**FIGURE 1. Programme budget and expenditure 2018-2020**



Source: Power BI /Atlas (as of 27 July 2021)

**FIGURE 2. Expenditure by outcome 2018-2020**



Source: Power BI /Atlas (as of 27 July 2021)

**TABLE 2. CPD planned budget and actual expenditure 2018-2022<sup>47</sup>**

CPD Outcome	CPD Planned Budget	% CPD budget	Actual Budget	% Actual budget	Actual Expenditures	% Actual expenditure
Democratic Governance						
<b>Outcome 1</b>	\$91,744,000	38%	\$517,787,721	82%	\$422,026,680	84%
Energy & Environment						
<b>Outcome 3</b>	\$42,466,400	18%	\$13,784,648	2%	\$7,017,010	1%
IDRPB						
<b>Outcome 2</b>	\$28,277,600	12%	\$9,434,286	1%	\$7,157,767	1%
<b>Outcome 4</b>	\$76,544,000	32%	\$90,223,590	14%	\$64,158,353	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$239,032,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$631,230,245</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$500,359,810</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>47</sup> Indicative resources from the CPD 2018-2022 Results and Resources Framework.

# CHAPTER 2

# FINDINGS



This chapter presents the results of the evaluation. The analysis takes into account the initial CPD results framework and changes following the restructuring of the country office.

## 2.1 Democratic governance

**CPD Outcome 1.** By 2022, women and men, girls and boys participate in decision-making and enjoy human rights, gender equality, effective, transparent, and non-discriminatory public services

**Output 1.1.** Regional and local authorities have scaled-up knowledge and skills to engage communities in planning, coordination, delivery, and monitoring of public services provision (Supported by IDRPB)

**Output 1.2.** National institutions, systems, laws and policies advance the equitable realization of human rights, especially among vulnerable groups

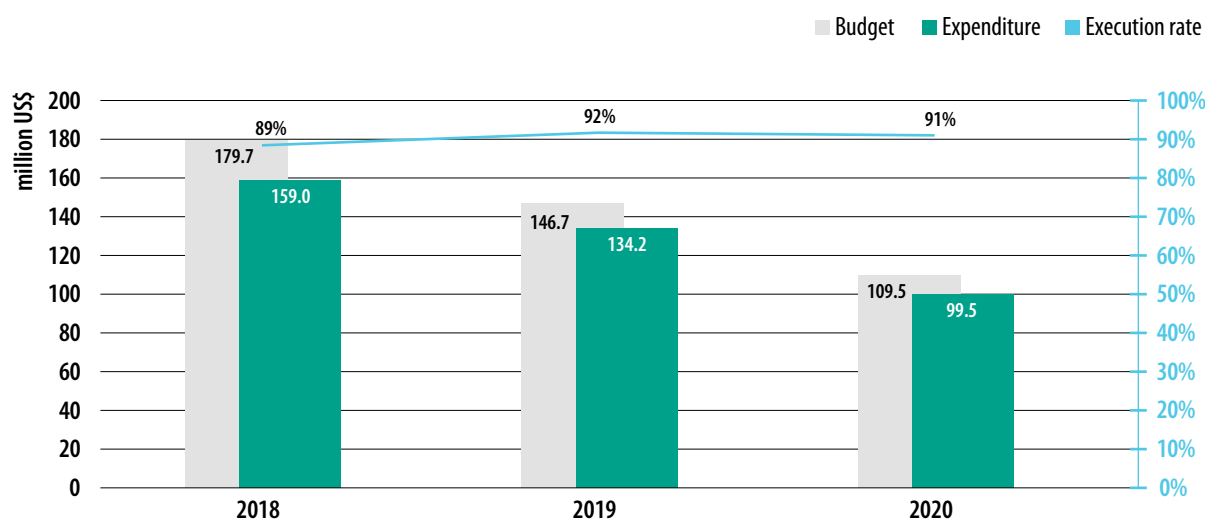
**Output 1.3.** Civil society is more engaged in national development processes

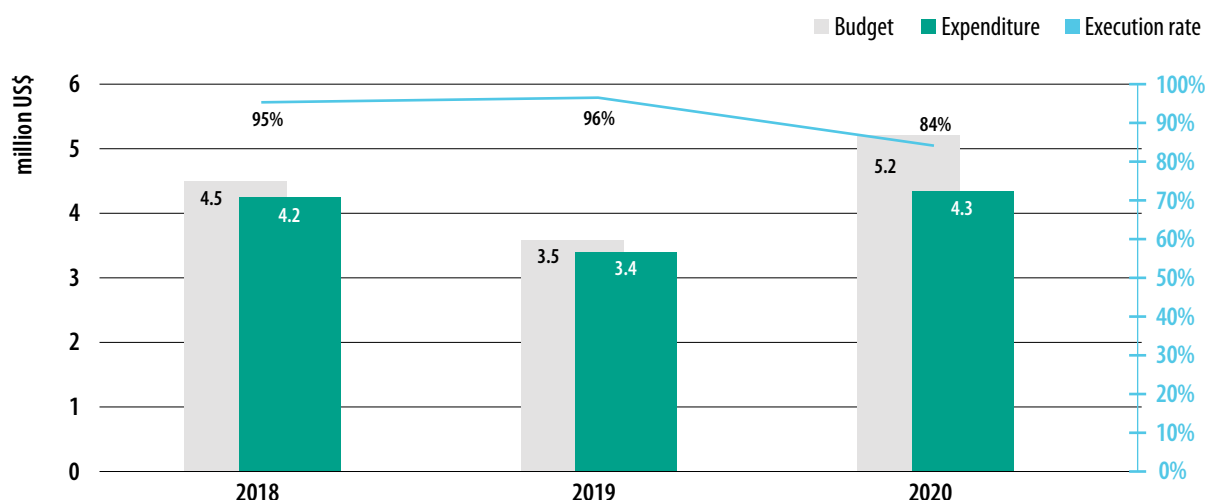
**Output 1.4.** Rule of law institutions have capacity and functions to effectively fulfil their mandates

**Output 1.5.** Measures scaled up and implemented to prevent and respond to domestic and gender -based violence (Supported by IDRPB)

**FIGURES 3 and 4. Outcome 1 budget and expenditure**

(i) All Democratic Governance portfolio; (ii) Figures excluding health procurement projects (phases I and II)





Source: Power BI /Atlas (as of 27 July 2021)

Democratic Governance has been a key and long-standing area of work for UNDP Ukraine. The post-revolution reform period presented UNDP with an opportunity to scale up its programme and impact in key governance areas such as human rights, administrative reform, rule of law and access to justice, local governance and civil society engagement. In the current programme cycle, UNDP sought to promote accountable and responsive public institutions and trust in State-society relations, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and inclusive political processes and social policies, with a specific focus on women, youth and disadvantaged groups. The portfolio includes 18 projects, of which eight are at initial stages. The focus areas are clustered around the following areas:

- **Health Governance Reform and Procurement**, supporting MoH to make the procurement of medicines more transparent and efficient and broaden citizen accessibility.
- **Parliamentary Reform**, supporting the Parliament (*Verkhovna Rada* or *VRU*) in the effective implementation of parliamentary control through the adoption of relevant law, strengthening communication, and improving the activities of the Secretariat to engage citizens more effectively in the legislative process.
- **Human Rights and Access to Justice**, supporting citizen access to human rights protection by enhancing the capabilities of the Ukrainian Ombudsperson's Office (UOO) and strengthening its regional network.
- **Public Sector Transparency and Integrity**, supporting the establishment of key anticorruption institutions and strengthening the role of citizens in holding the Government accountable.
- **Strengthening Civil Society and Youth Civic Engagement**, promoting the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) and youth in monitoring human rights and public service delivery at central and local levels.
- **Digital Transformation**, supporting the Government's digitalization reforms through a range of digital solutions aimed at improving the accessibility and transparency of public services.
- **Empowerment of Women**, supporting national partners in addressing GBV, especially in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, and improving women's participation in political decision-making.
- **Other areas**: Support to people with disabilities and financing for the achievement of SDGs.

The support of the Democratic Governance programme to health governance reform and procurement constitutes over 90 percent of the portfolio budget, funded by the State budget through the MoH and a World Bank loan to the Government of Ukraine.<sup>48</sup> Other main donors included Denmark, Sweden, EU and Norway.

In addition to the COVID-19 response, which has become an important component of the overall UNDP Ukraine programme since 2020, during this cycle the Democratic Governance portfolio has been impacted by:

- Donors' increasing focus on eastern Ukraine, whereby significant attention has shifted to the IDPRPB portfolio, which now addresses various governance issues at the local level.<sup>49</sup>
- The discontinuation of anticorruption support, which was highly visible in the past, largely due to lack of donor funds.<sup>50</sup>

**Finding 1.** Through its support to the national health procurement process, UNDP has contributed to improving the availability and accessibility of medicines to citizens, enhancing the capacity of the Central Procurement Agency (CPA) under MoH, and strengthening the role for civil society in monitoring the procurement process. While efforts are being made, UNDP has yet to develop a clear plan for the transfer of these functions back to the Government. UNDP also experienced implementation delays in some areas and limited communication and coordination with other development partners involved in the process.

Procurement support to the health sector, entrusted by the Government, has been the largest area of UNDP work in financial terms. At the request of the Government, UNDP has carried out the procurement of medicines, medical material and equipment for the MoH since 2015.<sup>51</sup> Between 2015 and 2020, UNDP implemented 122 State procurement programmes with a total value of \$598 million. The main contribution of UNDP in this area has been the breakup of entrenched procurement monopolies, resulting in lower prices and greater availability and accessibility of medicines and other medical products.<sup>52</sup> In addition to direct procurement, UNDP has contributed to strengthening national institutions responsible for the procurement process, primarily the MoH CPA. UNDP has assisted CPA with training around 350 procurement specialists in standards of transparency, accountability, cost-efficiency and sustainability in public procurement.<sup>53</sup> More recently, UNDP has carried out the procurement of COVID-19 related supplies on behalf of the MoH, implementing a World Bank loan to the Government of Ukraine.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>48</sup> The share of the World Bank was about 1.5 percent.

<sup>49</sup> The IDPRPB portfolio substantially contributes to the CPD Outputs 1.1 and 1.5, along with the Democratic Governance portfolio.

<sup>50</sup> The UNDP 'Enhanced Public Sector Transparency and Integrity' project, which had played a major role in strengthening the anticorruption infrastructure in the country, was terminated at the end of 2018.

<sup>51</sup> The VRU passed a bill into law introducing the public procurement of medicines and medical devices through specialized agencies in March 2015. MoH contracted three international organizations (UNDP, UNICEF and Crown Agents) as service-providers to implement procurement for 2015-2018. In 2019, the law 'On Amending the Law of Ukraine on Public Procurement and Some Other Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Improvement of Public Procurement' was adopted, allowing the MoH to outsource medical procurement to international organizations until the end of March 2022.

<sup>52</sup> UNDP Ukraine Internal Reporting. With UNDP support, new medicines have become available in Ukraine, especially for conditions such as rare juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, primary immunodeficiencies, etc. Through the haemophilia programme, UNDP supplied Emicizumab, an innovative medicine for children with haemophilia, at a price about 53 percent lower than in some European countries, which enabled savings of \$3.7 million and life-saving medication for additional patients. The coverage of treatment for all registered breast and blood cancer patients has broadened, with MoH covering the needs of 80 percent of all diagnosed cancer patients. These results were achieved through direct procurement from manufacturers, delivery of biosimilars, access to generic manufacturers, as well as signing of long-term agreements with monopolistic product suppliers.

<sup>53</sup> UNDP Ukraine internal reporting.

<sup>54</sup> ICPE Ukraine Questionnaire. UNDP, WHO and UNICEF in partnership with the World Bank started a project to support the Government with its operational and policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this framework, UNDP launched the 'Serving People, Improving Health' project, with a budget of \$2.07 million, with the World Bank loan to provide technical (\$870,000) and medical goods procurement (\$1.2 million) support. According to the COVID-19 mini-ROAR September 2020 results, efforts include: (i) communication campaigns on COVID-related health risks, (ii) monitoring, analysis and prevention of disease spread through capacity building and IT solutions, (iii) production of guidelines on infection prevention, and (iv) development of an electronic supply chain management system.

UNDP has also supported public monitoring of the distribution and accessibility of medicines through an open-data online platform, currently available in all regions and covering 1,952 health facilities.<sup>55</sup> To facilitate access to the platform for people without computer skills, UNDP facilitated the establishment of a telephone version of the platform (hotline). By 2020, over 625,140 people were reported to have used the platform to obtain information on issues such as the availability of State-funded medicines in local hospitals. Another 2,390 were reported to have used the hotline.<sup>56</sup>

As part of its effort to strengthen Ukraine's health sector institutions, UNDP has supported the National Council on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS to fulfil its role as the country's coordinating body for programmes of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund). UNDP has supported the Council's oversight over recipients of Global Fund programmes, facilitated the participation of non-governmental stakeholders in decision-making, and ensured consistency between national programmes on tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS and Global Fund grants. As a result of UNDP support, in 2020 the Government of Ukraine received 207.5 million UAH for HIV-related services from the Global Fund's transition plan.<sup>57</sup> UNDP support to the Council on the preparation of funding requests resulted in \$10.8 million in funding from the Global Fund for the COVID-19 response, and \$136 million for actions on tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS over the period 2021-2023.<sup>58</sup> The National Council now acts as a government advisory body, performing the function of National Coordinator of Global Fund programmes, and coordinates multiple stakeholders operating in the sector.

Several challenges were identified in health procurement during the evaluation. Current legislation only allows procurement by international organizations until March 2022, and the process for transferring the responsibility of health procurement to the relevant national institutions has been raised. At the time of the evaluation, MoH/ CPA capacity to fully take over the procurement process was in question. A partial transfer of responsibilities has already taken place, with CPA currently responsible for about 50 percent of health procurement.<sup>59</sup> However, a UNDP study of CPA capacity identified several shortcomings and risks, and it was unclear whether (and how) UNDP support would continue after that point.<sup>60</sup> Stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation reported that CPA independence is still fragile and vulnerable to risks such as political pressure. Although UNDP work in the area of health procurement has contributed directly to the Government's capability to address COVID-19 challenges, the pandemic has set back the entire health reform agenda by shifting sectoral priorities towards emergency issues, affecting the urgency of procurement reform.

In 2019, the country office prepared an exit strategy for its health procurement activities.<sup>61</sup> The document had several challenges, however, including a lack of analysis of the risks and challenges related to the procurement process (it was developed prior to the assessment of the CPA), and guidance on how to ensure the integrity and stability of the procurement process after the transfer was vague. The strategy was not enacted over the ensuing period, and has now become redundant considering the COVID-19 crisis.

<sup>55</sup> The platform is called e-Liky and can be found here: <https://eliky.in.ua/>.

<sup>56</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2020) ROAR.

<sup>57</sup> This amount is included in the MoH budget: [https://moz.gov.ua/uploads/5/26010-dn\\_1972\\_27\\_08\\_2020\\_dod.pdf](https://moz.gov.ua/uploads/5/26010-dn_1972_27_08_2020_dod.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2020) Annual Report for 2020 of UNDP Ukraine Project 'Strengthening the National Council on TB and HIV/AIDS in Ukraine.

<sup>59</sup> In 2020, CPA started procuring medicines and medical devices for 14 out of 39 programmes.

<sup>60</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2020) Capacity assessment of the State-Owned Enterprise Medical Procurements of Ukraine, Assessment Report.

<sup>61</sup> The strategy was attached to the updated project document agreed with MoH in 2020: 'Procurement Support Services to the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, Phase II'.

In addition, interviewees pointed to a lack of clarity on how UNDP would continue to support broader health sector reform based on its considerable experience gained in this area, and in coordination with the other relevant United Nations agencies.<sup>62</sup>

Delays in the procurement process were experienced in some cases, including implementation of the World Bank loan, due to several factors including frequent changes in MoH management and the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. At the time of the evaluation, part of the contract had not been completed in a satisfactory manner, risking the return of the funds.<sup>63</sup> Some development partners supporting the country's health reform, including United Nations agencies, had limited knowledge of UNDP work in health procurement, reporting the need for stronger communication, coordination and engagement by establishing well-functioning channels.

**Finding 2.** UNDP contributed to the promotion of public sector transparency and integrity by supporting the Government to establish a central anticorruption agency (National Agency on Corruption Prevention), an electronic asset-declaration system for public officials, and training. UNDP has also supported municipalities to develop anticorruption plans and civil society engagement in monitoring, but these efforts remain limited. Due to challenges inherent to the country's anticorruption efforts, delays were experienced in some UNDP-supported initiatives.

UNDP has played a key role in the establishment of the National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NACP), one of the country's central anticorruption institutions. With UNDP support, NACP has deployed an 'electronic asset declaration system' to manage information about the assets of about one million public officials.<sup>64</sup> UNDP also supported the establishment of an 'electronic asset verification system', used to verify 4.1 million asset declarations.<sup>65</sup> This system has prompted the investigation of some \$16 million in declared assets.<sup>66</sup> The system has enabled the public scrutiny of candidates to the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2019 and local elections in 2020, providing evidence of their integrity. UNDP has also supported anticorruption training for more than 150,000 officials (33 percent of civil servants), and promoted several nationwide and local campaigns engaging civic activists and journalists.<sup>67</sup>

UNDP work in this area has been challenged by external factors, as the country's anticorruption reform has experienced low political will and met opposition from vested interests. The pace of the reform has declined, discriminatory legislation was adopted targeting anticorruption activists, and violence against anticorruption public figures, journalists, activists and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) increased. In such situations, some UNDP activities experienced delays. For example, the e-declaration system has faced significant opposition, sometimes couched in technical grounds.

<sup>62</sup> At the time of the evaluation, UNDP reported that a new exit strategy for health procurement was being developed, led by a specialist, and expected in February 2022; and that new programmatic responses had been considered to respond to broader health sector reform.

<sup>63</sup> Under the terms of the agreement, UNDP was initially envisaged to procure COVID-19 personal protective equipment. However, the procurement process took a long time and in the meantime the Government was able to secure this from other sources. UNDP support was changed to the procurement of equipment (freezers for the storage of reagents and vaccines). At the time of the evaluation, close to the end of the loan agreement between the World Bank and Government of Ukraine, part of the procurement had not been completed due to issues with the certification of supplies by the selected vendor.

<sup>64</sup> This includes civil servants, judges, prosecutors and representatives of all law enforcement units in Ukraine.

<sup>65</sup> See <https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/democratic-governance/transparency-and-integrity.html>.

<sup>66</sup> By automatically connecting with and reviewing various State registers, these systems enable NACP to quickly detect incomplete or inconsistent information and identify corruption risks.

<sup>67</sup> See <https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/democratic-governance/transparency-and-integrity.html>.

Similarly, the mandate and powers of NACP have been challenged by sections of the State.<sup>68</sup> The level of public trust in State institutions remains low, despite improvements in perceptions of corruption in recent years.<sup>69</sup>

At subnational level (for example, in the municipalities of Chervonohrad, Nikopol and Zhytomyr), UNDP has supported the implementation of corruption risk assessments, the development of municipal integrity plans, the training of municipal staff on anticorruption and integrity measures, and promoted the role of CSOs and citizens in monitoring the performance of local authorities through public hearings. Significant capacity challenges remain at local level, however, and these efforts remain limited, fragmented and insufficient to make a tangible dent on local-level corruption.

**Finding 3.** UNDP developed a close relationship with the Ukrainian Parliament during the review period, contributing to furthering its transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. UNDP supported the establishment of several key parliamentary bodies and helped to improve public awareness on the work of the Parliament. Some delays have occurred in the information technology (IT) components of the parliamentary reform programme due to restrictions imposed by Ukrainian legislation in the area of national security.

The current UNDP programme cycle was marked by a close relationship with the Ukrainian Parliament (VRU), which has improved parliamentary transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. UNDP supported the establishment of the Parliamentary Reform Office, a group of high-level experts advising the VRU on the legislative process, oversight, accountability and digitalization of the institution. It also provided support to the Working Group on the Implementation of the VRU Internal Reform and Capacity-Building Action Plan, and enabled its meetings to become more inclusive and transparent, allowing for greater engagement of non-governmental stakeholders in the implementation of parliamentary reform. UNDP also assisted eight parliamentary committees to carry out their oversight functions and facilitated the development of guidance on monitoring the implementation of international human rights treaties.

UNDP supported the first assessment of the Parliamentary Secretariat and the development of its human resources management strategy.<sup>70</sup> The Secretariat's human resources department has improved skills for conducting staff assessments, including for senior management. An online training platform was launched for training Secretariat staff.<sup>71</sup> UNDP also assisted the Secretariat to develop a communications strategy with the involvement of parliamentarians, CSOs, journalists and experts. Members of Parliament now have access to an online reporting tool that generates reader-friendly reports for their constituents. UNDP facilitated the development of a comprehensive parliamentary education programme for schools, university students and adults.<sup>72</sup> The Parliamentary Educational Centre was launched in July 2019 in coordination with the Responsible Accountable Democratic Assembly (RADA) programme of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Within two years, the Educational Centre was visited by more than 10,000 students offline and 6,000 students online.

<sup>68</sup> In 2020, the Constitutional Court invalidated key provisions of anticorruption legislation and curbed the powers of NACP, which prompted the Ukrainian President to dismiss constitutional judges.

<sup>69</sup> In 2020, only 12 percent of Ukrainians stated that they trusted the court system, a significantly lower share than the CPD target of 35 percent. Ukraine's position in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index remains low, despite improvements in recent years (Ukraine's ranking improved from 130 in 2016 to 117 in 2020). <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/ukr>.

<sup>70</sup> UNDP entered into an agreement with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy to conduct an analysis of the institutional and management structure of the Secretariat, including operating procedures and internal regulatory documents of its structural units, to identify the possible duplication of functions and inefficient allocation of powers and responsibilities.

<sup>71</sup> 17 online training courses on key skills for Secretariat staff as well as 14 online training courses for English language e-learning processes, related to prior areas (topics) of VRU and its Secretariat activity, were developed and launched on this training platform.

<sup>72</sup> The first national parliamentary lesson was held on May 2021 during Open Government Week, with the participation of about 35,000 school students and 2,000 educators.

The IT component of the parliamentary reform programme experienced delays in the assessment of the existing parliamentary IT system, due to quarantine restrictions and limitations imposed by Ukrainian legislation in the area of national security. Stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation reported that the recommendations of the IT audit should become the basis for identifying new areas of cooperation under the new three-year e-Parliament Strategy. Despite this challenge, two IT solutions have been developed: online registration of visitors to the VRU; and a VRU mobile application (educational games, online VRU tour and augmented reality elements). In addition, an online training platform was developed to support the capacity development of Secretariat staff (the official launch is contingent on handover to the VRU Secretariat).

**Finding 4.** UNDP helped the Government to establish human rights institutions, facilitating realization of the Government's strong commitment to human rights. The UNDP focus has been primarily on strengthening the Ombudsperson's Office, which has received high recognition as a reputable human rights institution. UNDP also engaged in various efforts, including the revision of the National Human Rights Strategy, capacity-building of civil society in monitoring human rights violations, implementation of international commitments, campaigns for local authorities, and university curricula on human rights in journalism. Challenges remain, however, with limited awareness and political will among national authorities, and weak policy implementation and sustainability of civic actors trained through the programme.

A major area of UNDP institutional support for human rights has been with UOO, including the development of its strategic plan,<sup>73</sup> staff training, and expansion of the regional network of UOO representatives to all 24 regions, for more effective monitoring of human rights violations. UNDP support enabled UOO regional offices to become more effective and agile at resolving urgent issues, establish cooperation with local communities (*hromadas*), conduct field missions, and increase human rights awareness. In 2019, the Ukrainian Ombudsperson received "A" status re-accreditation by the Global Alliance of Human Rights Institutions, a clear recognition of the institution's credibility and reputation among human rights activists, and society more broadly.<sup>74</sup> According to UNDP data, by mid-2020 the regional network and human rights monitors had performed 159 field visits and consultations in rural communities, and monitored 209 detention centres and 25 court trials. As a result of this work, over 4,500 women and men were able to address human rights concerns.

The growing number of complaints from citizens regarding the violation of their rights testifies to a significant increase in the level of awareness of the activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights (from 47 percent in 2016 to 57 percent in 2020). These complaints relate to social and economic rights, discrimination, access to information, and government malfunctions. Addressing these challenges requires effective measures and actions to be taken by other duty-bearers, in particular local authorities (to improve services and ensure fair treatment and effective access to justice for all). To ensure sustainable changes, UNDP responded by strengthening the capacity of duty-bearers, especially at local level, and integrating the human rights-based approach and good administration principles into their work. In 2021, UNDP developed a comprehensive human rights course for civil servants, together with the Ukrainian National Civil Service Agency, which was integrated into the education system for duty-bearers.

<sup>73</sup> The Plan addresses key UOO responsibilities, including protection of the rights of vulnerable people, particularly those affected by the conflict, and raising awareness on human rights among the general population.

<sup>74</sup> Since 2019, the Ombudsperson has promoted the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. UNDP has supported the initiative and in December 2021 presented its study, 'Sustainable and equitable development through implementation United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights' at the meeting of the Intersectoral Platform on Business and Human Rights.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Justice, UNDP facilitated the revision of the National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan.<sup>75</sup> UNDP also assisted the Cabinet of Ministers in establishing an inclusive intersectoral working group engaging civil society to monitor implementation of the Strategy, and facilitated public hearings for the strategy revision. UNDP promoted the engagement of CSOs in monitoring the implementation of Ukraine's human rights commitments,<sup>76</sup> including drafting a shadow report on Ukraine's implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and a review of implementation of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).<sup>77</sup> UNDP support was instrumental in the organization of an extensive campaign on human rights, reaching more than 1,300 representatives of local authorities in 18 *oblasts*. It also helped to organize an online educational series on personal data protection and supported the inclusion of human rights in the journalism education curricula of 22 universities, reaching around 3,400 journalism students by 2020.<sup>78</sup> This support also included the establishment of the country's first Human Rights Journalism Master's Programme at the Institute of Journalism. Six NGOs received support in monitoring patients' access to medications in over 66 medical facilities.

Several challenges remain for UNDP work on human rights:

- **External factors.** Despite increasing citizen demand and a greater role of civil society and media in the promotion of human rights, the level of awareness and political will remains low among national authorities due the historical legacy of State control over individual rights and the efforts of vested interests in political and business circles to maintain the status quo. The onset of the COVID-19 crisis put many reform efforts on hold.
- **Weak implementation of human rights acts and obligations.** Assessments of implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy highlighted multiple shortcomings in the implementation of human rights commitments and obligations. For example, the midterm evaluation of Ukraine's implementation of UPR recommendations reported that only 8 percent of them had been implemented, and another 20 percent technically implemented, by 2020.<sup>79</sup> To address implementation challenges, UNDP recently introduced structural improvements to the process through which it supports the National Human Rights Strategy.<sup>80</sup> However, while the support of UNDP and other development partners to UOO and CSOs has been crucial in building their capacity to hold State actors accountable, the capacity of State institutions responsible for the implementation of human rights commitments, including rule of law, remains weak.
- **Sustainability of regional network of civil society human rights monitors.** While the network of UOO regional representatives has become an organic part of the civil service, funded through the

<sup>75</sup> The new strategy focuses on 27 areas related to human rights, including: fulfilling the right to justice, freedom of assembly, eradication of discrimination, ensuring equal opportunities for men and women, combating domestic violence, and fulfilling the rights of children, ex-combatants, IDPs, and people living in the NGCAs. The strategy's adoption by the Cabinet of Ministers and the President was completed in 2021. The review was done on the basis of an assessment of implementation of the previous version of the Strategy with the involvement of civil society. OHCHR has been a key partner in this area.

<sup>76</sup> Ukraine is committed to numerous international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities.

<sup>77</sup> In 2020, a UNDP-supported coalition of human rights organizations, including the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, ZMINA, La Strada-Ukraine, the Social Action Centre, the Fight for Right NGO, the Educational Human Rights House Chernihiv and the Center for Civil Liberties, prepared an interim alternative report on Ukraine's implementation of the recommendations made within the framework of the UPR. The document was sent to the United Nations Human Rights Council and published on the United Nations website.

<sup>78</sup> These universities constitute about 50 percent of all higher education institutions teaching journalism.

<sup>79</sup> Midterm evaluation of Implementation of the Recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (2017-2020), stakeholders' report to midterm reporting (third cycle), 2020.

<sup>80</sup> One is the inclusion of specific and measurable indicators and targets in the Strategy, something that was missing in the previous version. The second is embedding an advisor supported by UNDP and OHCHR in the inter-agency committee responsible for the oversight of the Strategy, to provide technical support to its members.

State budget, CSO monitors continue to be paid by the UNDP project. The sustainability of human rights monitoring functions is in question, as there is no clear plan for the allocation of necessary funds for those monitors after completion of the project.

**Finding 5.** Given the important role of civil society in the democratic process, UNDP made substantial contributions to strengthening the role of CSOs, enhancing their capacity as service providers for vulnerable people and holding public institutions accountable. UNDP supported the establishment of the ‘Youth Worker’ programme, which has promoted the engagement of young people in decision-making at community level, human rights, participatory democracy and volunteerism. The weak financial sustainability of CSOs involved remains a concern.

UNDP has facilitated the engagement of civil society in the formulation and implementation of public policy. A major contribution has been the strengthening of the role of the CSO Hubs Network in the delivery of services to vulnerable groups, including women, IDPs and people with disabilities, especially during the COVID-19 crisis.<sup>81</sup> In 2020, the 15 CSOs in the network reached over 36,600 people (60 percent women), supporting over 6,600 vulnerable people, including women, IDPs and persons with disabilities.<sup>82</sup> As noted earlier, six CSOs were able to monitor patient access to medication in over 66 medical facilities, and a coalition of over 50 CSOs drafted a shadow report on Ukraine’s implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and an alternative UPR report.<sup>83</sup> A coordination centre for COVID-19 volunteer activities was established to engage youth in supporting vulnerable citizens. At subnational level, UNDP provided online training to members of the CSO Hubs network on digital transformation, e-solutions and modern methods of citizen engagement.<sup>84</sup>

The ‘Youth Worker’ programme, established with UNDP support, has promoted the engagement of young people in decision-making at community level, with non-educational activities and the promotion of human rights, participatory democracy and volunteerism. At policy level, UNDP has supported the Ministry of Youth and Sports in the formulation of the State ‘Youth of Ukraine-2025’ programme and the Law on the Foundations of Youth Policy, two policy instruments that promote the role of young men and women in development activities.<sup>85</sup> UNDP has supported regional governments in the development of youth policy, and provided financial support to a range of youth civic initiatives implemented at regional level: a total of 58 civic education activities and seven advocacy campaigns involving 1,558 young people (880 female and 678 male).<sup>86</sup>

Local competitions for CSOs, financed from subnational budgets, have become a common practice, which has now been included in the newly adopted National Strategy for Promoting Civil Society Development. The sustainability of the work of CSOs remains a challenge, however, under conditions of almost complete reliance on funding from international organizations. This is a widely recognized challenge faced by UNDP and other international organizations supporting CSOs in Ukraine. UNDP has advocated for the allocation of government funding for CSOs.<sup>87</sup> Given its role and stake in this area, UNDP is well-positioned to explore a more sustainable funding solution to this challenge, jointly with the other partners.

<sup>81</sup> Established in 2013, the Network of CSO Hubs brings together 15 regional CSOs that promote civil society development, social cohesion, respect for human rights, democratic change, and community development.

<sup>82</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2020) ROAR 2020.

<sup>83</sup> According to this independent CSO assessment, the level of implementation of UPR recommendations in Ukraine had reached 26 percent.

<sup>84</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2020) ROAR 2020.

<sup>85</sup> These policy documents identify youth civic engagement as a strategic priority for the country, and lay the foundations for the establishment of the National Youth Council and infrastructure for youth policy implementation.

<sup>86</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2020) ROAR 2020.

<sup>87</sup> For example, after advocacy with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Government has increased funding for the Youth Worker programme from 1.2 to 2.4 million UAH in 2021, which was made possible through developing and adopting a regulation (Order No. 808).

**Finding 6.** The digitalization of administrative services is a key priority for the new administration. By forging a close partnership with the newly established Ministry of Digital Transformation, UNDP has been able to facilitate the introduction of digitalization in a wide range of public services, directly contributing to addressing this government priority. However, UNDP lacks a cohesive framework for these efforts that spread across all programme portfolio areas.

The digitalization of public services has been a key area of UNDP work in Ukraine. UNDP has supported the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDT) in the development of the country's Digital Strategy.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, UNDP has contributed to the development of the National *Diia* Centres Web Platform for administrative service centres (ASCs), which provides citizens with information about administrative services, reports news regarding ASC activities and schedules, and displays addresses, contacts and an interactive calendar for events.<sup>89</sup> Through this platform, UNDP has facilitated the design of mobile solutions for MSME access to administrative services in eastern Ukraine. As noted above, UNDP has also supported the Government's integrated response to corruption, particularly through digital solutions such as the e-declaration and e-verification systems. It has also assisted with the establishment of the *E-Liky* platform, a web portal that enables citizens to monitor the distribution and prices of life-saving medication in health facilities, thus improving the transparency, accountability and accessibility of medical treatment across the country.<sup>90</sup> UNDP has also supported the MDT in launching an electronic application for low-interest mortgages for IDPs. Through the 'Digital Solutions for Improved Access to Justice in Ukraine' initiative, UNDP has supported the Ministry of Justice, National Police and the judiciary system in the development of digital solutions to simplify access to certain legal consultations.<sup>91</sup> Other UNDP contributions related to the digitalization process include the establishment of the integrated HIV portal of the Public Health Centre and introduction of digital tools in the parliamentary process. The onset of COVID-19 and introduction of restrictions further accelerated the transfer of certain public services to online platforms. UNDP was quick to provide support to this process (see Section 2.4). At subnational level, UNDP has built the capacity of digital transformation officers through the establishment of two regional Digital Solutions Centres and the provision of specialized training. To ensure equal access to digital services, UNDP has promoted the creation of local computer literacy hubs to advance digital skills among the most vulnerable, including the elderly, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups. Multiple creative digital solutions have been developed and supported through the 'Hack for Locals' and 'East Code' innovation challenges.

Digitalization has not only been a key part of the Democratic Governance portfolio (in areas such as transparency and integrity, support to the Parliament or health procurement), but has also been prominent in activities related to the COVID-19 response and the Environment and Energy and IDRPB portfolios. Examples include the Energy Management Information System (EMIS) database for energy-efficiency in public buildings, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources (MEPNR) database on environmental impact assessments, or digitalization in conflict-affected areas. While this is an important and promising area of work, these activities have been fragmented across projects and portfolios, without a cohesive framework to connect them. In 2020, in response to COVID-19, the country office recruited an information management and digitalization advisor. This post later evolved into a digital transformation

<sup>88</sup> Ukraine's Ministry of Digital Transformation was set up in August 2019 to promote the digitalization of democracy in Ukraine, with the aim of making more government services available online, some of them completely automatically.

<sup>89</sup> <https://center.diia.gov.ua/>.

<sup>90</sup> <https://eliky.in.ua/>.

<sup>91</sup> One of these digital solutions is the mobile application 'Your Rights' (*Tvoje Pravo*), which has so far helped over 7,000 conflict-affected men and women in Ukraine, including those from NGCAs, to learn about their rights and get help in defending them through the Coordination Centre for Legal Aid Provision.

advisor, who is currently working with the country office team to ensure that the UNDP corporate digital strategy is mainstreamed in the current programme and the new CPD, and serves as a cohesive framework to guide all digitalization-related interventions, thus ensuring an integrated and holistic approach.

**Finding 7.** Various efforts have been launched to help the Government to develop financing mechanisms for the SDGs and national development objectives (Integrated National Financing Framework). Work in this area is at early stages and will require a consolidated framework to effectively engage with relevant government ministries and donor partners.

UNDP has supported a number of initiatives to ensure the availability of funds for achieving the SDGs and national development priorities. Jointly with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in December 2020 UNDP launched the ‘Promoting SDG Financing in Ukraine’ initiative to help the Government optimize its allocation of resources towards its development objectives and their alignment with the SDG agenda. UNDP also carried out the ‘SDG Bridge’ initiative to integrate the SDGs into national policies, strategies and programming processes and promote dialogue, and supported the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers to design the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), which is expected to serve as an instrument for the channelling of financing towards the achievement of national SDG targets.<sup>92</sup> UNDP also conducted and presented a Rapid Integrated Assessment to Commonwealth of Independent States countries, conducted SDG budget tagging, and a Development Finance Assessment at national and subnational levels. The Ukrainian Government launched a results-based management (RBM) system with an additional module on SDG implementation, that will be linked to concrete recourses in the future. At the time of the evaluation these initiatives were in their early phases, with various activities taking shape across different projects. A framework under which different efforts and activities can be coordinated will be needed to collectively engage relevant partners and yield a tangible impact on the allocation of the country’s development finance. The establishment of a comprehensive and transformative framework such as the INFF will require closer engagement with the Ministry of Finance, and the buy-in and practical support of IFIs like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

**Finding 8.** Results under the Democratic Governance portfolio are gender-responsive.<sup>93</sup> The advancement of equality between women and men has been a central cross-cutting theme across most Democratic Governance activities, including: anticorruption; access to public services; representation in public and political life; civil society support; the promotion of human rights; and the approximation of legislation with EU and United Nations standards. UNDP has contributed to strengthening national institutions to adopt measures in compliance with national and international gender equality standards and supported public officials to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment.

A range of UNDP projects in the Democratic Governance portfolio have contributed to gender equality, in multiple ways. At the political level, UNDP advocated for a 40 percent gender quota for party lists in parliamentary elections. The quota was introduced into the new election code, creating a legal obligation for political parties to increase women’s representation. The percentage of women in the newly elected

<sup>92</sup> To this end, UNDP has supported the Government of Ukraine in establishing an Integrated National Financing Framework Inter-Agency Task Force, which coordinates efforts for the establishment of the INFF.

<sup>93</sup> Gender responsive under the GRES scale refers to results address differential needs of men or women and address equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, etc.

Parliament reached a historic high of 20.3 percent, though still below the 30 percent target in the CPD.<sup>94</sup> The Parliamentary Gender Equality Caucus, supported by UNDP, now includes 100 Members of Parliament, the largest representation since its creation in 2011. UNDP supported the Government, Parliament and CSOs in their advocacy for women's participation in policy and decision-making. With UNDP support, the Parliamentary Secretariat received methodological guidelines for strengthening gender equality, informed by the results of the Gender Audit. A curriculum for an online course on the implementation of gender equality standards in the Secretariat has been developed, which will help to form employee understanding of the basics of gender policy and the implementation of State gender policy in Ukraine, and improve their knowledge of conducting gender impact assessments when developing draft regulations. A handbook on the integration of gender approaches and increasing the institutional capacity of the Parliament to implement a comprehensive gender approach was also developed for the Secretariat.<sup>95</sup>

To improve women's participation in local elections and policymaking, UNDP analysed the inclusiveness of democratic processes, which showed that women's low engagement in local politics results from a lack of public administration and leadership skills. UNDP supported various events to address this challenge, including training for women and awareness-raising campaigns engaging Government and civil society.<sup>96</sup> In the 2020 local elections, more than a third of elected local council members were women, a significant improvement from previous elections, owing to the 40 percent mandatory quota in candidate nominations, as well as multi-stakeholder engagement efforts. UNDP has recently started an initiative focused on promoting gender equality in four *oblasts* through: (i) increased civil and political participation of women, especially rural women and women with disabilities; (ii) mentoring of local elected women councillors; and (iii) strengthening institutional capacity for gender-responsive decision-making in amalgamated territorial communities.<sup>97</sup>

UNDP has supported UOO in the analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data.<sup>98</sup> As a result of UNDP assistance, UOO has improved its monitoring system and integrated sex-disaggregation into its data collection. The availability of data has enabled UOO to more effectively identify human rights violations and develop tailored solutions. UNDP has also supported UOO to mainstream gender equality principles into its Strategy and Action Plan. A working group on disaggregated data has been established within the Coordination Council on non-discrimination, gender equality, preventing and combating domestic violence, and the protection of victims of people trafficking, which is based in UOO and headed by the Representative of the Commissioner for equal rights and freedoms.

Another key area of UNDP work on gender equality has been GBV, particularly important in the context of increased GBV cases during the COVID-19 crisis. UNDP successfully advocated for the establishment of five full-time mobile GBV-response teams, funded by local governments, to provide psychological

<sup>94</sup> The introduction of quotas is not enough. A change of attitudes in society, along with the political culture within parties in Ukraine, are also essential. As evidenced during the application of gender quotas for the first time in the most recent local elections, political parties are not always compliant with these requirements due to the lack of effective sanctions. Multiple cases were documented by Opora and other CSOs where qualified women in leading positions in the lists after elections gave up their seats in favour of their male counterparts.

<sup>95</sup> The status of the guidance and handbook was not available during the evaluation.

<sup>96</sup> For example, UNDP engaged CSO hubs in organizing training for women aspiring to become political leaders. 25 women (out of 125 that applied) acquired skills on how to engage citizens and organize local initiatives and communication campaigns. UNDP organized a series of events with over 260 government representatives, civic activists and opinion leaders to discuss the participation of women in the political process. It also conducted a series of online discussions on the role of women in politics as a part of communication campaign to combat gender stereotypes and launched a training programme for newly elected women councillors.

<sup>97</sup> The 'Enhancing Women's Political Participation at the Subnational Level' initiative, funded by Norway, started in August 2020.

<sup>98</sup> Although the Ombudsperson's first annual report on human rights to the Parliament included a chapter dedicated to gender equality, the other sections did not underline vulnerabilities experienced by women and men. The report did not follow a gender mainstreaming approach and the data presented was not disaggregated by sex, age or other vulnerabilities, which does not allow for gender-responsive evidence-based policy development. UNDP conducted a gender audit of the annual report and provided recommendations on how to observe principles of gender equality in reporting.

support, community outreach, awareness-raising, protection monitoring and other services to women and men living in remote areas. UNDP also supported CSO Hubs in the provision of hotline consultations to GBV victims. About 900 conflict-affected victims of domestic and gender-based violence benefitted from psychosocial, legal and security services. UNDP also provided training for about 415 security service providers on gender-responsive community security, public communications, human rights, GBV prevention and response. Jointly with other United Nations agencies, UNDP supported the annual '16 Days Against Violence' communications campaign, reaching over 106,000 people.<sup>99</sup>

UNDP carried out a series of advocacy events for the empowerment of women. It supported the advocacy campaign of four CSO hubs targeting new territorial communities to provide free legal aid services. Eight communities (*hromadas*) now provide counselling and advisory services for vulnerable community members, particularly rural women. UNDP also supported CSOs to prepare the report on implementation of the Beijing declaration in Ukraine.<sup>100</sup> With UNDP support, a coalition of NGOs, youth and community development organizations from two regions successfully advocated for budget allocations for women's shelters. UNDP supported the Second Ukrainian Women's Congress (UWC), a high-level ongoing public platform which shapes gender policy agenda for the VRU, Government, private sector, civil society and media.<sup>101</sup> Over 700 people participated in discussions on issues related to gender dimensions of reforms in Ukraine, gender mainstreaming in local governance, and gender equality in economics. In 2018, the problem of corruption in Ukraine was analysed through a gender lens for the first time. The Corruption in the Eyes of Women and Men report, developed by UNDP, provides critical evidence of the increased vulnerabilities of Ukrainian women to corruption. UNDP supported journalism students to improve their understanding and awareness of gender issues. During a one-week human-rights workshop, over 100 students of journalism learned about gender equality.

## 2.2 Energy and environment

**CPD Outcome 3:** By 2022, national institutions, private business and communities implement gender-responsive policies and practices to achieve sustainable management of natural resources, preservation of ecosystems, mitigation, adaptation to climate change and generation of green jobs

**Output 3.1.** Comprehensive measures on climate change adaptation and mitigation across various sectors scaled up

**Output 3.2.** Local authorities and communities adopt gender-responsive and sustainable solutions for increased energy efficiency and modern energy access, especially of renewable energy

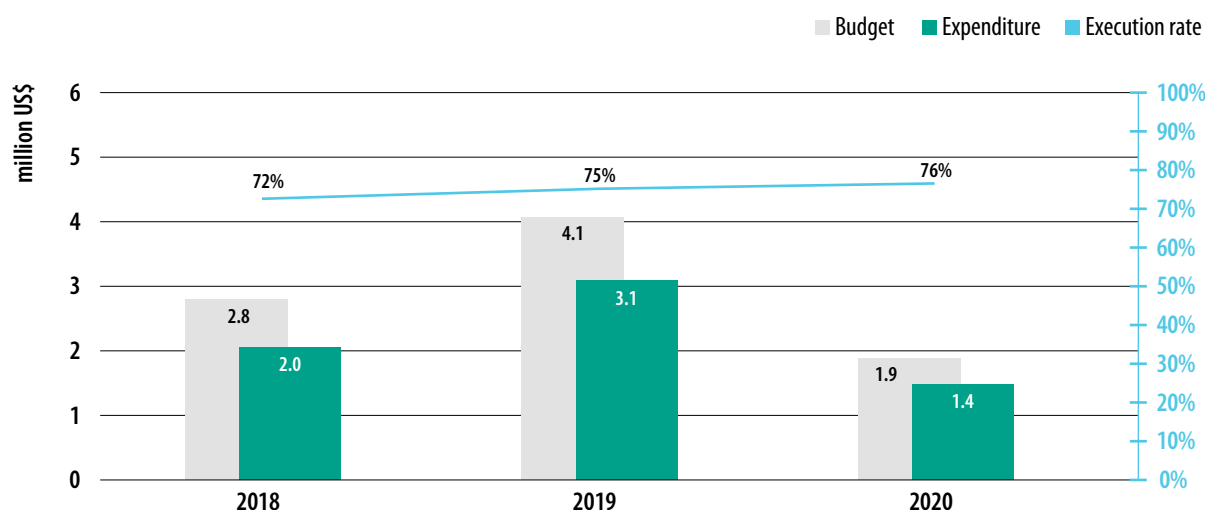
**Output 3.3.** Local authorities develop gender-responsive solutions at subnational levels for the sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste

<sup>99</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2020) ROAR. Other participating agencies include: UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNHCR and UNOPS.

<sup>100</sup> The report became a part of the regional outcome document, prepared by six Eastern partnership countries, presented at the Regional Review Meeting in Geneva.

<sup>101</sup> UWC is a public platform that annually gathers Parliament, Government, private sector, civil society, and media to discuss the challenges and opportunities for accelerating GEWE and to shape the gender equality policy agenda in Ukraine. Over 700 people participate in the discussions every year. The results and recommendations of UWC are addressed to VRU, the Government, local authorities, the private sector and CSOs. UWC raises the policy of equal rights and opportunities for women and men at the highest national level, involving branches of government and forming a priority action plan. UWC has intensified gender mainstreaming in reforms, drawing attention to the problem of inequality, generating new ideas and opportunities for women and men from diverse groups.

**FIGURE 5. Outcome 3 programme budget and expenditure**



Source: Power BI /Atlas (as of 27 July 2021)

The Environment and Energy portfolio is clustered into the following areas:

- **Elimination of ozone-depleting substances (ODS):** Support to the Government to deliver on its commitments under the Montreal Protocol.<sup>102</sup>
- **Sustainable energy:** Support to Ukraine's transition to energy efficiency and renewable energy by promoting energy-efficiency measures and the use of biomass as a fuel for heat supply in social facilities, including schools, hospitals and kindergartens.
- **The EU4Climate Initiative:** An EU-funded initiative to aid the development of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and mechanisms.
- **Nature-based solutions:** Support to authorities to implement nature-based solutions, develop national and local-level regulations and mechanisms, and explore innovative financial mechanisms.
- **Sustainable livestock management and ecosystems:** The promotion of sustainable livestock management and ecosystem conservation in Northern Ukraine.
- **Slovakia Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation for the SDGs:** An initiative to facilitate the development of cooperation projects with Slovak companies.
- **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR):** A recent effort to assist with the development of the DRR policy framework and support the strengthening of emergency services in the regions.<sup>103</sup>
- **Accelerator Lab:** An initiative started in 2019 with an exclusive mandate to facilitate the application of new innovative solutions to development problems. Although formally under the Environment and

<sup>102</sup> These are so-called 'controlled substances', in particular, refrigerants used for cooling and air conditioning, solvents and coolants used in the manufacture of building materials, defence industry, aviation, medical and railway facilities, automotive industry, etc. The UNDP 'Ozone' project document identified Ukraine's consumption of Hydrochlorofluorocarbons in 2012 at 164.20 metric tons. No reliable data is currently available for this area.

<sup>103</sup> The total number of IDPs as of 31 December 2020 was estimated to be 734,000 by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. This figure refers to people internally displaced by the conflict in eastern Ukraine. About 2,000 people were displaced by wildfires along the contact line in Luhansk in September 2020, and floods in Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia and Lviv in June 2020. IDMC (2020) Displacement Associated with Conflict and Violence: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/figure-analysis-ukr.pdf>.

Energy portfolio, this initiative operates independently and reports directly to the Deputy Resident Representative.<sup>104</sup>

**Finding 9.** At policy level, UNDP has contributed to the development of a variety of environmental strategies and regulations and their alignment with EU legislation, as well as the integration of the provisions of the Rio Conventions and Paris Agreement into sectoral policies, programmes, plans and legislation through a participatory process. UNDP has also supported the establishment of the online Environmental Impact Assessment Registry, which provides public access to all environmental impact assessments, as well as the adoption of several environmental laws by the Ukrainian Parliament, an area of work that would have benefitted from closer coordination with similar activities under the Democratic Governance portfolio.

Under the 'Rio' project, UNDP facilitated integration of the provisions of the Rio Conventions into sectoral policies, programmes, plans and legislation.<sup>105</sup> UNDP established participatory fora and a process of public discussions to improve understanding of the critical linkages between the principles of the Rio Conventions and more immediate socioeconomic development priorities among central and local government institutions, civil society, business community, academia, citizen groups and others. Another contribution has been the promotion of the SDGs among the public and policymakers. UNDP supported the adaptation of the SDGs to the country context, and the establishment of SDG baselines and targets.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, UNDP piloted local-level initiatives to raise awareness of the benefits of sustainable development approaches.

Under the 'Environmental Impact Assessment' project, UNDP supported MEPNR to establish an online Environmental Impact Assessment Registry, which provides public access to over 4,600 environmental impact assessments. The registry enables the public to have a say in the screening of economic activities with an environmental impact. UNDP has also supported the Environmental Committee of the Parliament to align the country's legislation with Paris Agreement commitments and the EU Green Deal.

Through the regional 'EU4Climate' initiative, UNDP contributed to the preparation of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan, National Bicycle Transport Strategy, White Paper on Micro-Mobility, and Gap Analysis of the EU Acquis Alignment in the Field of Climate Action.<sup>107</sup> The project is in the process of developing a roadmap for implementation of Ukraine's Nationally Determined Contribution, which includes a financial strategy for its implementation. This project has contributed to the alignment of Ukrainian legislation with the EU Community Acquis and provisions of Ukraine's Association Agreement with the EU.

Through the 'Green Caucus' project, UNDP has supported the Parliament's Environmental Policy and Nature Management Committee to adopt key environmental laws and improved the awareness of Members of Parliament on sustainable development principles.<sup>108</sup> The project was limited in its ability to engage other parliamentary committees, and communication with the donor was also inadequate.<sup>109</sup> Although the project has operated in the same area as the EU-funded 'parliamentary support' project under the Democratic

<sup>104</sup> In the programme reporting process the Accelerator Lab is placed under the Environment and Energy portfolio. However, in the office structure there is no programme boundary and the three members of the Lab report directly to the Deputy Resident Representative.

<sup>105</sup> The project integrated the principles and obligations of the three conventions into the national policy framework. In particular, this entailed the preparation of a National Sustainable Development Strategy, which was envisaged to fully incorporate key environmental priorities. Then it strengthened key institutional and individual capacity to pursue sustainable development to deliver environmental benefits, targeting the implementation of the Strategy by training government officials on the interpretation of the Rio Conventions provisions as they applied to their respective roles and responsibilities.

<sup>106</sup> UNDP supported a considerable number of analytical reports (policy analyses and reviews, strategies, guidelines, courses on many topics, templates, articles, videos, presentations, etc.) and multiple training materials for government and non-governmental representatives.

<sup>107</sup> 'EU4Climate' is a regional initiative that supports policymakers from the six Eastern Partnership countries to implement the Paris Agreement and align their national climate actions with EU Association and Partnership Agreements.

<sup>108</sup> The project is titled 'Support to the Parliament of Ukraine on Sustainable Energy and Environment' and is funded by the Government of Sweden.

<sup>109</sup> Independent Project Evaluation Report, February 2021.

Governance portfolio, interactions and coordination between the two have been limited. Furthermore, this project organized several events in eastern Ukraine, which were not effectively coordinated with the IDRPB portfolio.<sup>110</sup>

**Finding 10.** UNDP has contributed to Ukraine's transition to higher energy-efficiency and greater energy security in various ways, such as the improvement of energy efficiency in public buildings and sharing of international practices on the use of the 'energy service company' (ESCO) model. Several pilots have been implemented in municipalities to demonstrate the energy- and cost-saving potential of energy-efficiency measures. UNDP also promoted the use of biomass for renewable energy through policy changes and practical pilots with municipalities. While relevant, these efforts have yet to be scaled up, lack sustainable financing mechanisms, and are not fully coordinated with other similar UNDP projects.

Under the 'Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings' project, UNDP contributed to the development of the country's energy-efficiency policy. Noteworthy was UNDP support for the review of the draft law "On Energy Efficiency", which is instrumental for implementation of the EU Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU). The project provided MEPNR with policy advice on the Energy Efficiency First Principle,<sup>111</sup> and facilitated the sharing of international practices on the ESCO concept.<sup>112</sup> The project also introduced the EMIS concept in several cities, including Chortkiv, Ternopil and Bila Tserkva. Several energy saving projects were also implemented in municipalities, demonstrating the energy- and cost-saving potential of energy-efficient measures. The project was suspended in 2019 and relaunched only in March 2021. At the time of the ICPE, the project was still in the process of planning the relaunch. Key outcomes expected from this project include the development of an EMIS and the establishment of a financing support mechanism for ESCO projects.<sup>113</sup> The project was envisaged to facilitate investments by financial institutions in the energy-efficiency of public buildings, but so far only one 30.5 million Euro loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB) to the city of Ternopil has materialized. In the area of energy-efficiency, through a Slovak Aid-funded 'Ukraine Energy Security Expert Hub' project, UNDP has supported the development of an Action Plan for the Energy Strategy (to 2035) and facilitated high-level political dialogue with the energy community.<sup>114</sup>

UNDP has supported Ukraine's transition to renewable energy by promoting the use of biomass fuel for heat supply. Under the 'Bioenergy' project, UNDP supported the preparation of 33 feasibility studies and 19 detailed technical designs. A Financial Support Mechanism (FSM) was designed in partnership with the International Finance Corporation and State-owned Oschadbank. A total of 13 agricultural biomass boilers were installed in social facilities such as schools, hospitals and kindergartens in Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Cherkassy and Donetsk *oblasts*.<sup>115</sup> As a result of UNDP technical support, the city of Zhytomyr (with a population of 266,936) was reported to derive 95 percent of its heating energy from biomass boilers. Another contribution was the development of a pipeline of 48 municipal bioenergy projects in 35 cities.<sup>116</sup> At policy level, the project supported the development of a bioenergy roadmap to support the implementation of the National

<sup>110</sup> The events highlighted the environmental consequences of the ongoing conflict.

<sup>111</sup> Energy-efficiency first principle is the acknowledgment that Europe's biggest domestic energy source is energy-efficiency.

<sup>112</sup> ESCOs develop, design, build and arrange financing for projects that save energy, reduce energy costs, and decrease operations and maintenance costs at their customers' facilities.

<sup>113</sup> UNDP reported, at the time of this writing, that the 'ESCO Factoring' FSM had channelled \$1.2 million for the rehabilitation of 192 public buildings, financed by a domestic bank.

<sup>114</sup> The Energy Community of South East Europe is an international organization established between the EU and a number of third countries to extend the EU internal energy market to southeast Europe and beyond.

<sup>115</sup> The selection of biomass initiatives was done on the basis of competition. Of the 42 project proposals from 19 *oblasts* of Ukraine, 13 were selected for technical and financial assistance to supply heat using agricultural biomass.

<sup>116</sup> These results were reported in the project's terminal evaluation. The Bioenergy Project Manager reported that, based on a basic preliminary assessment conducted after the relaunch of the project in 2021, some of the pipeline projects had been implemented by municipalities without support from the UNDP project. Due to the lack of verifiable data, it was impossible to confirm the number of these projects.

Renewable Energy Action Plan, as well as several legal amendments related to bioenergy, regional and municipal biomass programmes, and analytical reports.

Overall, UNDP projects in the area of energy have been relevant to the country's transition to higher energy-efficiency and greater energy security. UNDP has reported that, as a result of its support, Ukraine's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were reduced by over 7,900 tons annually through improved energy-efficiency measures in pilot public buildings, including proper energy management in over 587 public buildings in 10 cities and 48 villages in Ukraine, contracts with private energy-saving companies, and the use of modern bioenergy technologies in municipal heating across Ukrainian municipalities.<sup>117</sup> The country's share of renewable energy in electricity production increased from a total of 7.9 percent in 2015 to 11.3 percent in 2020. As of 2019, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Ukraine had decreased by 62.4 percent from 1990 levels when including the 'land use, land-use change and forestry' (LULUCF) sector, and by 64.8 percent excluding LULUCF. Ukraine has committed to reducing GHG emissions by 65 percent by 2030 compared to 1990 (including LULUCF), and reaching carbon neutrality by 2060.<sup>118</sup>

Although the promotion of new energy models has been a crucial objective of these projects, the uptake of pilots has been limited, and no large-scale financing mechanism has been established on a sustainable basis. Furthermore, coordination between these projects and similar UNDP projects under other portfolios (such as the 'HOUSES' project in the IDRPB portfolio) has been limited.

**Finding 11.** UNDP has supported authorities to strengthen national capabilities for disaster risk management and reductions in the consumption of ODS.<sup>119</sup> These activities have been highly relevant and represent areas where UNDP has the potential for greater contribution. The 'Ozone' project was hampered by significant implementation challenges related to stakeholder engagement, political instability and shortcomings in internal project management and oversight.

Disaster risk management is a nascent area of work for UNDP Ukraine. In this area, UNDP has supported vulnerable communities in Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi *oblasts* to develop vulnerability assessments and risk management plans for high-risk areas within river basins. An area-based Disaster Risk Assessment was developed, aimed at assessing the preparedness of regions affected by wildfires, and estimating potential CO<sub>2</sub> emissions saved as a result of improvements in soft and hard infrastructure. Planned area-based disaster risk assessments had to be postponed in order to identify existing national methodologies and align them to international practices. One Accelerator Lab initiative has been to track the open burning of crop residue in over 200 communities through satellite imagery provided by the European Space Agency.<sup>120</sup> This area of work has good potential for greater UNDP engagement, which will require a fully-fledged framework for more systematic and longer-term involvement.

Under the 'Ozone' project, UNDP has supported the Government to comply with several requirements on the consumption of ODS under the Montreal Protocol.<sup>121</sup> Key UNDP contributions were the study of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) consumption, the development of a Law on ODS,<sup>122</sup> implementation of

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/sustainable-development-and-environment/energy-efficiency-and-environment.html>.

<sup>118</sup> From Ukraine's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement: [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Ukraine%20First/Ukraine%20NDC\\_July%202031.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Ukraine%20First/Ukraine%20NDC_July%202031.pdf).

<sup>119</sup> These substances are chlorofluorocarbons and HCFCs.

<sup>120</sup> The burning of crop residue is common practice among Ukrainian farmers, with negative consequences for the spread of fires and increased emissions.

<sup>121</sup> The 'Initial Implementation of Accelerated HCFC Phase Out' regional project involved Belarus, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

<sup>122</sup> The Law 'On ozone-depleting substances and fluorinated greenhouse gases' was endorsed by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2018. In July 2021, VRU adopted the Law 'On Amendments to Article 16 of the Law of Ukraine 'On Atmospheric Air Protection' on Regulation of Economic Activity with Ozone-Depleting Substances and Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases': <https://portal.rada.gov.ua/en/news/News/212639.html>.

three major contracts for ODS conversion, supply of equipment for ODS detection,<sup>123</sup> training of customs officers,<sup>124</sup> and increased awareness on ODS among stakeholders. The project faced serious challenges and several key objectives were not achieved.<sup>125</sup> UNDP has reported that 63 tons of ODS were eliminated from the production cycle of the biggest ODS consumer in the country (Polyfoam Ltd.) through a complete technical overhaul of the company.<sup>126</sup> However, the project was unable to obtain MEPNR clearance for over three years after its approval, project team interactions with MEPNR were not effective, and the handover of equipment to the State Fiscal Service was completed with significant delays. Several studies expected to be prepared by the Ukrainian Government under international obligations with the support of this project were not completed. To address shortcomings in project management and oversight, the country office management revised operational procedures, reporting lines and oversight mechanisms. All actions pertaining to the corresponding recommendation of the 2021 UNDP country office audit had been completed by December 2021.

**Finding 12.** UNDP Ukraine has carried out small interventions on plastic waste and water management, and initiated activities on nature-based solutions, sustainable livestock management and ecosystem and green recovery. These interventions are in their early stages, fragmented, and have yet to deliver tangible results. UNDP has yet to consolidate these small activities into more substantial initiatives, building on the foundations and networks established through these projects.

UNDP Ukraine has implemented small projects on plastic waste management and sustainable natural resources (focused on water reservoirs with financial support from the Coca Cola corporation), and supported research to examine the gaps in national legislation pertaining to healthcare waste management. Under the 'Green Recovery' project, UNDP facilitated the mobilization of green and sustainable private finance and assisted Ukrainian exporters to improve their management of climate-related risk. UNDP also recently started three new projects under the Environment and Energy portfolio: 'Nature-based Solutions',<sup>127</sup> 'Sustainable Livestock Management and Ecosystem',<sup>128</sup> and 'Supporting Green Recovery'. The Accelerator Lab has also tested a circular economy approach in coffee shops in the city of Lviv, using a discount mechanism for reusable cups combined with a digital map of coffee shops providing discounts. These interventions are Engagement Facility projects, which have the potential to be scaled up, but are in their early stages and have yet to deliver tangible results. Planned activities under these projects are fragmented and small-scale, focused primarily on the development of specific policy instruments. There is room for UNDP to consolidate these types of activities into more substantial and larger-scale initiatives, building on the foundations and networks established through these projects.

**Finding 13.** Some of the UNDP Environment and Energy work faced challenges in establishing stable contact and engagement with national counterparts, reflecting the instability of government institutions. The challenge for UNDP moving forward will be to find ways of engaging government partners more effectively, to strengthen the sustainability of interventions.

<sup>123</sup> UNDP delivered two chromatograph mass spectrometers and thirty-five refrigerant detecting equipment units to the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine (Customs) for use in customs offices, customs laboratories and educational facilities across the country.

<sup>124</sup> With UNDP support, over 130 customs specialists received training on legislation, regulations, customs controls, refrigeration servicing techniques and general best practices.

<sup>125</sup> These challenges are outlined in UNDP (2020) Terminal Evaluation of the Ukraine National component of UNDP-GEF project: Accelerated HCFC Phase Out in the CEIT Region.

<sup>126</sup> See: <https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/sustainable-development-and-environment/energy-efficiency-and-environment.html>.

<sup>127</sup> Under the 'Nature-based Solutions' project, UNDP is supporting the resilience of Ukrainian cities to climate shocks. The project supports the development of a collective intelligence online open platform on nature-based solutions for cities. It also promotes educational tools to raise awareness among citizens and supported the development of national and local level regulations and mechanisms that promote the use of nature-based solutions.

<sup>128</sup> Under the 'Sustainable Livestock Management and Ecosystem' project, UNDP will promote sustainable livestock management and ecosystem conservation in Northern Ukraine.

UNDP has been a major, long-standing partner in the environmental sector in Ukraine, working closely with government entities such as MEPNR involved in areas including climate change and environmental impact assessment. However, it was reported to the evaluation that UNDP engagement with the Government was fragmented along departmental lines, and national ownership of activities related to energy-efficiency was split across several institutions with scattered responsibilities. Past evaluations have illustrated similar challenges in national engagement and ownership, indicating the need for UNDP to pay closer attention moving forward.<sup>129</sup> The development of the pilot flood-risk management strategy in the Ivano-Frankivsk *oblast* was not replicated in other *oblasts* due to the lack of strong engagement by national counterparts.

Frequent organizational restructuring and changes in personnel of government entities, from management to working-level officials, has made it particularly challenging for UNDP to develop stable contacts and effective stakeholder relationships. At the same time, internal project management issues appear to have played a role in the limited government engagement, such as poor communication with counterparts (e.g., Ozone project), inadequate planning (e.g., Bioenergy and Ozone projects), and the lack of identification and management of risks (e.g., Ozone project).<sup>130</sup>

The challenge for UNDP will be to further strengthen the engagement of government counterparts to improve the sustainability of its interventions. For example, while communication plans are typically drawn up at the level of individual projects, a more cohesive communication approach may be useful at programme/ sector level. UNDP could consider the establishment of a coordination committee at portfolio level, to engage all key stakeholders in the sector and enhance communication and UNDP visibility among them. Government engagement may also be strengthened by promoting the practice of locating project offices within government institutions.<sup>131</sup>

**Finding 14.** In the current programme cycle, several Environment and Energy projects experienced implementation delays. Key challenges included: weak oversight mechanisms; long, cumbersome procurement processes; and frequent staff changes at UNDP.

Many of the Environment and Energy projects examined for this cycle have experienced considerable implementation delays, requiring extensions to project timelines (see Box 3). The delays were the result of multiple factors, including the armed conflict and, more recently, the cancellation or postponement of activities due to COVID-19, as well as challenges related to aforementioned inherent, external institutional factors (such as the limited engagement capacity of national partners). At the same time, issues related to internal programme and project management continue to require UNDP attention moving forward, as outlined in recent UNDP audit reports (August 2018 and April 2021).<sup>132</sup>

<sup>129</sup> For example, the outcome evaluation of the Environment and Energy programme (July 2017) included findings on shortcomings related to national ownership in the Ozone, Bioenergy and Rio projects.

<sup>130</sup> To address the shortcomings in project management and oversight which occurred during the implementation of the Ozone and Biomass projects since 2019, the UNDP country office has revised the internal control framework and standard operating procedures (including for procurement), revamped the team, and introduced a web-based monitoring system to trace project results and risks. All actions pertaining to the corresponding recommendation of the 2021 country audit had been completed as of December 2021.

<sup>131</sup> UNDP reported that various efforts had been made since 2020 to re-establish good working relations with government entities, including the establishment of a set of working groups to ensure more sustainable contact and communication with counterparts (e.g. on Green Finance with the State Agency for Energy Efficiency and Energy Savings, and on Environmental Insurance with the Environmental Committee); and active communication with deputy ministers responsible for specific topics for the smooth and effective running of existing and potential projects.

<sup>132</sup> For example, the latest audit report (April 2021) rated the country office as 'partially satisfactory/ major improvement needed', indicating that the 'assessed governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls were established and functioning, but need major improvement'. The rating was mainly due to inadequate project delivery and monitoring of the Ozone project and weaknesses in procurement planning and oversight and contract management. UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations (2021) Ukraine country audit.

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### BOX 3. Examples of projects with implementation delays

- The 'Ozone' project experienced considerable delays and had not been closed after over eight years of operation. The project remained unregistered for three years from the time it started.<sup>133</sup>
  - The 'Bioenergy' project had significant delays in its first three and a half years, was suspended in 2019, and relaunched in March 2021.
  - The 'Energy Efficiency in Buildings' project also experienced significant delays; although it started officially in August 2016, key team members were recruited only by April 2017.
  - DRR project activities related to area-based disaster risk assessments had to be postponed in order to identify existing national methodologies and align them to international practices.
  - The 'EU4Climate' project is behind schedule and will need an extension of at least six months.
  - The 'Green Caucus' project requested an extension of about six months to the end of 2021 to allow it to complete activities.
  - The 'Energy Security Expert Hub' project received a no-cost extension to the end of 2021 to enable it to complete activities.
  - The 'Supporting Green Recovery' project started in January 2021, with the project manager recruited in May, but there had been little delivery at the time of the evaluation in summer 2021.
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Among the projects reviewed, challenges were mainly identified in three areas: (i) weak oversight mechanisms; (ii) lengthy procurement and recruitment processes; and (iii) UNDP staff turnover.

**Weak oversight mechanisms:** Project steering committees (PSCs) were not functioning effectively to resolve issues and promote stakeholder coordination. They are expected to meet at least once a year but, in some cases, this has not happened.<sup>134</sup> Within UNDP, projects with issues were left unattended.<sup>135</sup> Interviewees called for the greater involvement of country office management, as well as project managers, in ensuring project implementation.

**Bureaucratic and lengthy procurement:** Several stakeholders interviewed found the long and cumbersome procurement process (including the slow recruitment and payment of consultants) to be a major challenge in UNDP project implementation. This was despite the heavy involvement of UNDP in procurement support over the years (especially for the health sector), and the considerable experience built. The April 2021 audit report highlighted similar issues, identifying challenges in the projects reviewed in relation to procurement planning and strategy, oversight and the use of standard operating procedures. The audit identified significant delays in the implementation of procurement.

**Staff turnover and weak institutional memory:** Some projects experienced high staff turnover, for example the 'Green Caucus' project suffered frequent staff changes, undermining the quality of project implementation and contributions. Frequent office restructuring may also have played a role in the preservation of institutional memory. At the time of the evaluation, the head of the Environment and

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<sup>133</sup> External factors causing implementation delays included the Revolution of Dignity and the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, as well as the bankruptcy of one of the companies.

<sup>134</sup> For example, the PSC of the Ozone project has not met regularly, preventing the project from resolving a number of issues, including the thorny issue of project registration. The terminal evaluation of the Bioenergy project found the PSC to have been "ad hoc without a clear decision-making process or clear guidelines for membership".

<sup>135</sup> For example, the terminal evaluation of the Bioenergy project noted that, for three and a half years, the project "showed lack of focus on its targeted objective-level and outcome-level results," yet no significant action was taken by the country office to address the situation.

Energy portfolio had recently joined the office and the portfolio team was building its capacity, with two additional project associates and project managers expected to join by the end of summer 2021. The portfolio is also expected to bring Chief Technical Advisors on board, who will cater to separate streams and focus on project development.<sup>136</sup>

**Finding 15.** The results of UNDP work under the Environment and Energy portfolio were gender-targeted.<sup>137</sup> The mainstreaming of gender in this portfolio has had mixed results, as the level of attention to gender in the design of the different projects varied. The main reasons for this included: limited awareness of gender issues in the Environment and Energy sector; absence of past or existing mainstreaming practices; lack of sex-disaggregated statistics in the sector; and lack of local knowledge and skills for integrating a gender lens into programming.

In the current national policy framework, climate change and environmental sustainability have not consistently been addressed through a gender lens. UNDP has advocated for gender-responsive, evidence-based policymaking at national and regional levels.

During the period under review, some projects in the Environment and Energy portfolio had limited focus on gender equality.<sup>138</sup> Although their primary purpose was not to deliver on gender and social equality, they presented opportunities for actions to improve the gender balance of power. A limited gender perspective was further reflected in the way these projects have been implemented, including weak gender-informed planning and monitoring.

Seven projects in the Environment and Energy portfolio identified gender inequality as a dimension to be addressed through support to partner institutions or beneficiary groups.<sup>139</sup> The respective project documents made use of standard terms like “gender-responsive”, “actions to improve the lives of women, men, girls and boys”, or “this output will be economically feasible, effective, sustainable and gender responsive”, but lacked clarity on what exactly was expected to be achieved in terms of gender equality. Although some of these projects were marked GEN1, they lacked a clear action plan and rationale for the promotion of gender equality. For example, the ‘Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings’ project was designed to explicitly engage women in its activities. Although the project engaged women’s rights organizations and gender equality advocates across all components, the terminal evaluation of the project noted that it missed opportunities to engage more women in its activities and benefit from solid cooperation and partnership with gender equality advocates. The midterm review of the project noted that it had not conducted any gender assessment in the target areas, and that all of the activities carried out were predominantly gender-blind. The ‘Green Caucus’ project conducted two gender surveys, and the Accelerator Lab and ‘Livestock Management’ project produced gender analyses, but beyond these, practical results to reduce gender inequality on the ground were yet to be observed.<sup>140</sup>

Two projects in the Environment and Energy portfolio promoted gender-responsive policies and practices, legal and regulatory frameworks and institutions, in line with UNPF/ CPD Outcome 4.2.<sup>141</sup> Project documents and work plans presented gender-responsive outputs, activities, indicators, intended results and even resource allocations to ensure gender mainstreaming at the implementation stage. These projects sought

<sup>136</sup> The Chief Technical Advisors are envisaged for the following streams: green economy and financing; climate change mitigation and adaptation; clean and affordable energy; and circular economy.

<sup>137</sup> According to the GRES scale: GEN1 results are focused on numerical equity of women, men or marginalized populations.

<sup>138</sup> These projects were: Ozone, Environmental Impact Assessment, Sustained Natural Resources, Nature-based Solutions, and Partnership for Effective DevCoop for SDGs.

<sup>139</sup> Rio Conventions in National Policies, Bioenergy, Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings, Green Caucus, Promoting Sustainable Livestock Management and Ecosystem, Accelerator Lab, and Plastic Waste Management at the Local Level.

<sup>140</sup> The GEF-funded ‘Livestock Management’ project was still at an early phase at the time of the evaluation.

<sup>141</sup> Strengthening DRR and Recovery and EU4Climate.

to mainstream gender in the design of project structures and selection of stakeholders. Both projects are expected to produce gender analyses and gender-responsive plans. The regional 'EU4Climate' goes one step further in developing a gender mainstreaming action plan, although the Ukraine component is small compared to other partner countries. The challenge will be the actual implementation of action plans.

Project documents and informant interviews suggested that the main factors limiting gender mainstreaming in the Environment and Energy portfolio included limited awareness of gender issues in the sector, a lack of past or existing mainstreaming practices, a lack of sex-disaggregated statistics in the sector, and unavailability of local knowledge and skills on how to effectively mainstream gender equality concerns into Environment and Energy interventions. Despite these challenges, UNDP has extensive experience on both substantive Environment and Energy matters and gender equality and mainstreaming, and is thus well positioned to promote the issue in the sector.<sup>142</sup>

## 2.3 Inclusive development, recovery and peacebuilding

**CPD Outcome 2:** By 2022, all women and men, especially young people, equally benefit from an enabling environment that includes labour market, access to decent jobs and economic opportunities

**CPD Outcome 4:** By 2022, communities, including vulnerable people and IDPs, are more resilient and equitably benefit from greater social cohesion, quality services and recovery support

**Output 2.1.** National and subnational institutions are better able to develop and implement policies and measures that generate sustainable jobs and livelihoods

**Output 2.2.** Public institutions and private entities effectively cooperate to improve the business environment

**Output 4.1.** Conflict-affected communities feel safer and satisfied with security services

**Output 4.2.** Crisis-affected women and men have more sustainable livelihoods opportunities, including jobs

**Output 4.3.** National and regional authorities have the knowledge and skills to engage communities in gender-responsive planning, coordination, delivery and monitoring of recovery efforts

<sup>142</sup> Following the recent change management, UNDP has established a gender focal point. All projects under the Energy and Environment portfolio have been assessed by the gender expert since then to ensure the proper inclusion of gender mainstreaming into project activities. For example, for the next phase of the Ozone project (HCFC Phase-Out), a concept note has been developed to add a gender lens at the design stage, highlighting the issue of the significant underrepresentation of women in the refrigeration and air conditioning sector.

**FIGURE 6. Outcomes 2 and 4 budget and expenditure**



Source: Power BI /Atlas (as of 27 July 2021)

One of the main changes to the UNDP Ukraine CPD was the merger of Outcomes 2 and 4 under one management structure, into a single thematic portfolio entitled Inclusive Development, Recovery and Peacebuilding (IDRPB). Conceptualized after the change management assessment, the consolidation was expected to achieve important UNDP goals of minimizing programme dispersion and fragmentation, by better addressing inclusive development on a national scale and applying the UNDP experience of supporting eastern Ukraine (which includes a highly integrated multi-donor, multisector support effort through the joint United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme [RPP] to other regions).<sup>143</sup> The combined IDRPB portfolio is reported in terms of the Regional Development Programme (RDP)

<sup>143</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2019) Change Management Advice Final Report.

component, which covers Outcome 2 programming (supporting decentralization; strengthening MSMEs, local governments and CSOs; and sustainable development and nationwide advancement of the SDGs) and the Recovery and Peacebuilding (RPB) component, which covers Outcome 4.

For the RPB component, UNDP work has been framed by the RPP joint programme, administratively managed by UNDP and implemented together with three other United Nations agencies: UN Women, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). RPP was developed in 2016-2017 following the outbreak of the conflict and the 2015 Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment, a joint analysis of the impact of the crisis and needs in eastern Ukraine conducted by the EU, World Bank and United Nations and supported by the Government.<sup>144</sup> RPP is an area-based programme developed for the conflict-affected area, and supported by 12 donors including the EU and EIB, through projects totalling over \$100 million.<sup>145</sup> The programme focuses on three components: economic recovery and restoration of critical infrastructure; local governance and decentralization reform; and community security and social cohesion. RPP has operated in Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson and Zhytomyr *oblasts*.

**Finding 16.** UNDP has contributed to building more resilient communities in conflict-affected regions by improving local community perceptions of safety and satisfaction with the quality of public services, creating job opportunities, and supporting local authorities to prepare relevant development strategies. With strong application of research and analysis, attention to serving people on both sides of the contact line, ability to convene donors, and administrative efficiencies gained in managing the United Nations RPP, UNDP played a significant role in achieving the favourable results. Pending issues stem from limitations to contact line crossing, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as partnerships within the United Nations framework through the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

UNDP has focused its efforts under the RPB component (Outcome 4) on improving perceptions on safety and security among people in conflict-affected areas and increasing the numbers benefiting from sustainable livelihood opportunities (including jobs), to enhance their resilience to shocks. By engaging with local authorities, CSOs and other actors (police and emergency personnel), numerous interventions were made, including:<sup>146</sup>

- 45 Community Service Working Groups (CSWGs) were formed to provide interactive dialogue platforms for authorities, communities and security providers; 44 gender-responsive community profiles were developed using inclusive and participatory processes; 270,000 women and men benefitted from improved community security, social cohesion, inclusion and access to justice initiatives; and 11 Centres for Safety and Security were established along with four training centres.
- 80 social infrastructure facilities were rehabilitated; 204 infrastructure projects were monitored; 1,205 MSMEs were supported (42 percent women-owned); 35 online stores were developed for conflict-affected businesses, along with a new e-learning platform for entrepreneurs; and an estimated 1.7 million people were reached by the entrepreneurship promotion campaign.

<sup>144</sup> RPP has been aligned with the Government's 'State Targeted Programme for Donbas Recovery'. The Government is currently preparing a new development strategy for eastern Ukraine led by the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories.

<sup>145</sup> The figures reflect 2020-2021 data from UNDP Ukraine, including: EU, EIB, U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, and the Governments of Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland.

<sup>146</sup> Taken from annual assessments conducted by UNDP RPB and project reporting. Stakeholder interviews helped to verify data.

Interviews with stakeholders and beneficiary groups, as well as the internal survey, suggested that progress and improvements had been made on the security and job creation targets set out in the CPD results framework, including:<sup>147</sup>

- 75 percent of women (target 63 percent) and 75.3 percent of men (target 78 percent) feel safe in the conflict-affected areas showing progress toward targets.<sup>148</sup> 42 percent of conflict-affected women (target 47 percent) and 70 percent of conflict-affected men (target 85 percent) feel safe outside the home.<sup>149</sup> Police and emergency personnel reported in interviews that the training received has benefitted security services and responses to cover issues such as GBV, that were not formerly addressed.
- The level of openness towards other groups in society (a proxy for social cohesion) progressed to 7.3 in Donetsk *oblast* (target 7.8) and 7.1 in Luhansk *oblast* (target 7.6).<sup>150</sup> Several focus groups of women and men stressed that ‘social cohesion,’ or the ability to get along, is an important unifying priority that needs to be achieved if any sustainable development is to occur.
- The number of people benefitting from emergency jobs and other livelihoods has increased for men and women, though not near to reaching the targets: 15,214 women (compared to a target of 100,000) and 14,904 men (compared to a target of 50,000).<sup>151</sup> 1,668,623 conflict-affected women (target 1,000,000) and 1,376,840 conflict-affected men (target 1,000,000) benefitted from improved infrastructure and quality public services with UNDP, with both targets surpassed.<sup>152</sup> In interviews, entrepreneurs and others expressed that their main interest was to maintain and expand their businesses, beyond the formation and basic survival aspects of doing business in the region.

To help national and regional authorities develop knowledge and skills to better engage communities in gender-responsive development planning and coordinate the delivery and monitoring of recovery efforts, UNDP has worked with both the Donetsk and Luhansk local authorities to support preparation of their medium-term development strategies to address socioeconomic issues, with civil society participation. They reflected local governance and decentralization reform by addressing gender in their overall budgeting, in line with national decentralization efforts.

Planning was supported through engagement to strengthen local authority capacity and processes, as well as to establish and advance government-civil society interaction. These efforts included: i) training 2,000 local authority representatives on public finance, gender-responsive planning and budgeting; ii) establishing 34 public councils (involving 1,275 community members, 45 percent women) and 27 youth councils to foster citizen participation in developing, implementing and monitoring local policies; iii) transferring 20 fully-equipped mobile ASCs to local communities; iv) creating 130 remote ASC workspaces

<sup>147</sup> Data from three surveys used by RPB management and staff to help identify issues and measure progress on issues being addressed, the AGORA, SCORE and Security and Justice Surveys: (1) AGORA is an interagency initiative of IMPACT Initiatives and ACTED and promotes the stabilization of fragile crisis-affected areas by strengthening local crisis response capacities and enabling inclusive recovery efforts. Its work is structured around two pillars: synergies between local actors and exogenous aid stakeholders and the use of settlements as the territorial unit for the planning, coordination and provision of aid and basic services. (2) Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) is an analytical tool implemented annually, designed to improve the understanding of societal dynamics in the GCA and NGCA. Originally developed in Cyprus by The Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development with UNDP and USAID support, it examines the levels of social cohesion and propensity for reconciliation, supporting stakeholders in their peacebuilding efforts. (3) The Security and Justice Survey, sponsored by the RPB, examines citizens' knowledge and attitudes of, and experience with, justice and security issues. It covers Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia *oblasts*.

<sup>148</sup> Security and Justice in Ukraine: Perspectives from Communities in Three Oblasts 2019-2020.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> SCORE data.

<sup>151</sup> Annual assessments conducted by UNDP RPB and regional administrations.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

along the contact line to enhance access to services for over 250,000 conflict-affected people; and v) developing an online “school of resilient communities” learning platform.<sup>153</sup>

Early in the crisis period, local authorities lacked organizational frameworks and capacity, but through the above and other interactions, they have evolved to improved functioning and capacity. As reported by citizen and business focus groups, the situation has significantly changed from early in the crisis period, to the point where there are avenues for citizen engagement, public services are being provided, and working relationships exist. However, sustainability concerns remain, in terms of processes and capacity and addressing new areas and other local government jurisdictions. The decentralization and amalgamation process in eastern Ukraine will continue to require attention, as they evolve towards the devolution of services and finances and the application of laws, policies and programmes at local level. In terms of public service delivery through ASCs, limited services have been provided by mobile ASCs at entry and exit checkpoints since the onset of COVID-19, as contact line crossings from the NGCA have been significantly limited, preventing Ukrainian citizens in the NGCA from obtaining services or visiting the GCA.<sup>154</sup>

Various factors contributed to the favourable results from UNDP support to eastern Ukraine, including:

- UNDP has applied extensive research and analysis in its identification of local challenges and recovery needs, based on data collected in conflict-affected regions (for example, the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index [SCORE], AGORA, and the Security and Justice Survey), allowing for evidence-based policymaking, programme planning and monitoring. During interviews, development partners spoke highly of UNDP needs assessments, and reported using them.
- UNDP has paid attention to addressing public, social and other needs of people of both sides of the contact line. RPP has been catalytic to build or refurbish ASCs for the GCA population, including providing facilities at or near the contact line, such as mobile service centres and a modular service centre (termed a ‘one stop shop’) at one open checkpoint, providing public services like documentation and pension benefits, access to banking, communication and health services.
- UNDP has been able to convene key donors that can make an impact and integrate their issue interest areas into a programmatic approach: the EU (for recovery, peacebuilding and governance); Netherlands and Denmark (for community security and social cohesion); Sweden and Switzerland (for good governance and citizen engagement); Canada (for the provision of public services and mine action); and EIB (for infrastructure refurbishment and construction).<sup>155</sup>
- UNDP was flexible to respond to the needs of development partners, local authorities and civil society interests. UNDP has been successful in tying together the three elements of the joint programme (economic recovery and restoration of critical infrastructure, local governance and decentralization reform, and community security and social cohesion), as one coherent programme, as expressed during interviews. By providing “life-changing support” which was immediately helpful to the local population, such as infrastructure, public service delivery and job creation, as well as dialogue on sustainable peace, many reported that the triple nexus (humanitarian-development-peace) approach had been achieved.

<sup>153</sup> RPB programme reporting.

<sup>154</sup> Before the pandemic, NGCA residents were allowed to cross the contact line. After the closure of the checkpoints the crossings stopped, and at the time of writing only two border crossing were partially open. The operation of entry and exit checkpoints is regulated by the Government of Ukraine and de facto authorities in the NGCA. UNDP, together with other United Nations agencies operating in the GCA and NGCA, is proactively advocating for freedom of movement across the contact line.

<sup>155</sup> 62 sub-projects, funded by the EIB loan and monitored by UNDP, have been already completed in 19 cities and communities in five eastern *oblasts* of Ukraine. The reconstruction of additional 167 public facilities is ongoing. These include hospitals, kindergartens, schools, hostels for IDPs, water and power supply systems, and other critical infrastructure damaged by the conflict.

- UNDP was able to reach out to regional authorities and counterparts, establishing a strong rapport with many of them over the years, who have become the backbone of the current platform for dialogue.
- The programme management is seen as competent in regards to reporting and overall programme management, execution and results.
- By engaging UN Women, UNFPA and FAO, the programme has maintained a focus on poor and vulnerable groups, upholding the principle of ‘no one left behind’.

In addition to the administrative efficiencies achieved, interviewees raised suggestions for the future programme. Development partners were interested in convening more technically-oriented meetings and dialogue to discuss substantive topics, issues and programme approaches with the participation of all relevant stakeholder groups, in addition to the current annual meetings of the Government, development partners and programme management. Based on many successful engagements at *oblast* level (for example, with community security networks, dialogue platforms for early warning, human rights or minority issues, and building infrastructure for peacebuilding), expectations were expressed for UNDP to further support local and national government to replicate the efforts.

Various United Nations agencies pointed to opportunities for UNDP to expand programme collaboration with other agencies operating in eastern Ukraine to strengthen synergies and demonstrate the ‘One-UN’ approach.<sup>156</sup> Currently, there is on-the-ground cooperation with three United Nations agencies directly involved in RPP (UN Women, UNFPA and FAO), and UNDP reported that various initiatives are in the pipeline.<sup>157</sup> Given the scope and breadth of RPP, there are opportunities for the involvement of other United Nations agencies, and scaling up existing United Nations partner contributions. Building on the strong research work of UNDP, suggestions were made for joint studies, such as on the economic implications of closure of the mining sector.

**Finding 17.** UNDP has contributed to broader inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable livelihoods, by strengthening the enabling environment for business through Business Membership Organizations (BMOs) and the development of MSMEs, which has created or strengthened businesses and generated employment opportunities. Further attention is needed to address sustainability issues (such as barriers to accessing finance) and strengthen the enabling environment, given the lack of a forward-looking policy framework. In eastern Ukraine, MSMEs are advancing from standard advisory services and grant schemes to establishing value chains, providing the potential for new businesses to be established, and expanding existing businesses and employment opportunities.

The inclusive development (or RDP) component of the IDRPB portfolio (CPD Outcome 2) focuses on job creation, public-private partnerships, training (including for youth and women), and improving the policy environment. The main project focuses on strengthening BMOs, while others include a mix of MSME and civil society strengthening, with an SDG focus.<sup>158</sup> In addition, the ‘Local Socioeconomic Recovery’ project in Kherson *oblast* was an effort to marry Outcomes 2 and 4 under the IDRPB.

<sup>156</sup> Areas mentioned for potential collaboration included: disability; employment (informal and formal sector, entrepreneurship, BMOs); green transition (for example for displaced former coal miners); agriculture; environmental protection and management; energy; civil society engagement; and gender.

<sup>157</sup> For example, a new project initiative on public transportation in areas along the contact line has been formulated with UNHCR and presented to a development partner. Research on the social and economic implication of coal mine closures and decarbonization in eastern Ukraine will be finalized in mid-2022, including validation with community members, regional and local authorities, stakeholders and other partners.

<sup>158</sup> These projects include ‘E-learning for Sustainable Development’, ‘Empowered Partnerships for Sustainable Development’ and ‘Private Sector Engagement for the SDGs’.

UNDP has made progress in several of its target areas, approaching the original goals established. For example, by 2020, UNDP interventions had created jobs through direct support for job creation or strengthening MSMEs and organizations that support MSMEs. This created 43,295 jobs for women (CPD target 130,000), 37,634 jobs for men (target 90,000), and 4,277 jobs for youth (target 10,000), all below CPD indicator targets, but showing progress.<sup>159</sup> A total of 27 BMOs (target 30), including two women-led BMOs, were targeted to facilitate cooperation between public and private institutions, improve the business environment and management, and optimize internal processes to support member businesses.<sup>160</sup> UNDP is approaching its target for the quality of services provided by partner BMOs, as 54.6 percent of BMO members (target 65 percent) are satisfied with the services provided by the BMOs.<sup>161</sup> BMOs are now seen as catalytic entities at national and regional levels, providing feedback and policy input, as well as improving support services for member businesses.<sup>162</sup>

Across the IDRPB portfolio, over 60,000 community members (52 percent women) in 16 *oblasts* benefited from new economic opportunities, improved infrastructure and environmental improvements through business development, training and partnerships with civil society, government and the private sector. Digitization was applied with three online courses for sustainable development, and one civil service course on adapting to remote work, with 23,729 of the 37,776 total users receiving certification.<sup>163</sup> To support sustainable BMO and MSME business development during the COVID-19 pandemic, training was switched online and some BMOs established competencies to help MSMEs establish web-based storefronts and become more proficient at providing products or services online. For example, the Donetsk Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a BMO project participant, provided online consultations to MSMEs and helped them to develop their digital presence.

Sustainable partnerships were developed, as exemplified by the seven pilot projects involving businesses, community groups and local governments. These projects were spread throughout Ukraine, with \$258,215 in project grant scheme funds and \$446,304 in local partner funds. The 'Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development' project 'challenge grants' aimed to help develop challenge-driven partnerships to address sustainable development, combining public and private resources. The efforts led to a further series of nine grants in response to COVID-19, benefitting around 170,000 people.<sup>164</sup> While the initial grant scheme aimed to develop positive working relationships at local level, the experience gained and capacity developed for participating organizations led to them extending the work on their own or progressing to other, related community initiatives. For both grant schemes, a key success factor was the ability to work with local authorities.

With the merger of Outcomes 2 and 4 into IDRPB, vulnerable groups were targeted, as exemplified by project activities in Kherson *oblast*. Project experiences from the separate outcomes were applied in a more consolidated way. The projects helped to improve access to administrative, healthcare and educational services for Kherson *oblast* residents and IDPs from other regions, including Ukrainian citizens living in Crimea. The projects also provided a COVID-19 response by supporting an initial assessment and improving

<sup>159</sup> Data from IDRPB project and programme survey reporting, updated by project personnel.

<sup>160</sup> The BMOs were selected by a competitive process for phases I and II. 20 BMOs were selected for Phase II and the seven Phase I BMOs were added to the group to help further their development and mentor the new entrants.

<sup>161</sup> UNDP-Swiss Development Agency (2021) Strengthening MSME Business Membership Organizations in Ukraine (Phase II) Project Progress Report.

<sup>162</sup> UNDP reported that BMOs are provided with individual organizational development plans to help sustainability in terms of more resilient and efficient management structures. New membership policies offered by UNDP are expected to allow them to increase the number of members and corresponding membership fees.

<sup>163</sup> Data from IDRPB projects and programme survey reporting, updated by project personnel.

<sup>164</sup> Partnerships included the gender-sensitive design of safe public spaces, assistance to MSMEs in rural communities, women empowerment (Moms in Business), mobile museum-laboratory for school children, craft production laboratory, and a youth school for socially responsible business.

access to education and healthcare provision. Local authority representatives said the projects addressed issues that were not already being supported and required external assistance in order to initiate and implement activities.

Several educational institutions working with MSMEs and BMOs have used courses developed with UNDP support for other initiatives, including online education and enhancing their curriculum. In eastern Ukraine, the business exhibition “East Expo 2020” took place online as a follow up to previous exhibition events in the region.<sup>165</sup> Support was provided for the institutional development of 15 business infrastructure organizations, business service providers and MSME associations in areas along the Azov Sea coastline. This support was focused on strengthening the capacity of organizations providing services or developing final products for newly established MSMEs and experienced entrepreneurs, including consultancy and training, digital services, marketing support and enhanced business communications. The RPP ‘Business Grants’ programme also provided support to 1,205 businesses from the conflict-affected areas of Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia *oblasts*.

RPP efforts in vocational education and training (VET) addressed entrepreneurial development and market-based employment skills. A training course was developed on the basics of entrepreneurship for students in VET institutions, to increase their employment opportunities. The Ministry of Education and Science approved a course book (training curriculum) on basic entrepreneurship, and the training course will be included on the curriculum of selected VET institutions. Based on UNDP analyses of VET systems in Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*, regional VET strategies were deepened and extended, leading to system transformation for a more modern and market-responsive VET approach.

While there has been progress on individual IDRDP project indicators, this is not sufficient to impact overall socioeconomic development. The existing outcome-level performance indicators (such as employment rates, gender wage gaps, and “Ease of Doing Business Ranking”) are all at macro level, and influenced by many other factors. The appropriateness of these indicators is questionable, even though other agencies under the UNPF also contribute to them, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNFPA and UN Women. The cooperation and collaboration of UNDP with national and local governments, the private sector and key development partners have helped to make progress on socioeconomic development in the regions where support was provided.

Progress was further impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the government-mandated lockdown during the second quarter of 2020. GDP fell by 4 percent, per capita GDP by 3.6 percent, and unemployment rose to 9.5 percent, with the female unemployment rate increasing to 9.1 percent.<sup>166</sup> While the pandemic slowed projects, there was responsiveness that allowed for adjustments. Projects tailored their responses to meet the needs of the stakeholder groups they had originally intended to serve. One example is the extension of the ‘challenge grants’ during the pandemic period, and the economic development grants provided in the Kherson *oblast*.

During focus groups, various MSME representatives indicated difficulties in accessing private formal credit and finance markets, especially in eastern Ukraine. They named several factors causing challenges

<sup>165</sup> On 29 October 2020, UNDP, in partnership with MDT, launched the annual business exhibition ‘East Expo 2020’. In response to quarantine restrictions, the exhibition of MSMEs from the conflict-affected region was held online on the interactive East Expo website and the Government’s business-support portal Diia.Business. The Expo enabled 160 entrepreneurs from eastern Ukraine to present their products and services online and find new partners during online Business2Business meetings. Nearly 5,000 people visited the exhibition, panel discussions and master classes during the event. The information campaign reached over 1 million people throughout Ukraine.

<sup>166</sup> Source: Ukraine State Statistics Service.

in qualifying for financing, including IDP status or the size or nature of their business.<sup>167</sup> Some larger, more successful firms have been able to obtain credit after receiving RPP assistance and building their businesses.<sup>168</sup>

UNDP work has resulted in MSME development at local level, but lacks national linkages, with a limited voice at the national level, and the framework for this work is not fully clear. The Ministry of Economy has been preparing the new national MSME Strategy, which is expected to be adopted in 2022, and the newly established Entrepreneurship and Export Promotion Office is reportedly responsible for implementation. The MDT has also been involved, including developing the *Diia.business* online business platform with UNDP support. The unclear organizational framework provides challenges for MSMEs to provide input to the policy framework.

UNDP support to MSME development remains highly relevant, as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be felt at least over the medium term (two to three years). In interviews, national level counterparts expressed that UNDP was a viable partner to help them address and improve the legal and regulatory framework for MSMEs. BMOs also considered UNDP to be a relevant partner to facilitate this interaction. The Outcome remains relevant, with a continued need for support to employment generation, labour market access and economic opportunities. The enabling environment still needs attention, given performance to date and continued decentralization and amalgamation efforts.

The national Government's decision to close coalmines, a mainstay economic sector in some cities, towns and villages of eastern Ukraine, is having negative socioeconomic repercussions for lives and livelihoods. Under the RPP, UNDP has taken steps to help local authorities strengthen their capacity to conduct environmental assessments and, with other programme components, investigate ways to support this socioeconomic transition. Further significant attention will be required as workers are displaced, as there are limited or no economic activities in the affected areas.

**Finding 18.** Building on the experience of the previous programme cycle, UNDP has strengthened its system for local and regional development and established its presence throughout the country. Pending issues remain, such as SDG localization, but there is great potential to further advance the system as part of the programme strategy and framework for IDRPB in the next cycle.

Geographically, Ukraine is a large country. One of the main comparative strengths of UNDP, recognized by stakeholders during the evaluation, was its strong local presence and its activities and networks throughout the country. An example of local presence is the EU-funded 'Home Owners of Ukraine for Sustainable Energy Solutions' (HOUSES) project, which supported the creation and operation of Home Owners Associations (HOAs) to plan viable energy-efficiency solutions for residential buildings and receive funding from the Energy Efficiency Fund (EEF).

Through UNDP facilitation of training, individual and group consultations, and experience exchange activities, a total of 2,288 new HOAs have been established, and 6,105 new or pre-existing HOAs have strengthened their operational and management capacity.<sup>169</sup> Over 2020 and 2021, 391 HOAs applied for grants from EEF, and another 263 have expressed interest in participating in the EEF grant programme or are at various stages of applying. In addition, 151 HOAs are undergoing energy audits. Interviews with HOA

<sup>167</sup> One woman entrepreneur of a successful information technology company said she was refused credit from a bank because of her IDP status.

<sup>168</sup> UNDP expected that access to finance for MSMEs would be enhanced by launching an impact investment marketplace on Diia.Business as of November 2021.

<sup>169</sup> Based on project reporting and interviews with HOA representatives.

members showed that UNDP has: i) helped to create or strengthen HOAs; ii) provided advisory services to access EEF grants; and iii) supported relationship-building and addressing HOA interests with local authorities.

The 'HOUSES' project aimed to facilitate the localization and acceleration of the SDGs, by establishing a network of SDG Regional Coordinators in each of the 24 *oblasts* in Ukraine.<sup>170</sup> The network originated from an EU-funded project in the previous cycle, 'Community-Based Approach for Local Development', which had strong local presence with project staff in each *oblast*. The network was kept in place under the HOUSES project during the current programme cycle. Given their presence throughout the country and close engagement with local actors, the project staff were eventually tasked to support advancement of the SDGs in their respective oblasts, while supporting the implementation of UNDP projects in their regions.

The SDG Regional Coordinators played a critical role in advocating for the SDGs at local level. They supported local authorities to develop *Oblast* Sustainable Development Strategies and contributed to regional data gathering and advocacy work. However, given that these Coordinators primarily had project-related functions (mainly for HOUSES), the time and effort they were able to provide to the SDGs at local level was limited.<sup>171</sup> Many development partners interviewed were not aware of the SDG Coordinators.

The HOUSES project ended in July 2021, since when UNDP has been revisiting the system, terms of reference and approach.<sup>172</sup> If the system is maintained, the sustainability of the Coordinators should be ensured by providing capacity development support to act as a catalyst for the SDGs, giving them sufficient authority to engage local authorities, and providing the opportunity for Coordinators to communicate and share ideas and experiences.

UNDP has advanced coordination of efforts to achieve sustainable development within the IDRPB. This is evidenced by the various efforts to develop partnerships for SDG advancement and advance economic opportunities.<sup>173</sup> The projects have used a variety of approaches to bring SDGs to the local level, create economic opportunities and engage CSOs to address key local and cross-cutting issues including youth employment and skills development and gender issues. The projects also address improving local government service provision in a variety of ways, from helping to realize public-private partnerships on civil society initiatives to providing mobile public service delivery.

There are challenges, but the existence of a network of UNDP project coordinators across the country is an asset with great potential for further application.<sup>174</sup> Having such a system could be catalytic as national, regional and local SDG efforts are advanced, given the Government's aforementioned SDG commitments. While amalgamation was already completed in October 2020, there remain aftereffects to apply the SDGs at local level. The priority is to strengthen the capacity of territorial units to effectively manage local resources and advance the localization of the SDGs by decreasing inequalities between and within communities,

<sup>170</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2019) Strategy Note: "Working with regional and local authorities, CSOs, communities and private sector, UNDP Ukraine will continue to roll out the SDG Area-Based Programme to advance regional and local sustainable development. Across all 24 *oblasts*, SDG Oblast Coordinators will act as development integrators for SDG-related activities of UNDP, United Nations agencies and other partners. This joint approach provides an excellent example of United Nations reform in action and strongly anchors UNDP as an integrator".

<sup>171</sup> According to the ICPE survey of SDG Regional Coordinators, 53 percent spent about 20-39 percent of their time on SDG-related work in their respective *oblasts*; and about 13 percent spent under 20 percent of their time.

<sup>172</sup> The country office is currently exploring the possibility of establishing a network of four regional development hubs, which could be funded by existing or forthcoming projects.

<sup>173</sup> These projects include 'Empowerment Partnership for Sustainable Development', 'Private Sector Engagement for SDGs', 'E-learning for Sustainable Development', 'Local Socioeconomic Recovery in Kherson *oblast*' and 'Promoting SDG Finance in Ukraine'.

<sup>174</sup> With the onset of COVID-19, UNDP capitalized on the HOUSES project with its network of 24 coordinators, 344 local authorities and nearly 3,500 HOAs, to launch a communications campaign about the disease and safety, reaching an estimated 1.8 million people.

including communities amalgamated in 2015-2017 and recently created ones, as well as the civil and military administrations.

**Finding 19.** The merger of two CPD outcomes into a single programmatic pillar (IDRPB) is still in transition. The conceptual foundation needs to be further defined and solidified if continued into the next cycle, with a broader objective of contributing to the decentralization process. The multi-themed, encompassing nature of the portfolio includes elements covered under the other two portfolio areas of democratic governance and environment and energy, requiring a consolidated theory of change, constant cross-unit communication and synergy.

The merger of two CPD outcomes into the IDRPB portfolio was conceptualized in the 2019 change management assessment as a way to address ‘alignment’ issues (between the outcomes and the office organizational structure), minimize programme dispersion and fragmentation, better address inclusive development on a national scale and apply a more integrated approach.<sup>175</sup> The regional development (RDP) component of IDRPB allows for a more nationwide focus, and covers numerous topics supported by several donors.<sup>176</sup> The peacebuilding (RPB) component is concentrated mainly in conflict-affected regions, with a focus on security and social cohesion, local governance development including public service delivery, and economic development and reconstruction.<sup>177</sup> The United Nations RPP, part of the RPB component, has been used to support the Government’s decentralization vision, the ‘State Targeted Programme for Donbas Recovery’.

The underlying aim of the merger was for regional development to take place to support the country’s decentralization process, allowing RPB experiences to be shared between regions, strengthening the emphasis on engaging local government, MSMEs and CSOs, and advancing the SDGs nationwide. At the time of the evaluation, though efforts were underway, UNDP was yet to develop a clearly articulated programme concept (theory of change) merging the two programme areas.<sup>178</sup> National-local government linkages have been weak, given that not all communities in the eastern region have been amalgamated, and have different legal status managed by a civil-military administration.<sup>179</sup> In practical terms, the combined portfolio has been reported separately: as RPB and RDP.

A further issue is that, due to the multisectoral nature of RPB, the existing IDRPB portfolio covers areas also addressed by the other two portfolios; Democratic Governance and Environment and Energy. For example, the ‘HOUSEs’ project under RDP is part of the ‘EE4U’ programme, addressing energy-efficiency issues in residential buildings through the homeowners.<sup>180</sup> Many traditional governance issues are addressed under the RPB component, including the ‘Good Governance and Citizen Engagement’ and ‘EU Support to the East of Ukraine’ projects, which include the broader goals of addressing decentralization and other reform agendas and sector and structural adjustments.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>175</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2019) Change Management Advice Final Report.

<sup>176</sup> RDP donors include the EU, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, with project efforts including: improving living standards, generating employment through MSME development; developing working partnerships between local governments, CSOs and private entities; and building capacity to provide government services, with crosscutting emphasis on women and GBV, digitalization of training and public services, and advancing sustainable development and the SDGs at local level throughout Ukraine.

<sup>177</sup> Work activity is also expected to gear up in Sumy, Chernihiv and Mykolaiv *oblasts* as the new EU addendums are implemented.

<sup>178</sup> There has been an effort to marry the two components in Kherson *oblast*, with the expectation that such an approach will be expanded to other *oblasts*.

<sup>179</sup> See Section 1.4 Country Context, decentralization reform.

<sup>180</sup> UNDP Ukraine HOUSEs project document.

<sup>181</sup> The UNDP Ukraine ‘EU Support to the East of Ukraine’ project aims “to support sector reforms and structural adjustments in health, education and critical public infrastructure to mitigate direct impacts of the conflict”.

In more recent years, following the office restructure, there have been efforts to increase communication between different portfolio areas at the level of CPD outcome management and related projects.<sup>182</sup> There are opportunities for additional and continued synergy between IDRPB and the other portfolios from design stage.

**Finding 20.** Results under the IDRPB portfolio are gender-targeted or -responsive. UNDP has helped to address gender issues, generate women's jobs and businesses, improve access to justice and public services, and create a coherent voice for women in eastern Ukraine.

GEWE is mainstreamed into the IDRPB portfolio, where all projects have specific gender indicators and targets. Project information is disaggregated overall by sex, as evidenced in project reporting. While project interventions have helped to provide opportunities for women to participate and address women's specific issues, especially women's empowerment, results were categorized as gender-targeted or gender-responsive, rather than gender-transformative. Particular initiatives, such as the development of women-oriented BMOs, may eventually prove transformative as the BMOs achieve sustainability and growth and help to support or create women-owned MSMEs.<sup>183</sup>

Livelihoods initiatives have mostly been gender-targeted or -responsive, addressing areas with gender aspects such as job creation and business formation, local authority strengthening, security, social cohesion, access to justice, public and social service provision. The number of Local Gender Coordination Councils established in target communities increased from seven in 2019 to 20 in 2021, by when they involved 348 people (247 women). The number of women-owned MSMEs that started or expanded operations with project support amounted to 278 in Donetsk (of 648 in total), 165 of 400 in Luhansk, and 65 of 157 in Zaporizhzhia. These businesses have included arts and handicrafts, food processing and technology ventures, as well as various service-oriented businesses. A total of 1,959 women in the three *oblasts* - of 3,604 women receiving different types of business training - have increased their knowledge on starting and improving businesses and professional skills.<sup>184</sup>

Of the 1,069 participants in the 45 CSWGs, 59 percent are women.<sup>185</sup> 44 gender-responsive community profiles were developed by CSWGs on a participatory basis, enabling civil society activists in Donetsk, Luhansk Zaporizhzhia and Kherson *oblasts* to advocate for and adopt solutions to the most pressing security issues identified in their community. 24 Citizens' Advisory Bureaux (CABs) and local CSOs acting as service providers have acquired capacity and are active in conflict-affected communities of Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*. Since 2018, these entities have provided over 36,000 administrative, legal and psychological services to conflict-affected people (63 percent women), especially to the most vulnerable groups, including IDPs and the elderly.<sup>186</sup> Project participants reported that these bodies have provided a channel to local authorities and amongst themselves to identify and address critical issues.

<sup>182</sup> For example, IDRPB collaboration on the transformation of coal mines with the Environment and Energy portfolio (under Outcome 3); and a joint development effort with the Democratic Governance portfolio (under Outcome 1) on the United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund application for peacebuilding and social cohesion interventions, as well as work on the Diia digital infrastructure platform.

<sup>183</sup> Two of the BMOs included in the 'BMO Strengthening' project support women-owned businesses.

<sup>184</sup> UNDP IDRPB surveys and reporting.

<sup>185</sup> CSWGs were formed to provide interactive dialogue platforms for authorities, communities and security providers. The CSWGs are in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson *oblasts*.

<sup>186</sup> CABs are managed by local CSOs and human rights groups to fill a gap in the capacity of government authorities to provide administrative, psychological and legal aid services to the population in need. Regarding public services, CABs can only advise on when and where the services are available, and the documents required. While 11 CABs are in place, the target is for 20 to operate in areas along the contact line and isolated communities.

Progress has been made in implementing gender-responsive fiscal decentralization in communities in eastern Ukraine as part of the decentralization process. Collaboration with UN Women to create efficient local finance management systems is exemplified by the establishment of 14 gender-responsive budgeting working groups, comprising 199 members (178 women) in target communities of Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*, all of whom increased their skills in mainstreaming gender into local programmes in accordance with the methodology recommendations of the Ministry of Finance. Local officials reported that the training was ground-breaking in considering gender-related issues for budget planning and expenditure, knowledge and processes that were not previously available. In addition, four other communities in Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* can now benefit from models of integrated social services that provide comprehensive gender-responsive support to residents, especially those from vulnerable groups (including IDPs), through access to assistance from lawyers, social protection specialists, pension funds and other social workers in one single office.

To ensure the provision of specialized services to GBV survivors in local communities, UNDP supported the overhaul of two shelters, promoted the establishment of another shelter, and established two day-centres for GBV survivors in Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*. Over 9,000 women and girls gained access to GBV services through the increased capacity of local service providers. UNDP also facilitated the implementation of two regional community-based policing programmes in Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* to promote the interaction of police with the local population. These activities cover areas such as the prevention of domestic and gender-based violence and the prevention of drug addiction among youth. The efforts have helped to heighten awareness of gender issues with local officials, police and emergency service personnel.<sup>187</sup>

The challenge remains to expand the above efforts to other geographical areas in eastern Ukraine and bring these positive examples to other parts of Ukraine through the IDRPB framework. Furthermore, while efforts have been aimed at women, focus groups and interviews indicated that there has been discussion to bring men into the conversation. To date, this has been done in local budget planning reform, MSME development and work with the police and emergency services to sensitize participants to GBV and related issues.

## 2.4 UNDP response to the COVID-19 pandemic

**Finding 21.** The UNDP response to the COVID-19 crisis was quick and coordinated under the joint United Nations framework. The approach was people-centred, with a particular emphasis on protecting and meeting the needs of vulnerable populations, focusing on institutional support, research and impact assessment, the digitalization of public services, and addressing GBV. UNDP utilized its network throughout the country to facilitate response and recovery activities. UNDP will need to continue its support to the Government for the implementation of the COVID-19 emergency response plan.

The UNDP response to the COVID-19 crisis was quick, and aligned with the four-pillar structure of the COVID-19 UNDP Integrated Response 2.0 offers: governance, social protection, green economy and digital disruption. The country office adjusted the programme design by adding 16 outputs to existing projects and launching six projects to address the consequences of COVID-19 and accelerate the recovery process.<sup>188</sup> In agreement with donors, UNDP allocated more than \$1.3 million to the COVID-19 response in Ukraine.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>187</sup> From project/ programme surveys and reporting. Also verified by stakeholder interviews with public sector representatives and CSOs.

<sup>188</sup> This included the 'COVID-19 Crisis Response' project, funded through the Rapid Response Facility.

<sup>189</sup> An amount of \$180,000 was repurposed from existing programmes and \$1.2 million was allocated to the 'Serving People, Improving Health' project.

Shortly after the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, UNDP supported the dissemination of trustworthy information about the pandemic and related risk mitigation measures from reliable sources (WHO and UNICEF). This information eventually reached nearly 2 million people through its partner network, which included 24 coordinators, 344 local authorities and nearly 4,000 HOAs. Further, UNDP supported MoH to implement a World Bank loan through the procurement of medical goods related to COVID-19 (\$1.2 million) and technical support to MoH (\$870,000).<sup>190</sup>

At institutional level, UNDP supported the Government to establish two Crisis Coordination and Management Units in the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to provide a coordinated response to the crisis.<sup>191</sup> This was followed by a more comprehensive and longer-term project to support the development of institutional capacity for a rapid response and a resilience-driven transformation of Ukraine's crisis decision-making and adaptation.<sup>192</sup> UNDP also supported the Government to transition key government institutions to online work, coordinating communication and outreach to the diaspora through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and strengthening the crisis communication and outreach capacity of government institutions at regional, national and local levels. In Kherson *oblast*, UNDP conducted a detailed COVID-19 impact analysis, and designed a response that included: supplying electronic equipment to help with home schooling; providing mobile public service delivery vehicles; creating a grants scheme to help develop community and economic development initiatives; improving overall public service delivery; and providing personal protective equipment to health workers.

Under the joint United Nations framework, UNDP acted as the technical lead for the joint United Nations Socioeconomic Impact Assessment and supported the Government in the development of the Socioeconomic Response Plan.<sup>193</sup> UNDP also supported the development of the 'COVID-19: Ukraine Compounded Vulnerability Index' online tool, which presents disaggregated analysis of the pandemic's consequences on socioeconomic, demographic and other variables in all regions of Ukraine. In collaboration with other agencies, UNDP engaged in extensive research work on the impact of the pandemic, producing numerous papers on a range of topics such as human rights, business and economic impact, youth, gender and the environment (see Box 4). The findings of this research have yielded insights into the measures required to address the effects of the pandemic, and provide good ground for the development of future UNDP programmes.

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#### BOX 4. UNDP-supported analytical research papers on the impact of COVID-19

- Analytical paper 'Impact of COVID-19 on Respect for Human Rights in the Regions' developed by the regional coordinators of the VRU Commissioner for Human Rights, analysing the situation with the observance of human rights in their regions.
- Analytical report 'Emergency Legal Aid to Counter COVID-19', providing analysis of legal aid provided by specialized CSOs (members of the Legal Development Network) during quarantine restrictions.

<sup>190</sup> The 'Serving People, Improving Health' project, with a total allocated budget of \$2.07 million.

<sup>191</sup> UNDP 'Crisis Coordination Management Unit' project.

<sup>192</sup> UNDP 'Responding to Strengthen Ukraine's Resilience in the Face of COVID-19 Epidemic' (RESURFACE) project.

<sup>193</sup> UNDP supported the Government in the development of the multisectoral COVID-19 response plan with ten priorities (health care, economic development, social services, education and science, peace and security, human rights, rule of law, humanitarian activities, gender policy, local development).

◀ Box 4. UNDP-supported analytical research papers on the impact of COVID-19 (cont'd)

- Analytical report 'COVID-19 in Ukraine: Impact on Households and Businesses', with the results of the socioeconomic assessment of the impact on businesses and households in Ukraine conducted jointly with UN Women and FAO.<sup>194</sup>
- Analytical report 'The Impact of COVID-19 on Women's Rights in Ukraine' prepared in partnership with the Office of the Government's Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, the VRU equal opportunities caucus.
- Analytical report 'Providing Social and Administrative Services under Quarantine' providing insights on the delivery of social and administrative services in the context of the pandemic.
- Survey 'How do Ukrainian youth live in the times of COVID-19?' focusing on a range of youth-related issues.<sup>195</sup>
- Survey 'Getting Access to Public Information on COVID-19' conducted by the regional network of the Ukrainian Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights, on how local authorities are publishing information about protective measures against COVID-19 and how they reply to the requests for information.
- Report 'Infographics: Ukrainian Women and Men during COVID-19', presenting a set of visual data on the behaviour of women and men, and how they have been affected by the pandemic.
- Report 'COVID-19 Impact on Air Quality in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova', providing insights from the monitoring of air quality and the impact of COVID-19 on air quality in the two countries.
- Study 'Assessment of the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises'.

Two additional features of the UNDP response to COVID-19 have been the digitalization of public sector services and the safeguarding of human rights, especially the protection of women from domestic violence. These two lines of work were already part of a major trend of UNDP regular programming in this cycle, but COVID-19 further accelerated this work.

**Digitalization.** As noted previously, UNDP has strengthened its partnership with MDT in this programme cycle, and this was further reinforced to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. In this context, UNDP launched the #HackCorona initiative, engaging IT experts, civic activists, start-ups and journalists in developing IT projects to tackle the effects of the pandemic. Furthermore, UNDP supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to develop an interactive tool to provide Ukrainian citizens with up-to-date information on travel restrictions related to COVID-19.<sup>196</sup> As a result of quarantine restrictions, the country office repurposed several of its activities and moved them to online platforms, including youth-related training, educational activities on human rights, reporting by human rights coordinators and monitors and others.

**Protection of human rights.** UNDP provided support to UOO on a range of COVID-19 related human rights challenges, including those faced by vulnerable groups. These included: the COVID-19 preparedness of elderly-care institutions and facilities for people with psychosocial disabilities; the provision of social services to homeless people in Kyiv; and the containment of COVID-19 outbreaks in the penitentiary and court

<sup>194</sup> The report presented the findings of two separate surveys that reached 974 owners of MSMEs and 1,022 households in all 24 *oblasts* and the city of Kyiv. The survey's second phase was underway at the time of the ICPE.

<sup>195</sup> The survey focused on: education, the impact of the pandemic on working conditions and employment of young people, youth involvement in community life, youth health and sports practices, security and social cohesion, environmental protection, youth initiatives and the youth information bubble.

<sup>196</sup> UNDP Ukraine reported that more than 2 million Ukrainian citizens have used the interactive online map to obtain information about travel restrictions.

systems. To identify the impact of COVID-19 on women's social and economic rights, and the situation of domestic and gender-based violence, UNDP supported a study on women's rights during the lockdown.<sup>197</sup> With GBV further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, UNDP supported the provision of legal and security services to over 9,000 individuals.<sup>198</sup> To address these new human rights challenges, UNDP launched a social media awareness-raising campaign on staying safe from domestic violence during the quarantine 'Just Like You: Five tips from human rights defenders during the lockdown'.

UNDP also provided communications and awareness-raising support on measures to counteract the effects of COVID-19, leveraging the network of SDG coordinators, NGOs and other partners throughout the country. For example, UNDP launched a campaign to encourage solidarity and kindness during the pandemic, and supported the internet publication 'platfor.ma' to help young women and men cope with self-isolation, social distancing and quarantine restrictions. Furthermore, UNDP supported the Chamber of Commerce to develop a chatbot to respond to user queries on how MSMEs could mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic. Seven CSOs were provided with financial support under the 'Civil Society Response to the Violations of Human Rights of Vulnerable Groups of Women and Men during COVID-19 Outbreak in Ukraine' grant competition. UNDP also leveraged a social media intelligence tool to monitor over 30 million social media messages, and map information pollution in Ukraine around the pandemic. The study identified more than 250,000 messages with disinformation narratives related to COVID-19 on Ukrainian online media, forums, blogs, message platforms and social networks.

The above measures were, for the most part, taken in addition to the regular activities planned under the various ongoing projects. The COVID-19 crisis is likely to significantly shape and transform the expectations of national partners for UNDP support. In this context, it will be appropriate for UNDP to assess ongoing projects, as it did with various IDRPB projects, to identify the adjustments necessary to respond more effectively to the evolving situation. The adjustment and repurposing of ongoing projects to COVID-19 problems and needs is challenging because of the rigid nature of donor-funded projects with earmarked financial resources. Nevertheless, an assessment will be useful, as it would provide a more comprehensive picture of the changes needed in the upcoming programme cycle. The assessment could include monitoring frameworks, mapping project outputs against COVID-19 markers, identifying the level of contribution of projects to COVID-19 areas of work, and identifying and tracking COVID-related knowledge products. It will also be important for UNDP to support the Government to implement the COVID-19 emergency response plan, developed with technical support by UNDP, other United Nations agencies and development partners, to accelerate implementation of the entire reform package, including healthcare reform.<sup>199</sup>

## 2.5 Overall implementation and cross-cutting issues

**Finding 22.** Strategic positioning. UNDP Ukraine has strong positioning in the country, with an array of comparative strengths, including its good rapport with the Government, direct contribution to the national reform agenda, technical, financial and research capacity and regional presence. Various recently-launched initiatives at the country office are expected to further facilitate UNDP efforts to adapt to the country's rapidly changing context. Partnership within the United Nations system and programmatic focus were among the issues raised during the evaluation.

<sup>197</sup> Survey results showed that women faced increased workloads, salary cuts and domestic violence during pandemic. Over 40 percent of respondents who faced domestic violence during the COVID-19 crisis reported that they had never experienced it before.

<sup>198</sup> This includes recipients of legal support services provided by CSOs funded through the COVID-19 response grant competition, and those who received either legal aid or security services from UNDP-supported CSOs and service providers (e.g. shelters, free legal aid centres and the police).

<sup>199</sup> UNDP noted that support to the COVID-19 emergency response plan is expected through the establishment of policy advisory units under the RESURFACE project.

**Partnership.** UNDP has enjoyed the confidence and trust of the Government during this cycle. The strong rapport it has been able to establish over the years with high-level government offices, including the offices of the President and Prime Minister, senior officials of various line ministries, and heads of *oblast* administrations, has allowed UNDP to have direct and open communication with relevant national focal points on development challenges. During interviews, UNDP was described as a crucial partner for the Government as it tackles the complex issues faced by the country. The UNDP ability to respond swiftly to emerging crises (for example the COVID-19 pandemic) and the Government's immediate priorities (such as digital transformation in public administration and services, energy and green economy) was highly appreciated by national partners.

As the largest United Nations agency in Ukraine, UNDP has a significant role in advancing the goals of the UNPF. Financially, UNDP is responsible for one-third of the UNPF programme budget.<sup>200</sup> Recent Partnership Surveys indicated that development partners have found improvement in the UNDP contribution in several areas, including innovation, gender and DRR.<sup>201</sup> Under the RPB component of IDRPB, UNDP has effectively led the joint United Nations programme on recovery and peacebuilding in eastern Ukraine, which was described by many as a reflection of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. UNDP has worked closely with national partners to develop a plan to secure financing of the SDGs (the INFF).

At the same time, some interviews with United Nations agencies highlighted the need for UNDP to engage and communicate more effectively with the rest of the United Nations family, further embracing the 'one voice' approach. When asked about challenges in interagency collaboration, several agencies covering similar issues and sectors as UNDP (such as health, governance, sustainable livelihoods, support to conflict-affected populations or gender) noted that UNDP had "*a different approach (or angle)*" from them. However, there was a shared interest among all development partners to collaborate to address common challenges for Ukraine, if the opportunity allows, beyond collegial information sharing, with more technical engagements, issue-based debates and programme synergy. Given the strong analytical research capability of UNDP, there were suggestions for more policy-related work or joint assessment opportunities, for example on the economic implications of closure of the mining sector in the east, which will be useful for other development partners.

**Operating as a development agency in conflict areas.** Following the delinking of the Resident Coordinator function from UNDP, a clear separation of the roles played by UNDP and the Resident Coordinator's Office has taken place in Ukraine. However, addressing Ukraine's challenges with one voice is still work in progress. The operational environment in Ukraine is complex, particularly in conflict-affected areas, where UNDP can operate only in the GCA (while also addressing the needs of NGCA residents when they come to GCA for services), while humanitarian agencies work in both. With the HRP framework led by OCHA, and the Resident Coordinator serving as United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, many partners interviewed associated 'integrator' role for the United Nations work in the conflict-affected areas with those bodies rather than UNDP. Given its strong positioning in the country, however, UNDP has a clear vantage point to lead the nationwide development agenda. One of the reasons for merging inclusive development and RPB under one programme framework was to bring best practices and lessons learned from its work in eastern Ukraine to the rest of the country. There are several areas to which UNDP has strongly contributed during this cycle (for example, gender, MSMEs or local governance), that could be replicated in other parts of the country, with UNDP taking an integrator role and engaging all relevant partners.

<sup>200</sup> See Section 1.4 UNDP programme under review 2018-2022.

<sup>201</sup> UNDP Partnership Surveys 2015, 2017 and 2020. Between 2015 and 2020, the results on UNDP seen as "valued partner" increased from 79 to 81 percent; on its contribution to GEWE from 30 to 69 percent; to DRR from 22 to 46 percent; and to innovation from 45 to 57 percent.

UNDP has closely engaged with humanitarian actors in the GCA, managing a complex programme. As interviewees noted, humanitarian assistance in the GCA is expected to end by 2023 and there is room for UNDP to explore the next phase of its programme plan. For example, the opportunity to strengthen and advance RPB activities along the contact line remains, broadening activities that facilitate economic development and sustainable livelihoods to meet the needs of IDPs and vulnerable groups, while supporting or facilitating social cohesion and security within the GCA, and developing options for those in the NGCA. Progress has been made on the provision of public administrative, health, social and other services through mobile ASCs. The established CABs provide a variety of social, legal and psychological services that were previously not available, and fill a gap that is not being provided by the national or local authorities.<sup>202</sup> CSWs, public and youth councils are providing linkages for civil society to be more involved with their local governments, and helping them to take on civic duties on their own.

**Continual strengthening of the office.** UNDP has been undergoing a restructuring process, which aims to strengthen its ability to further respond to the country's development challenges. The overall restructuring of the office, stemming from the change management exercise, resulted in revision of the office programme and operational structure, internal control framework and business processes. With new leadership since 2019, the country office has pushed forward various initiatives to respond to the changing operational environment, focusing on innovation, flexibility and agility. These included: the consolidation of programme units from four to three (Democratic Governance, Environment and Energy, and IDRPB) aimed at sharpening the programmatic focus; and the creation of the Strategic Planning, Partnerships and RBM unit, disbanding the former Business Development Unit. The establishment of an independent RBM team is significant, as it ensures the separation of the programme monitoring and oversight functions from programme management.<sup>203</sup> UNDP has introduced the Integrated Monitoring, Reporting and Planning Platform (IMRP) to strengthen the programme/ project monitoring capability of the office. A gender strategy and team have been established to integrate GEWE into the office and its programming. The communications team, guided by its comprehensive strategy, has actively engaged on various fronts, from resource mobilization support (such as the EIB engagement campaign), to responding to widespread misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccination on social media,<sup>204</sup> working closely with UNICEF.<sup>205</sup>

**Focus areas.** With its proximity to the Government and organizational mandate, interviews with development partners raised a general expectation for UNDP to add value through its ability to impact the country's policy dialogue on systemic governance challenges, including anticorruption and strengthening of public administrations. Development partners also raised the convening power of UNDP as a comparative strength, critical to address immediate government priorities (such as energy efficiency or the green economy) and tackle crises. With its operational capacity and resources, UNDP was expected to be at the forefront of United Nations efforts contributing to the Government's broader reform agenda (including decentralization), while facilitating the participation of relevant partners.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>202</sup> CABs are managed by CSO organizations while ASCs are managed by the Government.

<sup>203</sup> UNDP Ukraine. Change Management Mission Final Report.

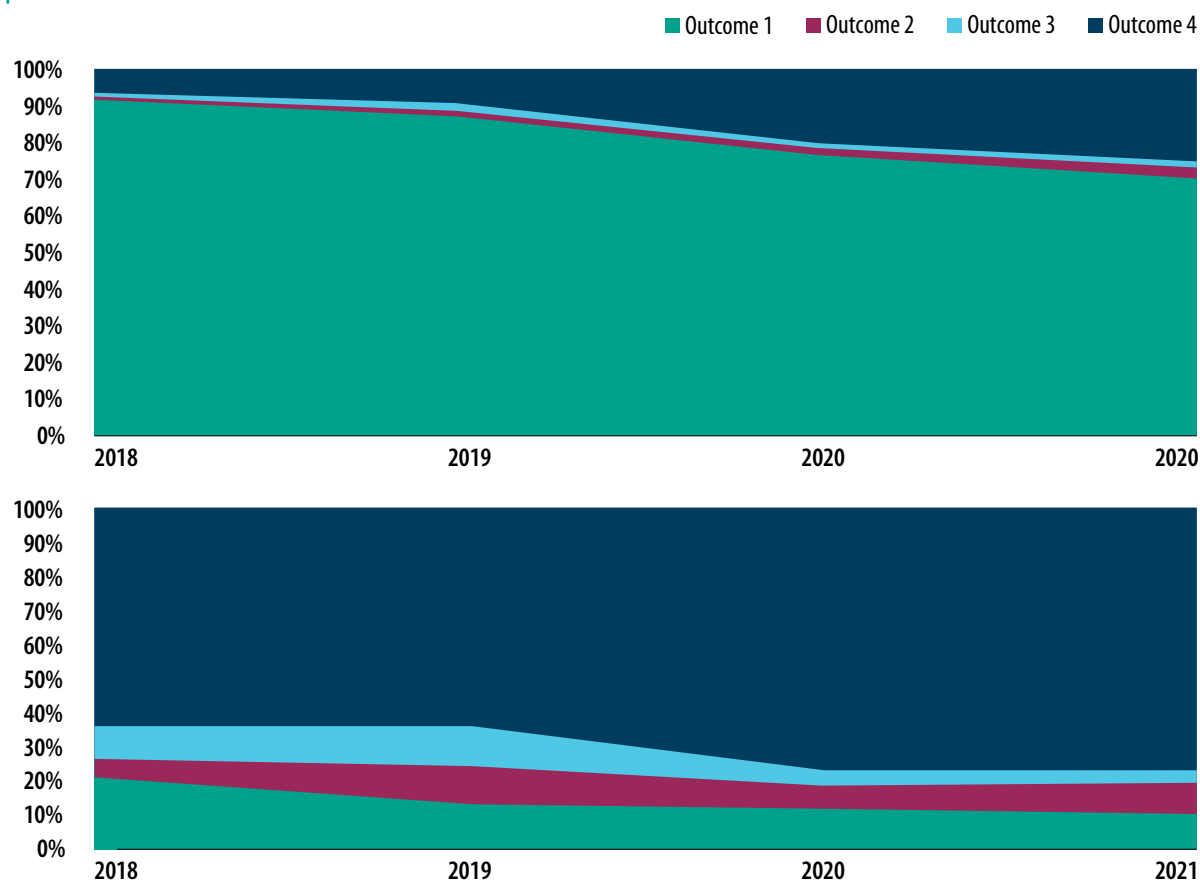
<sup>204</sup> OECD (2021) COVID Crisis in Ukraine. Page 9. "Ukraine's vaccination rollout has been hindered by challenges on the demand side, with 'anti-vax' disinformation spreading on social media and high vaccine distrust among the population in general. A March 2021 survey indicated that 60 percent of Ukrainians would not want to get vaccinated even if the vaccine was provided free of charge".

<sup>205</sup> UNDP Ukraine (2020) Advocacy, Outreach and Communication Strategy 2020-2022. The strategy defines the team's work by different target audiences and tools (e.g., social media, publication, newsletters, events), by outcome area.

<sup>206</sup> For example, the United Nations country team's Common Country Assessment notes, "Ukraine's progress towards Agenda 2030 and its ability to achieve needed economic and social transformation will directly depend on the successful finalization of a number of foundational reforms currently being implemented: anti-corruption and judicial reform, public administrative reform, decentralization, land reform, and health care reform".

Currently, UNDP programme expenditure is largely concentrated in the RPB component of IDRPB, except for the MoH procurement projects, with minimum investment in core Governance (despite the fact that governance was envisaged as the largest portfolio for the current period in the CPD) or Environment and Energy areas. RPP, the joint programme in eastern Ukraine, which includes governance and energy components, represents 85 percent of Outcome 4 programme expenditure. Success cases and lessons from the programme in conflict-affected regions should urgently be integrated into the Democratic Governance and Environment and Energy portfolios, to scale them up to national-level work.

**FIGURE 7. Programme expenditure by outcome 2018-2021 and portfolio distribution after removing health procurement under Democratic Governance**



Data Source: Data from Power BI as of 27 July 2021

**Finding 23. Gender equality and women’s empowerment.** Based on the existing portfolio of projects, the financial commitment of UNDP to secure more projects promoting GEWE has yet to materialize. The country office has established a comprehensive gender equality strategy, launching various rigorous initiatives and demonstrating its commitment to promoting the issue both in programmes and operations.

In response to the country priority of addressing GEWE, particularly recognizing women’s disproportionate vulnerabilities in the conflict-affected areas, UNDP committed in its CPD to “ring-fence at least 15 per cent of resources for GEWE, strengthen gender expertise and prioritize the needs of women in conflict-affected areas and in other vulnerable situations”.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>207</sup> UNDP, CPD 2018-2022.

The UNDP Ukraine Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2022 further committed the office to a target of 15 percent of its budget allocation to GEWE as a principal objective (GEN3) and 85 percent to significant inputs to GEWE (GEN2) by the end of 2020.<sup>208</sup> Based on the existing list of projects, this goal has not yet been achieved either in the budget allocation or expenditure. In the first three years of the programme, 0.1 percent (or \$500,000) of the budget was committed to projects marked GEN3, 54.8 percent (or \$280 million) to projects marked GEN2, and 45 percent (\$230 million) to those marked GEN1.

Similarly, 59 percent (or \$295.5 million) of actual programme expenditure has been associated with project outputs with gender equality as a significant objective (GEN2) and 0.1 percent (\$400,000) with project outputs with gender equality as the main objective (GEN3). It was notable that there was no expenditure associated with outputs not expected to contribute to GEWE (GEN0). Gender-sensitive programming has been seen primarily in two areas: UNDP health procurement support to MoH under the Democratic Governance portfolio (Outcome 1), with a majority of projects related to GEN1 or GEN2; and the RPB portfolio (Outcome 4) associated with GEN2 expenditure.

Following the recent office restructuring, however, UNDP Ukraine has embarked on a series of robust initiatives at several different levels. Partner perceptions of the UNDP contribution to gender issues had significantly improved in the latest survey.<sup>209</sup> Guided by the Gender Strategy, which provides an overall vision and framework for the office and is aligned to the Corporate Gender Equality Strategy 2018-22, UNDP Ukraine has made progress in four areas on gender. Firstly, in 2019 the country office created a group of internal champions, including a gender specialist (also serving as a member of the interagency task force chaired by OCHA), a focal point on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation, and a Gender Focal Team led by senior management.<sup>210</sup> Secondly, the office implemented the internal Gender Equality Seal Programme 2021-2022, through which progress can be monitored through a set of guided instruments and measurable standards. Thirdly, UNDP organized regular in-house learning sessions, such as training on gender-responsive communication. Finally, it set up gender-responsive human resource and recruitment guidelines to ensure that all new staff have the skills and understanding to promote gender equality.<sup>211</sup> UNDP has achieved gender parity in the office, with women making up 55 percent of the total staff.<sup>212</sup>

To integrate gender into programming, the gender specialist is responsible for facilitating a gender analysis for each new project, to be reflected in the project design and activities. This is to ensure that all new projects are awarded either GEN2 or GEN3, in line with the Action Plan. The share of programme expenditure focusing on gender (GEN2 and GEN3) has increased nearly four-fold in the first two years of the programme cycle, from 22 percent in 2018, to 80 percent in 2019.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>208</sup> UNDP Policy to Support Planning and Programming in Ukraine under the UNDP Ukraine Gender Strategy and Action Plan, 2019-2022.

<sup>209</sup> See Finding 22.

<sup>210</sup> The Gender Focal Team includes: the Gender Specialist, programme officers, project managers, the Human Resources Manager, Communications Manager, and Monitoring and Evaluation Manager.

<sup>211</sup> UNDP Ukraine country office questionnaire and interviews. For example, gender-related competency questions are included in terms of reference as part of the procurement process. All newly recruited staff and consultants, as well as existing positions, are expected to have the understanding, skills and competencies to promote gender equality. This effort has been included in the UNDP Performance Management and Development process, where performance reviews of senior managers include at least one key result on gender equality.

<sup>212</sup> UNDP Executive Snapshot. At the time of the evaluation, 55 percent of total staff (N=241) were women. Management was well-represented by women, including the Resident Representative and Deputy Representative, and one of the three programme team leaders.

<sup>213</sup> Project expenditure data from Power BI, 27 August 2021. The change was largely due to an increase in GEN2 project expenditure. To develop more gender-transformative projects, UNDP has been developing GEN3 project concepts for urban development, support to women in policy- and decision-making for effective governance, and data collection for gender equality.

**FIGURE 8. Programme budget by Gender Marker**



**FIGURE 9. Programme expenditure by outcome and Gender Marker (2018-2021)**



Source: Both Figures based on Atlas Project Data, Power BI, 27 July 2021

**Finding 24. Innovation.** UNDP placed significant focus on piloting and demonstrating innovative solutions to development challenges during the current cycle. UNDP launched numerous innovation products in partnership with national partners and donors, gaining recognition from development partners. Given the investments and criticality of innovation and digitalization as a potential accelerator for development results, there is room for UNDP to establish a clear framework to fully integrate efforts into existing and future programmes and projects.

Innovations received much attention during the cycle under review, and are currently consolidated in the country office under ‘digitalization’.<sup>214</sup> Partner ratings of the ‘innovativeness’ of UNDP Ukraine have more than doubled over this cycle.<sup>215</sup> In collaboration with the newly established MDT, as well as development partners and donors, UNDP has launched over 35 digital interventions, including the national SDG online monitoring system, innovative solutions in nature-based climate change adaptation and mitigation, the #HackCorona initiative, and an online platform for MSMEs in eastern Ukraine.<sup>216</sup> COVID-19 accelerated the pace of UNDP innovation efforts from the previous cycle.<sup>217</sup> Building on past experience, UNDP has supported the government ‘Your State in Your Smartphone’ initiative to support the digitalization of most government services, improve their efficiency and performance and reduce the risk of corruption.<sup>218</sup> With an Oslo Governance Centre grant in 2020, UNDP conducted research using an advanced social media

<sup>214</sup> UNDP Ukraine questionnaire.

<sup>215</sup> The partnership survey indicated that the rating on this item increased from 25 percent (2015) to 57 percent (2020).

<sup>216</sup> UNDP Ukraine, ‘Going Digital for All: Digital Solutions Supported by UNDP in Ukraine’.

<sup>217</sup> In the previous cycle, the innovative governance component of the ‘Community-Based Approach to Local Development’ programme (2008-2017) supported the digitalization of municipalities through such projects as ‘smart rada’ (Dubno municipality, Rivne *oblast*), ‘open budget’ (Pryluky, Chernihiv *oblast*), ‘smart doctor’, ‘e-tourism’ (Nizhyn city, Chernihiv region), ‘e-office of city residents’ (Korosten city, Zhytomyr region).

<sup>218</sup> UNDP Ukraine, Going Digital for All: Digital Solutions Supported by UNDP in Ukraine.

intelligence tool to track over 30 million social media messages in Ukraine about the COVID-19 pandemic, providing useful insights into the spread of disinformation about the pandemic.<sup>219</sup> The Accelerator Lab, established in 2019, facilitates the application of innovative solutions to development. UNDP investment in innovation and digitalization in areas such as governance and sustainable green economy was well recognized by interviewees, as also indicated in internal partnership surveys.<sup>220</sup>

Given its investment in innovation, there is room for UNDP to fully integrate innovative interventions with ongoing and future programme work to maximize results and effectively reflect lessons generated through such work in future programme or project design and implementation strategies. The Accelerator Lab has engaged with programme and project teams through sensemaking sessions, for example to collectively brainstorm development challenges and ideas for coming years.<sup>221</sup> Their engagement in the design of specific projects or portfolios, however, has reportedly been rather limited. Relevant innovation data from the Lab (or any other sources) should be tracked and monitored, and results measured through the platforms provided by programmes and projects. Monitoring and tracking of innovative efforts over time, and the capture of lessons generated during pilot stage and the degree to which they are replicated and scaled up, should be prioritized. Currently, innovation-related efforts across projects and portfolios appear fragmented, without a cohesive framework to connect related activities.

**Finding 25.** Funding sources, the donor landscape and resource mobilization. UNDP programme spending has fluctuated significantly across the last two cycles. In the current cycle, the share of bilateral and multilateral funds has increased significantly, and UNDP has successfully leveraged donor funds to complement its efforts. The donor landscape is volatile and unpredictable, requiring UNDP to explore a more sustainable funding model and well-designed resource mobilization plan. Currently portfolio managers are responsible for mobilizing resources for their respective areas.

**Trends:** UNDP programme expenditure increased sharply following the outbreak of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine in 2014. Including its support for MoH medical procurement, UNDP average annual expenditure has tripled during the current programme cycle, compared to the previous one. The programme budget during the period 2012-2017 was \$392 million, with average annual expenditure of \$47 million. In the current cycle 2018-2022, the overall programme budget grew by 61 percent to \$631 million, with average annual expenditure increasing threefold to \$153 million.

The highest level of expenditure by the office was marked in 2018, the first year of the current period, since when UNDP overall programme expenditure has been steadily decreasing, falling 11 percent by 2019 (from \$174.6 to \$154.9 million) and a further 16 percent by 2020 (to \$130.4 million). However, the country office maintained a high overall programme delivery rate of 90 per cent between 2018 and 2020.<sup>222</sup>

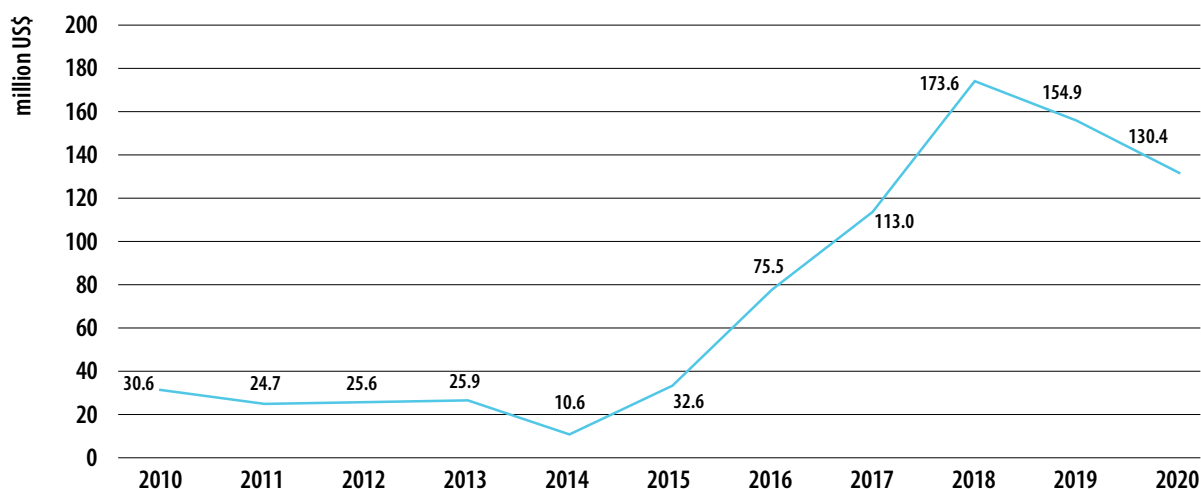
<sup>219</sup> UNDP Ukraine. ICPE questionnaire.

<sup>220</sup> In the UNDP Partnership Survey, the perceived contribution of UNDP to 'innovation' jumped from 25 percent in 2017 to 57 percent in 2020.

<sup>221</sup> For example, a midterm review and sensemaking exercise for the Environment and Energy portfolio in 2020.

<sup>222</sup> The delivery rate for the period 2012-2017 was 72 percent. Data from Power BI as of 27 July 2021.

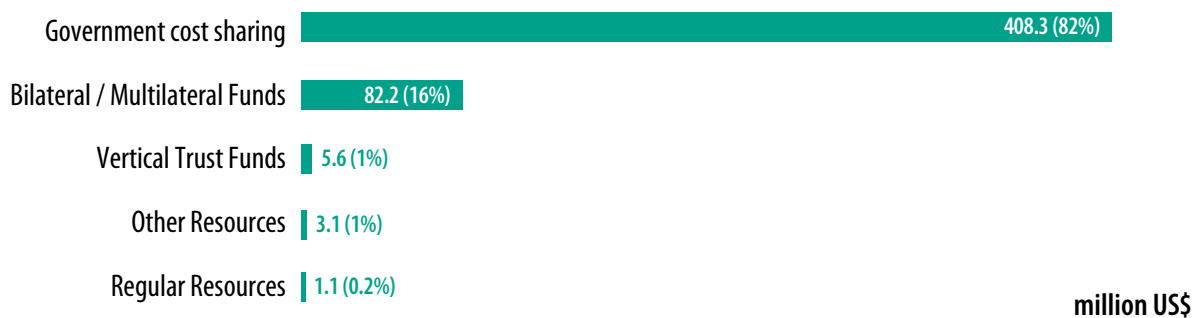
**FIGURE 10. Ukraine expenditure trends 2010-2020**



Data Source: Data from Power BI as of 27 July 2021

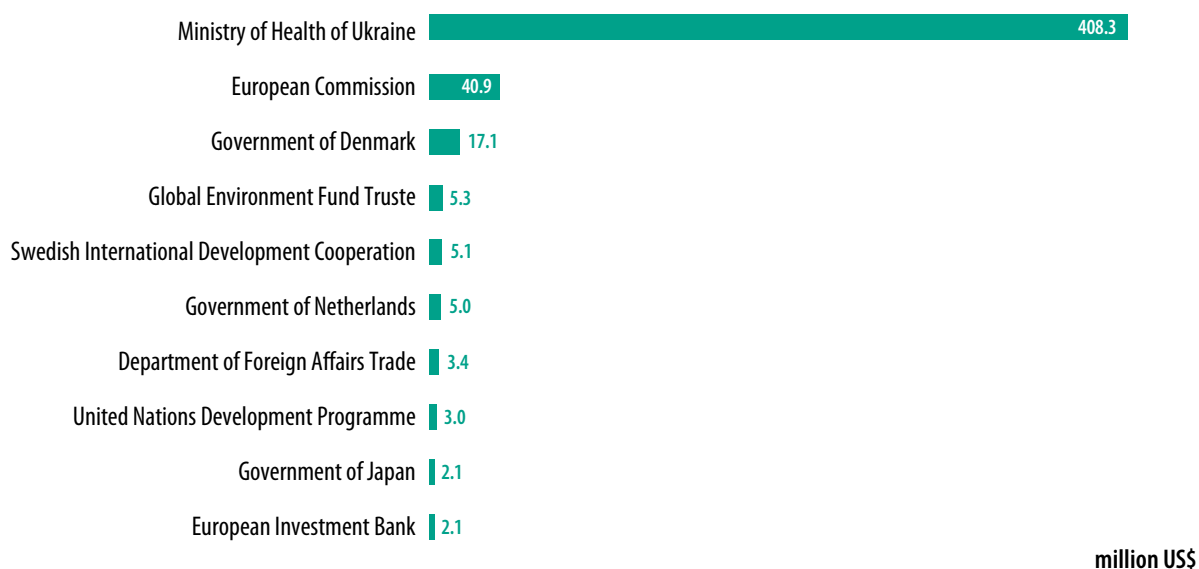
**Sources of funding:** In the current cycle, MoH represented the largest source of UNDP funding at approximately 82 percent (\$408.3 million), followed by bilateral and multilateral funds at approximately 16 percent. UNDP also mobilized resources from vertical trust funds and other sources, each representing 1 percent of programme expenditure, and regular resources, representing only 0.2 percent. Major donors for UNDP have included the European Commission (\$40.9 million or 8 percent), Denmark (\$17.1 million or 3 percent), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (\$5.2 million or 1 percent); followed by Sweden, the Netherlands and Canada. Core UNDP resources represented only a tiny fraction of programme funding in this cycle (\$1.1 million or 0.2 percent).

**FIGURE 11. Programme expenditure by fund source (2018-2021)**



Data Source: Data from Power BI as of 27 July 2021

**FIGURE 12. Top 10 donors in terms of total expenditure (2018-2021)**



Data Source: Data from Power BI as of 27 July 2021 {"Department of Foreign Affairs Trade & Development" is CANADA}

Resource mobilization exceeded initial expectations for the two CPD outcome areas, Democratic Governance (with procurement support) and support to eastern Ukraine (see Table 3). UNDP currently provides technical assistance for implementation of the EIB loan in eastern Ukraine for recovery, including infrastructure refurbishment and construction, and is implementing a World Bank loan in the health sector.<sup>223</sup>

**TABLE 3. Country office budget and resource mobilization by outcome area**

	UNDP budget in CPD (US\$ million)	Resource mobilization (US\$ million)
Outcome 1. Democratic governance	91.7 (38%)	352.5 (75%)
Outcome 2. Sustainable livelihoods	28.3 (12%)	5.1 (1%)
Outcome 3. Energy and environment	42.5 (18%)	28.8 (6%)
Outcome 4. Recovery and peacebuilding	76.5 (32%)	85.3 (18%)
<b>Total UNDP budget in UNPF</b>	<b>239 (100%)</b>	<b>471.6 (100%)</b>

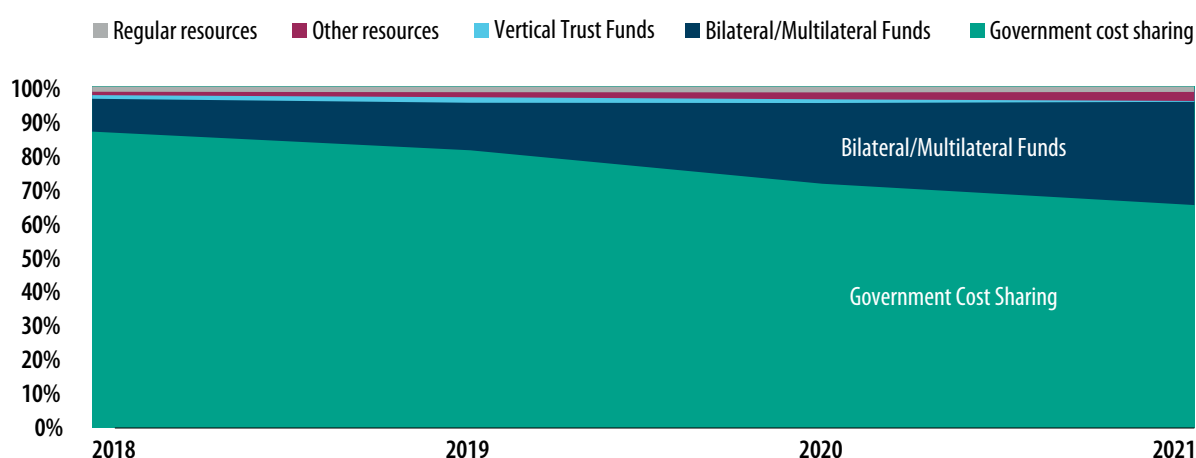
Data Source: UNDP Ukraine country office

Programme expenditure by funding source indicates that government cost-sharing, provided mainly for MoH procurement support, has been declining over time, from 89 percent of total expenditure in 2018 (\$155 million), to 73 percent by the end of 2020 (\$95 million). Meanwhile, contributions from bilateral and multilateral sources have steadily increased, from 10 percent in 2018 (\$16.6 million), to 25 percent in 2020 (\$32 million), and are expected to reach 31 percent of total expenditure in 2021.

<sup>223</sup> 62 sub-projects funded by the EIB have been already completed in 19 cities and communities in five eastern *oblasts*. The reconstruction of an additional 167 public facilities is ongoing, including hospitals, schools, hostels for IDPs, water and power supply systems and other critical infrastructure damaged by the conflict.

UNDP has been able to complement its resources with funding from various donors to achieve its programme goals. For example, the development and strengthening of MSME BMOs with the Government of Switzerland, and support to decentralization reform and strengthening of public service delivery through the Governments of Germany and Sweden. The Government of Denmark has funded activities related to human rights, access to justice, youth and civil society development. The Government of Sweden funded digital transformation activities. The EU funded UNDP work in support of parliamentary reform, and a significant portion of activities in eastern Ukraine along with 13 other development partners. As noted, UNDP has also implemented a World Bank loan to MoH for the procurement of medical material related to COVID-19.<sup>224</sup> The Environment and Energy portfolio has been far less diversified. Its main sources of funding have been GEF (50 percent), EU (19 percent) and the Rapid Recovery Facility (RRF) (17 percent).

**FIGURE 13. Changes in funding sources 2018-2021**



Data Source: Data from Power BI as of 27 July 2021

UNDP continues to require a secure sustainable and well-diversified funding base for its programme. Several factors present risks to the financial sustainability of the country office:

- Health procurement activities are on a declining trend. While a significant boon to the UNDP programme, this activity is unsustainable in the long-run. At the time of this ICPE, it was uncertain how long UNDP would be able to maintain its role in the procurement of medicines and medical equipment.<sup>225</sup>
- The donor landscape has been changing. Funding from traditional donors is expected to decline due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Major partners such as the EU are increasingly engaging with their own regional (European) partners to implement projects.

<sup>224</sup> With funds provided by World Bank, UNDP has implemented the 'Serving People, Improving Health' project to support the Government of Ukraine in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic (funding for the procurement component amounted to \$1.2 million).

<sup>225</sup> Ukrainian legislation allows for the procurement of medical material through international organizations until March 2022. Any extension of this period will require VRU approval. As noted in this report, UNDP recognizes that it will eventually have to transfer all procurement activities to the MoH CPA, although it lacks a solid exit strategy for this.

- GEF funding is on a declining trend, with the UNDP position as a key GEF implementer in the country challenged by other organizations.<sup>226</sup>
- Some donors have discontinued cooperation with UNDP in longstanding partnership areas in Ukraine. This has been the case particularly in the transparency and integrity area, where the EU and Denmark have started separate anticorruption initiatives after the closure of the UNDP anticorruption project.

UNDP Ukraine has clearly recognized these threats and the need to diversify its funding sources. In the context of the COVID-19 response, it strategically allocated core resources to pilot projects that resulted in the engagement of donors in the areas of digitalization of public services and strengthening community resilience.<sup>227</sup> In the Environment and Energy area, the country office is trying to diversify the funding base, while improving relations with GEF, exploring funding from non-traditional sources such as the International Climate Initiative and North American Space Agency.<sup>228</sup> The country office is also exploring the potential for UNDP involvement in facilitating Ukraine's participation in the EU Green Deal. Efforts have also been made to engage with IFIs and the EU on environmental projects.

To place the programme on a sustainable footing, UNDP needs to pursue further cost-sharing opportunities, in addition to maintaining relations with traditional donors and developing new partnerships with non-traditional donors. Given its track record with engaging the EIB and the World Bank, UNDP should further explore opportunities with IFIs and the private sector. Resource mobilization responsibilities have been placed upon each portfolio. To further strengthen its funding position and efforts, the country office would benefit from a more solid and long-term resource mobilization strategy that articulates funding diversification objectives and identifies appropriate strategies, actions and partners for achieving them.

Some United Nations partners indicated that resource constraints are shared by all agencies, suggesting that programmatic collaboration and engagement between United Nations agencies could strengthen access to funding sources for all. Despite their different mandates, operational modalities or government partners (line ministries), it is important to recognize the collective value of the United Nations and operate under one voice and a set of programming principles.

**Finding 26. Results-based management.** The country office has embarked on revamping its RBM practices by introducing a digital platform for monitoring and reporting programme data (the IMRP). For existing programmes and projects, the results framework has not always been optimal, with challenges including the quality of indicators used. The new system allows real-time monitoring and programme cycle management; a significant step in the right direction.

**UNDP Ukraine has revamped its RBM system since the office restructuring.** It introduced a new monitoring and reporting platform in January 2021, the IMRP, which aims to allow UNDP to link project indicators to CPD indicators and track CPD indicators automatically. At the time of the ICPE, three of the 14 outcome indicators defined in the CPD Results and Resources Framework had been achieved or were 'on track', seven were considered within reach by the end of the programme cycle, and the rest were assessed to be 'off track'.<sup>229</sup>

<sup>226</sup> For example, the 'Green Sustainable Cities' project, that UNDP has been negotiating for a long time with GEF, was awarded to UNIDO.

<sup>227</sup> The country office allocated \$664,000 from core resources and \$300,000 from the RFF specifically for the COVID-19 response. The country office received \$1,998,290 in donor funding targeted at countering the impact of the pandemic (including \$1.2 million from the World Bank repurposed loan), in addition to \$1.2 million from RRF for bolstering a green recovery from the pandemic.

<sup>228</sup> Areas of potential cooperation with these partners are climate change, water governance, water security, environmental monitoring and national security governance.

<sup>229</sup> See Annex 5 for a full list of CPD outcome and output indicators and their status.

There are several challenges inherent in the country programme and project results frameworks. Some outcome-level indicators are at macro level, influenced by many players and factors and thus inappropriate for measuring the UNDP contribution (for example, “wage gaps between men and women”). In some cases, there were no linkages between existing projects and the indicators proposed (for example, the Democratic Governance portfolio indicators include “public confidence in the court”, but there has been no engagement with the courts). The Democratic Governance and IDRPB portfolios often cover similar subject matters, but the indicators are mixed (for example, there is no work under Democratic Governance contributing to “Share of regions that have approved and implementing sustainable development strategies” while this has been pursued under IDRPB through the work of SDG Regional Coordinators in *oblasts*).<sup>230</sup> The quality of results frameworks varies between programmes and projects. The RPP programme has a clear management structure and results framework. However, many non-GEF environment and energy projects lack an appropriate results framework to guide proper project planning, management and monitoring compared to GEF-funded projects.

There is also room for improvement in the design, monitoring and results-measurement of the various pilot and innovation-based projects delivered by UNDP, as part of the programme and project frameworks. In some cases, programme teams were not aware of how the work undertaken by the Lab team was related to their own programme and project implementation.

The country office is cognizant of monitoring and performance measurement challenges in existing programmes and projects. Shifting away from the use of a manually processed Excel tables, the new IMRP launched in 2021 is expected to provide an improved digital solution to the office monitoring capacity, collecting real-time data and linking them to higher-level programme goals, managing the entire lifecycles of programmes and projects. It is expected that the system will not only contribute to gathering data and linking them to CPD results reporting, but also to strengthening the entire RBM structure and culture in the office, including staff training and communication.

**Finding 27. Programme inclusiveness.** The UNDP programme paid significant attention to addressing the needs of citizens and vulnerable groups across the portfolios. UNDP has contributed to opening governance processes at central and local levels for participation by citizens, developing policies and legislative instruments to bring attention to the needs of vulnerable groups, and strengthening CSOs to address community needs. Attention to inclusiveness at local level has been encompassed under IDRPB, engaging local authorities and civil society groups, facilitating regional development strategies, developing gender-based budgeting, bringing public services closer to the contact line, and addressing security concerns.

Overall, the UNDP programme in this cycle has been highly inclusive. The Democratic Governance portfolio has been particularly focused on inclusiveness, with a range of interventions targeting the engagement of civil society and vulnerable groups in policy development and implementation, holding public institutions to account, or monitoring the situation of human rights on the ground. The research and assessments supported by UNDP in the context of COVID-19 had a strong focus on vulnerable groups. At policy level, UNDP has promoted the integration of human rights-based approaches into national and subnational policies. At institutional level, UNDP has supported the Cabinet of Ministers to establish an inclusive intersectoral working group to monitor implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy,

<sup>230</sup> While this may somewhat suggest an integrated approach, such relationships were not obvious when looking at the scope and breadth of each of the outcome areas and the country programme as whole.

thus directly engaging civil society at the highest level of policymaking.<sup>231</sup> With UNDP support, Ukraine has achieved unprecedented levels of public sector transparency and openness. UNDP has supported the Parliament to become more open and transparent to citizens. The asset declaration and verification platforms allow for extensive scrutiny of office holders by the wider public. Corruption risk-assessments in three cities have served as good examples of the involvement of civil society in public sector accountability mechanisms. Furthermore, UNDP has supported several nationwide and local anticorruption campaigns with the involvement of civic activists and journalists. UNDP health procurement activities have also promoted inclusiveness by breaking monopolies in the healthcare sector and broadening the coverage of treatment, especially for vulnerable groups. Furthermore, UNDP work has focused on strengthening the monitoring capacity of UOO and CSO human rights defenders, ensuring that gender, age and vulnerability dimensions are integrated into the human rights monitoring process. UNDP has also promoted human rights values among journalists, and supported them to incorporate a human rights-based approach into their professional practices, mainstreaming values of diversity and tolerance. The recent UNDP 'Digital Solutions for Improved Access to Justice in Ukraine' initiative has supported justice and law-enforcement institutions to provide quality legal services to the most vulnerable groups, including conflict-affected women and men, people with disabilities and rural communities.

UNDP has supported gender-responsive, efficient and accountable governance through improved civic engagement across the country, including the establishment of the CSO Hubs Network. Support for the youth worker and youth policy profession has been another key area of UNDP support. UNDP has also supported several awareness-raising activities on GBV, and provided support for people with disabilities. Over 25,000 people with limited mobility have enjoyed enhanced participation and access to services as a result of the 'Promoting Mainstream Policies and Services for People with Disabilities in Ukraine' project.<sup>232</sup> Through an initiative promoted by Ukraine's First Lady, UNDP has supported the drafting of the National Strategy on Barrier-free Ukraine.

In the environment sector, UNDP has supported MEPNR in establishing the online Environmental Impact Assessment Registry, which is currently operational and contains over 4,600 environmental impact assessments vetted by government experts. These assessments are now open to public scrutiny, enabling citizens to have a say in screening economic activities with potential risks for the environment. Furthermore, UNDP DRR activities have benefited vulnerable groups in areas prone to natural disasters (such as rural dwellers in mountainous areas) and where prevention, preparedness, response and recovery systems are fragile or crisis-ridden (for example, conflict-affected populations in the eastern regions).

Under the IDRPB programme, inclusiveness has been encompassed at grassroots level, working with local groups and authorities. Under the RDP component, support to establish and strengthen housing associations has helped them to better interact with local authorities. Grant challenges and programmes in various *oblasts* have resulted in public-private partnerships to address community issues such as street lighting, childcare, and development of the tourism and agricultural sectors. The sustainable development strategies produced by each of the 24 *oblasts*, with UNDP assistance, contributed to addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, including providing spaces to input into the strategies. Efforts in eastern Ukraine

<sup>231</sup> The intersectoral working group engages representatives of State and local executive bodies and other State institutions, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights, Members of Parliament, representatives of civil society, scientific institutions and international organizations.

<sup>232</sup> The project was implemented from September 2017 to February 2019.

have made significant strides regarding inclusiveness (focusing on IDPs and vulnerable groups including women, youth and those near the contact line) starting from a very low level given the establishment of local authorities in 2014 in a conflict region. This work involved establishing capacity and organizational structures for civil society groups to form and operate, such as CSWGs (for police-community dialogue or local security issues, for example), CABs and Youth Policy Councils, addressing the direct needs of women, youth and other vulnerable community groups. It also included practical governance improvements, such as installing gender-based budgeting in several local governments. Public services were brought closer to the contact line through the design and operation of mobile ASCs. Despite the progress made to date, the work has not been completed and the experiences still need to be disseminated to other communities throughout Ukraine.

**Finding 28.** Internal and external coherence. The coherence of the UNDP programme has been uneven, with projects often fragmented and lacking synergy within and across portfolios. UNDP engagement at subnational level has been significant across all portfolios. There is room for greater collaboration and synchronization of project design and implementation across the different programmes, particularly where there are similar projects in different geographical areas. Externally, UNDP has engaged with other United Nations agencies in several joint structures and activities, but programme synergy and understanding of UNDP work have been limited in some areas.

Programme coordination and interaction within and across portfolios have been mixed. Components of the RPP programme for eastern Ukraine have been well integrated and managed efficiently under one framework, funded by various donors. Democratic Governance work around human rights has also generally been synergetic and sustained over time, contributing to efficiencies and economies of scale. In contrast, there were limited interactions between the two major flagship projects in the area of transparency and integrity, i.e. UNDP support to health procurement and its work on anticorruption. Civil society engagement work under Democratic Governance has been fragmented across several projects, with limited coordination.<sup>233</sup> Two of the largest projects in the Environment and Energy cluster (energy efficiency in buildings and bioenergy) have operated largely in isolation, despite running concurrently for some time. Interaction between the initiatives generated under the Accelerator Lab and projects under the Environment and Energy cluster was also limited. For work engaging Parliament, there were limited interactions between the Environment and Energy 'Green Caucus' project, which worked closely with the VRU Environmental Committee, and similar Democratic Governance work involving the Parliament. Potential synergy between the Environment and Energy and IDRPB portfolios has not yet been fully utilized, even though Environment and Energy had a footprint in the eastern region through several projects, and the IDRPB portfolio has an environmental component.<sup>234</sup> While both Democratic Governance and IDRPB have a strong focus on promoting the role of civil society in monitoring local public services, there has been limited synergy between them, missing an opportunity for learning from their respective experiences on local governance. Efforts to promote the SDGs have been made by Democratic Governance, IDRPB and

<sup>233</sup> Almost all Democratic Governance projects have included considerable involvement of civil society, but the main projects worth noting here have been 'Enhanced Public Sector Transparency and Integrity', 'Strengthening the Office of Ombudsperson's Capacity', 'Human Rights for Ukraine', 'Civil Society for Enhanced Democracy and Human Rights', 'Social Cohesion Through Youth Participation', and 'Mainstream Policies and Services for PWD II'.

<sup>234</sup> For example, the 'Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings' and 'Bioenergy' projects had activities in eastern Ukraine, and the 'Green Caucus' project organized events in eastern Ukraine without any coordination with the RPB portfolio.

at office level, without a coordinating framework. Similarly, digitalization activities have been fragmented across projects and portfolios.<sup>235</sup>

Coordination meetings at the country office were reported to have been taking place among programme managers and specific portfolio focal points. Beyond information sharing, these platforms should be used to enhance synergy, coordination and collaboration in the design and implementation strategies of programmes and projects.

UNDP has engaged with other United Nations agencies through various United Nations country team working groups and initiatives. For example, UNDP led the interagency procurement working group, and contributed to preparation of the HRP. UNDP has also had numerous engagements with other agencies through joint programmes.<sup>236</sup> During the evaluation, development partners were asked about their knowledge of UNDP work in areas similar to their own. They expressed a limited level of understanding of UNDP work, even on areas where UNDP has long been engaged such as health procurement and anticorruption. In the Environment and Energy area there has been limited engagement with other agencies, except for participation in the interagency working group on DRR. There is room for UNDP programme visibility to be enhanced for greater collaboration and substantive engagement.

**Finding 29.** Sustainability of programme interventions. Sustainability was a concern for some of the new institutional structures established, pilot initiatives and policies developed with UNDP support. This was for a variety of reasons, including the lack of clear follow-up plans, the political climate, and financing mechanisms.

Over the current programme cycle, UNDP has supported the establishment of various institutions. Some of these have a favourable prospect for sustainability, as they are fully embedded into existing institutional mechanisms and financial bases. For example, the asset declaration and verification systems under the 'Integrity and Transparency' initiative, as well as the Environmental Impact Assessment system, have been institutionalized. A university curriculum developed through UNDP linking human rights and journalism (the master's programme on human rights journalism) has become more sustainable following the allocation of funding from the State budget. The Youth Worker profession has been formalized under the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Sustainability remains a concern for other initiatives without full institutionalization and funding assurance. The newly-created entities under Democratic Governance are particularly vulnerable to the political environment and donor interest in funding projects. The CPA established under the MoH was expected to take over full health procurement functions from several international organizations.<sup>237</sup> The handover from UNDP was expected to occur in 2019, but has yet to materialize and does not have a clear follow up plan. The CSOs and civic groups monitoring the procurement and price of medicines will not be supported

<sup>235</sup> These activities have not only been a key part of the Democratic Governance portfolio (in areas such transparency and integrity, support to the Parliament, health procurement, etc.), but also very prominent in activities related to the COVID-19 response and present in the Environment and Energy portfolio (including the EMIS database for energy efficiency in public buildings, or the MEPNR database on environmental impact assessments). Two key projects in the current programme cycle focused on digitalization: the 'DIA Support Project Inception Phase' and the 'DIA Support Project'. Other projects with components and activities related to digitalization have been 'Procurement Support Services to Ministry of Health', 'Procurement Support Services to MoH, Phase 2', 'Enhanced Public Sector Transparency and Integrity', 'Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings in Ukraine', 'Environmental Impact Assessment'.

<sup>236</sup> UNDP has engaged in several joint programmes with: WHO and UNICEF on the health procurement programme; UNAIDS on HIV/AIDS prevention; UNICEF on support to the Government accelerate Agenda 2030 implementation; OHCHR on human rights; UNOPS on the small grants programme; OCHA and UNHCR on mine action; and WHO and ILO on disability.

<sup>237</sup> Currently, UNDP, WHO, UNICEF and Crown Agents are supporting the MoH with health sector procurement.

following the termination of UNDP engagement. The anticorruption institutional framework has faced political challenges. As a result of the discontinuation of funding by donors, UNDP has largely withdrawn from engaging central institutions in this area, while stakeholders interviewed expressed the hope that UNDP will continue to facilitate an enabling environment for the open and full participation of civil society in anticorruption policy and monitoring. Similarly, civil society human rights monitors established through UNDP rely on the project continuation for funding, whereas civil servants attached to UOO have now been institutionalized with funding from the State budget.<sup>238</sup>

Results are mixed on pilot initiatives. UNDP has made extensive use of grants in this cycle. In the Environment and Energy area, for example, two projects related to bioenergy and energy-efficiency in public buildings provided grants to partners for pilot initiatives that demonstrate the value of new technologies. Both were expected to establish market-based financial mechanisms for investments in energy-efficiency and renewable energy, which have yet to materialize.<sup>239</sup> The terminal evaluation of the bioenergy project pointed to the vulnerability of the project's full reliance on grants, as only one bioenergy loan had materialized by the time of that evaluation.<sup>240</sup> There is room for UNDP to explore and strengthen the use of market-based mechanisms throughout its programme to incentivize private sector financing, which is more sustainable than free grants.

Some pilots have yet to be scaled up, with limited uptake of technology occurring outside of the project (for example, the bioenergy project generated interest in the use of biomass for heating of social facilities), or replication of successful efforts for broader application (for example, the corruption risk assessments and municipal integrity plans supported by UNDP in Chervonohrad, Nikopol and Zhytomyr have yet to be replicated elsewhere). Currently, UNDP lacks a clear framework on pilots, to define how initiatives are piloted, and how results are tracked over time and lessons collected, analysed and shared for full scale-up. The Accelerator Lab envisaged the pilot and scale-up of innovative solutions to public policy problems, presenting an opportunity to develop a more systematic and evidence-based approach to pilots.

UNDP has supported the Government to develop numerous policy instruments, including legislation, regulations, strategies and action plans. However, many stakeholders interviewed highlighted the challenge of limited implantation of those instruments. In the area of human rights, this was evidenced in the assessment of implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy, as well as in assessments conducted by OCHCR and CSOs of UPR implementation. The lack of implementation of policy instruments threatens the sustainability of efforts of UNDP programmes and projects to support government reform. The policy implementation aspect needs to be fully part of project documents, including strengthening the capacity of those government entities in a position to implement approved programmes and secure financing for implementation.

<sup>238</sup> The monitors network has been formalized within the structure of UOO and currently all 24 *oblasts* have civil servant representatives, whose salaries are financed from the State budget.

<sup>239</sup> Under the Bioenergy project, an FSM was signed with the International Financial Corporation and Oshadbank to secure the sustainability of interventions. Under this mechanism, UNDP was envisaged to use \$3 million for technical assistance to support loan applications to commercial banks, to be facilitated by International Financial Corporation. The 'Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings' project was envisaged to establish an FSM under the ESCO model, to facilitate EIB investments in energy-efficiency of public buildings. Despite efforts made by these projects, the envisaged mechanisms have not yet taken root.

<sup>240</sup> Approximately \$1 million to Uman municipality from UkrGasBank.

## 2.6 Country programme performance rating

An overview of the country programme performance rating is provided in Table 4 below, based on a 4-point scale. The evaluation results are rated based on five criteria, each comprising a set of parameters: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

**TABLE 4. Country programme performance rating**

Consolidated Rating Table	Overall rating	Remarks/ Justification
<b>1. Relevance</b>	<b>4</b>	UNDP work was delivered to meet the immediate priorities and needs of the new administration in the country, guided by the EU Association Agreement. The CPD is in alignment with the UNPF. UNDP rapid response to COVID-19 was coordinated under a joint United Nations effort. Some initial goal areas in the CPD (e.g. Democratic Governance) were not fully covered. Attention was given to RPP activities under IDRPB, as governance and public administration reform with civil society input was a major component of RPP to help transform the response from humanitarian and crisis-oriented to recovery and development.
1.A. Adherence to national development priorities	4	
1.B. Alignment with United Nations/ UNDP goals	3	
1.C. Relevance of programme logic	4	
<b>2. Coherence</b>	<b>3</b>	In some areas (e.g. Environment and Energy) UNDP efforts were thinly spread with no clear strategic focus. IDRPB (the merger of two outcomes) is in transition and needs further conceptualization and operational planning as a programme pillar. There is significant scope and opportunity to improve programmatic coherence across all portfolios (e.g., DG/EE; DG/IDRPB; EE/IDRPB), particularly where similar efforts are dispersed in different geographical areas (subnational engagement is significant across the three portfolios but with limited linkages in projects). Greater reflection of innovation work is needed within the framework of existing programmes/ projects. The United Nations response to COVID-19, led by UNDP, was well coordinated. The joint RPP on recovery and peacebuilding was well managed. Greater UNDP engagement and collaboration is sought by partners (e.g., health and sustainable livelihoods).
2.A. Internal programme coherence	2	
2.B. External programme coherence	3	
<b>3. Efficiency</b>	<b>3</b>	Some projects experienced considerable delays in implementation, with the risk of having to return donor loans (e.g. health procurement) or requiring extensions (e.g. energy efficiency). Some projects were running with a well-managed framework (e.g. RPB). Greater attention is needed for the oversight and management of projects.
3.A. Timeliness	2	
3.B. Management efficiency	3	

TABLE 4. Country programme performance rating (cont'd)

<b>4. Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	By forging close relationships with the Government and civil society, UNDP made notable contributions to public sector transparency and integrity, parliamentary reform, civic activism, climate change mitigation, the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy, recovery and peacebuilding. Some of the systems supported by Democratic Governance faced challenges due to external factors but were significant as part of the reform agenda (e.g. CPA, NAPC). The strong engagement of CSOs as agents of change, consideration for sustainable development principles, attention to addressing the needs of women and other vulnerable groups including IDPs, are all reflected in programme goals. Programme results were mostly gender-targeted or -responsive (not yet transformative). Significant support was given to emerging issues, such as the digitalization of public sector processes and the COVID-19 response. In some areas, projects were fragmented and lacked depth and scale (e.g. Environment and Energy climate change adaptation, water and waste management, livestock management and disaster risk management). Various measurement issues exist between programme efforts and the CPD Results and Resources Framework (e.g. inappropriate performance indicators and absence of projects relevant to indicators).
4.A. Achieving stated outputs and outcomes	3	
4.B. Programme inclusiveness (especially those at risk of being left behind)	3	
4.C. Prioritizing GEWE	3	
4.D. Programming processes adhered to sustainable development principles	3	
<b>5. Sustainability</b>	<b>3</b>	Sustainability is a common challenge across portfolios, including: new UNDP-supported structures (e.g. independence of CPA, funding for civil society human rights monitors, strengthening local authorities in the eastern region); pilot initiatives not being scaled up (e.g. energy efficiency in public buildings, flood risk management strategy for the Ivano-Frankivsk region); and weak implementation of policies and legal frameworks. Some efforts which firmly rested on existing institutions and national financing frameworks (e.g. master's programme on Human Rights Journalism, asset declaration and verification systems) saw greater prospects for sustainability and have become part of the country's institutional landscape. Support to sustainable development financing (SDG, INFF) was launched.
5.A. Sustainable capacity	2	
5.B. Financing for development	3	



# CHAPTER 3

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



Based on the findings presented throughout this report, the evaluation makes the following conclusions and recommendations. A management response was provided by the country office to respond to the recommendations in this report.

## 3.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1. Programme intent.** UNDP Ukraine has exercised adaptive management to address the new Government's immediate priorities in line with the EU Association Agreement, while effectively responding to the emerging crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuing conflict in eastern Ukraine. UNDP strategic positioning is strong.

Coming into the current programme cycle, UNDP Ukraine had four CPD goal areas defined within the UNPF framework: governance; sustainable livelihoods; energy and environment; and recovery and peacebuilding in eastern Ukraine. The new administration, resulting from 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections, prioritized the revival of the economy, end of the conflict, digitalization of public service delivery, improvement in energy-efficiency, and eradication of corruption in alignment with the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. Based on the broader programme goals set for the period, UNDP focused on supporting the Government to accelerate the country's progress on sustainable development, advancing democratic policies and addressing the needs of the conflict-affected population.

UNDP responded quickly to the COVID-19 crisis, in a coordinated and integrated manner with the Government and development partners. The response was carried out with the national and local governments, other United Nations agencies and donors, while directly meeting the needs of the Government and citizens in areas such as: institutional frameworks (e.g., crisis coordination and management); communication and outreach through digital support; research and analytical assessment of impact; and emergency supplies. UNDP support was highly acknowledged by national partners as a model for collaboration in a time of a crisis.

UNDP Ukraine has strong positioning in the country, owing to its array of comparative strengths, including its good rapport with the Government, technical and financial capacity, and regional presence. It has enjoyed the strong confidence of the Government during the current period and has been entrusted to support the country's health procurement and advancement in digital transformation and a green economy. UNDP placed significant focus on piloting and demonstrating innovative solutions to development priority areas during the current cycle, launching numerous innovation products through digitalization.

Various internal initiatives to strengthen business processes and programmes, begun at the start of the programme cycle, were pushed forward by the new UNDP leadership on their arrival in 2019. This has yielded promising changes in the office, including: the merger of two programme areas (sustainable livelihoods and recovery and peacebuilding) to bring the efforts nationwide; the separation of the oversight function from programme delivery; the introduction of robust gender and communication strategies; and an integrated monitoring system for improved performance monitoring and reporting.

**Conclusion 2. Achievement of intended goals.** By forging close relationships with the Government and development partners, UNDP has been able to make significant contributions in the portfolio areas. Strong programme relevance, attention to meeting the needs of the target population, and leveraging UNDP comparative strengths were indispensable in achieving favourable results. At the same time, fundamental programme management and design issues have affected the overall programme performance, including timely project implementation and oversight, fragmentation and consideration of sustainability.

UNDP has provided the Government with critical health and medical procurement support, an area that was critically lacking and entrusted to UNDP. UNDP has contributed to improving the availability and accessibility of medicines and material to citizens, and enhancing the capacity of central agencies involved in the process. Implementation delays and limited communication and coordination with other development partners were areas requiring attention. UNDP has yet to develop a clear plan for the transfer of functions to the Government.

UNDP also supported the establishment and enhancement of key government institutions in the areas of parliamentary reform, human rights and anticorruption, contributing to strengthening their accountability, transparency and efficiency. Significant contributions were made in promoting the role of civil society in democratic reform, advocacy for accountability and the protection and promotion of human rights, and facilitating their engagement in decision-making processes. Challenges remain, deriving from the political context and other foundational issues, as well as the sustainability of newly established structures and systems.

UNDP played a key role in climate change mitigation, especially through its interventions on energy-efficiency in buildings (public and residential), the promotion of renewable energy, and the development of institutional infrastructure for the monitoring and reporting of carbon emissions. UNDP support to develop the institutional framework for environmental impact assessment and monitoring and reporting on international conventions was well appreciated by national counterparts. Frequent changes in government focal points, and fragmentation and delays in project implementation, were among the challenges raised.

MSME development was addressed from several vantage points, including strengthening BMOs to provide private sector input into the business policy formulation environment and better serve members. UNDP also provided education and training for MSMEs throughout the country, to help improve business formulation and expansion and address value chains that integrate businesses across the country as well as connections outside.

UNDP established itself as a major player in eastern Ukraine, managing a complex multisector, multi-donor recovery and peacebuilding effort to address the needs of conflict-affected communities, and improve their resilience. Efforts have transitioned to provide catalytic support and services, stabilizing the GCA by addressing inclusion for a variety of population groups including IDPs, developing a 'voice' in local policymaking processes, and advancing social cohesion as a key element for peace and stability in the GCA. This has been done in a streamlined manner, with a variety of development partners and local governments. UNDP was able to convene donors that can make impact, integrating their areas of interest into a single programme. Weak national-local government linkages, and the need for further engagement of relevant United Nations agencies, are ongoing challenges.

The conceptual framework merging the two components into IDRPB, to allow lessons learned from the experiences of eastern Ukraine to be integrated into nationwide socioeconomic development, remains in transition and has yet to be fully developed. Across the three programme pillars of the current country programme, there is room for further strengthening of programmatic synergy and communication to minimize the dispersion of efforts and maximize cross-fertilization, expanding the linkages between programmes/projects and already well-recognized innovation initiatives and pilots for shared results.

**Conclusion 3. SDGs.** UNDP contributed to keeping the SDG agenda in the national dialogue amid the complex operational environment. Tangible results were produced at national level (such as the country's first VNR, support to the programming process and financing mechanisms) as well as local level (for example, the regional development plans). There is room for improvement in some areas, such as: the mechanism for SDG localization; greater coherence of efforts within the office; collaboration within the United Nations country team; and engaging relevant government offices and IFIs for greater buy-in.

UNDP has contributed to advancing the mainstreaming of the SDGs, which was reaffirmed by the Government as a priority. Various efforts and initiatives have been made at national and local levels during the current cycle, leading to: the Government's preparation of its first VNR in 2020; keeping the SDG agenda at the core of development by strengthening national dialogue, policy and programming processes (e.g. SDG Bridge); and developing a framework to secure the availability of sustainable financing mechanisms in Ukraine (e.g. SDG Financing and the INFF). UNDP has facilitated the formulation of regional development strategies in 24 *oblasts*, leveraging its presence through a network of coordinators established through its projects. Grassroots efforts have been made to raise awareness among CSOs and business communities on the SDGs.

To fully address the SDG agenda, several issues were identified as requiring further attention. The local SDG coordinators lacked sufficient time and resources, with varying levels of access to regional authorities and SDG knowledge, to fulfil their role as champions for the SDGs. Within the existing framework, SDG efforts have been fragmented across different programmes and teams, without a unifying framework. At the broader strategic level, there is room for: more engagement with other United Nations agencies to bring together the full resources and capacity of the United Nations development system; facilitation of dialogue among various government entities involved in financing mechanisms (Ministry of Finance and the Cabinet); and outreach to the IFIs and other donors for buy-in and collaboration.

**Conclusion 4. GEWE.** Based on the existing projects, UNDP results are mostly gender-targeted or -responsive, falling short of being transformative. Significant efforts are underway, with the launch of a robust gender strategy for the country office in 2019, including the integration of gender-focused design in all new projects to contribute to the gender priorities of the country.

Programme results in the current portfolios were assessed as either gender-targeted or -responsive, falling short of being transformative, though some tangible efforts have been made. The advancement of equality between men and women has been a central cross-cutting theme in Democratic Governance activities, such as anticorruption, access to public services, and representation in public and political life. For example, UNDP has successfully advocated for the application of a 40 percent gender quota for party lists in parliamentary elections, which was introduced with the new election codes. Gender mainstreaming in the Environment and Energy programme has been mixed, largely due to limited awareness. In eastern Ukraine, UNDP has helped to generate jobs and businesses owned by women, advance gender-based budgeting at local level, improve women's access to public services and justice, and facilitate a coherent voice for women in the region. The efforts took place at grassroots level, addressing issues in local communities, and contributing to improved women's representation in decision-making fora by facilitating political parties to nominate more women.

While UNDP commitment to secure more gender-oriented projects has yet to materialize in the existing portfolios, the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan established in 2019 has prompted a series of actions to revamp the gender efforts of the office, and integrate gender into its programming. For example, the plan has a clear objective of allocating 15 percent of the programme budget for projects with GEWE as a principal objective (GEN3), and 85 percent to those designed to produce significant inputs (GEN2).

The office has established a group of gender champions led by management, and implemented the Gender Equality Seal 2021-2022. At operational level, human resources guidelines have been established to ensure that all new staff have the skills and understanding to promote GEWE.

## 3.2 Recommendations and management response

### RECOMMENDATION 1.



**Strategic focus.** Operating in a complex conflict setting, UNDP should continue to use the SDGs as a unifying framework for its country programme in the next cycle, with due consideration for emerging issues in the country. At thematic level, UNDP should explore issues drawn from the evaluation.

To effectively integrate all SDG-related efforts at the country office, UNDP should develop a clear office-wide theory of change, defining how the work of different portfolio teams collectively addresses the SDGs in addition to programme-specific strategies. A 'portfolio' approach should be considered, where multiple teams, programmes or projects are directed towards jointly addressing shared results areas.

For its support to communities and people in conflict-affected regions, UNDP should revisit its work for the next cycle 2023-2027, given the various emerging issues such as: the end of humanitarian assistance in the GCA estimated for 2023; and increasingly limited border crossings from the NGCA, exacerbated by COVID-19 restrictions, which prevent citizens from obtaining services or visiting the GCA.

At the **thematic programme level**, UNDP should explore the following issues drawn from the evaluation:

- **Democratic governance:** UNDP should play a greater role in the areas of public sector transparency and integrity, as more opportunities become available to pursue traditional good governance issues. Given its significant engagement with CSOs as agents of change, UNDP should continue to promote their role in the monitoring of public service delivery and engage national and civil society partners to support reforms aimed at eliminating corruption. UNDP should capitalize on the "window of opportunity" in the areas of e-services, e-governance and digitalization in general, as part of its support to the Government's reform agenda. It should explore a greater role in rule of law and access to justice, areas currently actively pursued under the IDRPB portfolio. The strong partnership with VRU and UOO, as well as extensive experience with the promotion of human rights, provide good foundations for furthering engagement with rule of law institutions such as the judiciary, Ministry of Justice, etc. Social cohesion and national unity should be pursued at national level, given the considerable experience of UNDP and lessons from the RPB.
- **Health procurement:** UNDP should: i) develop a clear vision for its role in support of the country's health reform agenda, in close coordination with the other relevant United Nations agencies; ii) prepare a solid exit strategy for the full transfer of procurement responsibilities; and iii) identify bottlenecks in the procurement process and strengthen internal oversight.
- **COVID-19 response:** UNDP should: i) support the Government in implementation of the COVID-19 emergency response plan developed with the technical support of UNDP, other United Nations agencies and development partners; and ii) assess ongoing projects for any

adjustments or repurposing required to respond to the crisis (this assessment could include monitoring frameworks, mapping project outputs against COVID-19 markers, identifying projects' level of contribution to COVID-19 areas of work, and identifying and tracking COVID-19 related knowledge products).

- **Energy and environment:** Building on many years of experience, UNDP should continue its support for the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy. It should continue the work at policy level (the development of environmental strategies and regulations) and the integration of international norms and standards into sectoral policies, programmes and legislation through a participatory process. There are significant opportunities to support Ukraine to participate in the EU Green Deal, and UNDP should explore engagement with the Parliament in this area for greater impact. Where feasible, UNDP should promote market-based mechanisms across projects, and establish systems to incentivize private sector financing. UNDP projects that involve infrastructure investment, especially in the energy sector, should establish competitive market-based financing mechanisms to ensure sustainability and scale.
- **Disaster risk management:** This area presents good potential for UNDP, and reengagement in this area should be driven by a clear vision of UNDP comparative advantage and be well coordinated with the plans of other relevant United Nations agencies. UNDP should consolidate smaller-scale interventions (e.g., plastic waste management and water management, nature-based solutions, sustainable livestock management and ecosystem and green recovery) into a larger framework.
- **IDRPB:** Proper design and implementation of the IDRPB portfolio is crucial to improve the alignment of the two components and bring development nationwide. UNDP should develop a written programme approach to bring all of the elements together in a coherent, responsive and results-oriented manner, using the SDGs as a framework, and broadly engage relevant United Nations agencies for joint efforts. For decentralization efforts in the challenging civil-military administrations, more work is needed on national-local government linkages. UNDP should provide more opportunities to discuss these substantive issues among the RPP, Government and development partners, in addition to regular annual meetings. Such coordination should be done under the RPP Board.
- **Sustainable livelihoods and job creation:** This should remain a priority to support vulnerable populations, including IDPs and women. Various favourable results from conflict-affected regions (e.g. value chains) should be replicated in wider geographical regions of the country.
- **Advancement and promotion of the SDGs:** To strengthen the localization of the SDGs, the new cohort of SDG Regional Coordinators should be provided with: a sufficient level of authority to enable them to access regional authorities; training as champions of all SDG goal areas (beyond the 'energy' issues on which the initial SDG Coordinator concept was launched); and a networking system where they can exchange experiences from their respective regions and coordinate coherent approaches to SDG localization. UNDP should explore how such local functions can eventually be transferred to the Government or CSOs. UNDP should also consolidate SDG-related efforts that are currently split among various programme units, and explore closer engagement with other United Nations agencies for programmatic collaboration, as well as with relevant ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Finance for INFF) and IFIs (e.g. the World Bank and IMF) for greater buy in and collaboration.

**Management response: Accepted.**



Agenda 2030 and its 17 Goals have been, and shall remain, the overarching framework of UNDP Ukraine's programmatic interventions to address national priorities and emerging needs. UNDP Ukraine will further strengthen its strategic focus on promoting democratic governance, rule of law and access to justice, green and inclusive transition, reconciliation, peace building and resilience. In doing this, UNDP will propose innovative solutions to tackle the emerging issues in the aforementioned areas, through protecting and promoting human rights, enhancing gender equality, strengthening social cohesion and empowering youth empowerment. The impactful and tangible results achieved in the conflict-affected regions in the current CPD cycle will inform potential scale up nationwide, primarily focusing on the capacity development of the local authorities and creating new livelihoods and jobs through sustainable economic growth models. UNDP Ukraine will continue its support to strengthening national legal and regulatory frameworks, including in the area of energy and environment. UNDP will further strengthen national capacity for aligning legislation with international norms and standards including EUACI and EU Green Deal and for attracting domestic and external public and private funding and financing for green and inclusive transition, DRR area and sustainable climate action and sustainable natural resource management. UNDP will further strengthen its multi-sectoral and holistic development approach to complex development challenges.

By continuously forging partnerships with the private sector, UNDP will support the alignment of responsible business conduct with the human rights commitments.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
<b>1.1 Democratic Governance</b>				
1.1.1 Prepare UNDP programmatic offer on transparency and integrity including identifying entry points for new programmatic opportunities to be further used for resource mobilization.	March 2023	Lead: Democratic Governance team Contribute: IDRPB team		
1.1.2. Strengthen social cohesion, national unity, and peacebuilding at the national level through joint implementation of the Building Constituency for Peace project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and jointly implemented by UNDP, UNFPA and OHCHR.	October 2023	Lead: IDRPB and Democratic Governance teams Contribute: Environment and Energy team		
1.1.3. Develop a follow up project on civil society support, which will address, among others, the CSO sustainability issue and promote the CSOs role in monitoring of public service delivery.	May 2022	Lead: Democratic Governance team Contribute: IDRPB, Environment and Energy teams		

◀ Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

1.1.4. Take stock of the current strategic partnership with the MDT and develop a second phase of the UNDP support to the Government's digital transformation agenda, as a scale up of the results of the ongoing 'DIA Support' project (particularly on digital services, digital literacy, and digital environment for business with specific attention to marginalized people).	December 2023	Lead: Democratic Governance Portfolio Contribute: IDRPB, Environment and Energy teams		
1.1.5. To conduct analysis of the donor landscape and activities in the area of justice reform and develop UNDP programming in the rule of law at the national level in coherence with EU PRAVO, USAID, CoE, OSCE, IDLO and key development partners working on rule of law.	December 2022	Lead: SPPRBM team Contribute: Democratic Governance team		
1.1.6. To sustain relationship with the Ukrainian Parliament and identify new areas of collaboration to leverage the impact of the 'Parliamentary Reform' project.	July 2022	Lead: Senior management and Democratic Governance team Contribute: IDRPB, Environment and Energy, Communications teams		
1.1.7. To further support the promotion of human rights agenda and implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy (incl. on business and human rights) and the National Strategy for Barrier Free Environment based on lessons learned from current partnerships.	May 2022	Lead: Democratic Governance team Contribute: IDRPB team		
<b>1.2 Health Procurement</b>				
1.2.1 Update the 2020 exit strategy for the health procurement project capturing the MoH vision and capabilities and including an analysis of risks and challenges pertinent to the procurement process and enhanced transparency.	September 2022	Lead: Democratic Governance team		
1.2.2 Maintain the 2020 Introduced additional procurement oversight mechanisms of the health project and continue enhancing strategic communication with the leadership of the MoH.	December 2022	Lead: Democratic Governance and SPPRBM teams Contribute: Senior management and Operations team		

◀ Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

1.2.3 Identify UNDP priorities for supporting the country's health reform agenda to be presented and discussed with the other relevant United Nations agencies during a meeting of the United Nations Medical and Health Response Working Group.	October 2022	Lead: Democratic Governance team		
<b>1.3 COVID-19 response</b>				
1.3.1. Assess in close cooperation with the Government the scope of further support to the implementation of the COVID-19 emergency response plan, which is now being provided through the established policy advisory units under the 'RESURFACE' project.	July 2022	Lead: Democratic Governance team Contribute: IDRPB and Environment and Energy teams		
1.3.2. Conceptualize, upgrade, ensure regular update of the Vulnerability Index Dashboard and integrate the analysis into future programming for improved geographical targeting and agile, evidence-based programmatic response to COVID-19 as well as other crises.	December 2022	Lead: Strategic Planning, Partnership, RBM team Contribute: All programme and communication team		
1.3.3. In accordance with corporate guidance, ensure that all eligible ongoing projects are assigned COVID-19 marker in the Corporate Planning System/Quantum. The COVID-19 tag is to be assigned in IMRP, UNDP home-grown web-based monitoring system, to facilitate data collection and reporting on the results pertaining to COVID-19 response and recovery; annual COVID-19 indicator reports to be generated for all eligible projects in IMRP by December 2022, in order to supplement corporate reporting.	December 2022	Lead: Strategic Planning, Partnership, RBM unit Contribute: All programme team		
1.3.4. Capture lessons learned from the agility and flexibility of UNDP response to COVID-19, consolidating research and knowledge products developed (including corporate mini-ROAR report).	July 2022	Lead: Strategic Planning, Partnership, RBM unit Contribute: Programme team Support: Operations team		

<b>1.4. Energy and Environment</b>				
1.4.1 Develop a value proposition on UNDP offer on a. sustainable management of natural resources, b. green economy and financing and c. building resilience d. promoting energy efficiency.	June 2023	Lead: Energy and environment team		
1.4.2. Maintain the partnership with the National Bank of Ukraine and enhance the financing schemes for the green agenda in Ukraine (e.g. updates to Sustainable Finance Strategy for NBU, technical assistance on implementation of the non-financial reporting (ESG reporting) for nonbanking institutions).	December 2022	Lead: Energy and environment team		
1.4.3 Provide strategic support to the participation of Ukraine in the EU Green Deal including implementation of the necessary legal acts and consultations with the relevant stakeholders.	June 2023	Lead: Energy and environment team		
<b>1.5. Disaster Risk Management</b>				
1.5.1. Liaise with relevant development partners, United Nations agencies and government officials to further promote the DRR agenda, synchronize existing activities and plans.	May 2022	Lead: Energy and Environment team Contribute: Communication team		
1.5.2. Update strategy for the Energy and Environment programme including consolidation of the smaller-scale initiatives into larger programmes, where possible.	December 2022	Lead: Energy and Environment team Contribute: IDRPB and AccLab		
<b>1.6 Inclusive Development Recovery, and Peacebuilding</b>				
1.6.1. Develop an updated concept for the IDRPB portfolio, its programmatic areas and implementation arrangement, using the SDGs as a framework and covering priorities specific for the area-based development across Ukraine, with particular focus on the conflict-affected and most vulnerable areas and regions of Ukraine.	June 2022	Lead: IDRPB and SPPRBM teams Contribute: Environment and Energy and Democratic Governance teams		
1.6.2. Leverage the thematic programmatic areas of work and establish regular coordination meetings with the development partners and line public institutions to enhance linkages between the local and the national governments.	December 2023	Lead: IDRPB and SPPRBM Contribute: All programme teams		

◀ Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

1.6.3. Further support the decentralization process across the communities in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, focusing on capacity development of local public authorities for service delivery, community security and local socioeconomic development. Targeted activities will be directed at the civil military administrations to facilitate a smooth inclusion in the decentralization reform process when the political decision is in place.	December 2023	IDRPB team		
<b>1.7. Sustainable Livelihoods and Job Creation</b>				
1.7.1. Continue to mobilize development partners and multiple stakeholders and develop new project concepts to address the issues of creating sustainable livelihoods and new economic opportunities countywide.	December 2023	IDRPB team		
1.7.2. New economic opportunities for women and men in targeted communities other than eastern Ukraine will be created through accelerated sustainable development of MSMEs (implementation of second phase of project Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development, funded by SIDA); while promotion of the export strategies will be expanded from RPP to other regions (project concept Support to inclusive economic development in Ukraine by linking Export Strategy with regional development and SDGs).	December 2024	IDRPB team		
<b>1.8 Advancement/promotion of the SDGs</b>				
1.8.1. UNDP Ukraine is developing a new concept note on SDGs localization and the potential operationalization of this concept through regional development offices presence. The comprehensive plan will certainly consider a detailed description of functions of the proposed Regional Coordinators including the support to policy development and partnership building functions at the regional/local levels. This proposed approach will be presented to government counterparts for their approval and development partners to build coalitions, advocate for collective efforts, fund raise and ensure sustainability.  1.8.2 To strengthen the SDGs localization and leverage the SDGs finance project experience, UNDP Ukraine will enhance capacity of local partners and UNDP field teams on mainstreaming of SDGs into policies, strategies, and programming processes in coordination with key stakeholders.	June 2023	Lead: IDRPB and SPBRM teams Contribute: All programme teams		

## RECOMMENDATION 2.



**Programme implementation.** UNDP should address programme implementation issues in the country office: continuing to ensure cross-portfolio synergy; ensuring greater programmatic partnerships with other United Nations agencies working on similar areas; and addressing delays in project implementation, time-consuming procurement processes, and limited project oversight. Gender initiatives launched in 2019 should be fully implemented.

The UNDP restructuring process is ongoing, and could address many of the programmatic issues identified in this evaluation. In close collaboration with RBEC, the country office should ensure that staff development and learning opportunities continue to take place, to promote team collaboration, communication, cross-portfolio programmatic synergy, and engagement and coordination with relevant development partners (particularly United Nations agencies sharing common programme areas under the UNPF) in programming and implementation. Given that UNDP projects are currently delivered through DIM, it is particularly important that programme and project managers demonstrate skills and knowledge in programme or project management, based on RBM. Country office management should continue to be closely involved in addressing the challenges experienced by programmes and projects.

Leveraging the comprehensive gender strategy established in 2019, UNDP should advance the integration of GEWE into all portfolio areas. Attention should be made to broaden programme objectives to achieve more gender-transformative results, addressing the root causes of gender inequality.

For improved RBM, leveraging the office research capacity and the new IMRP, UNDP should explore how to develop an appropriate set of performance indicators relevant to UNDP programme work, in addition to tracking the existing indicators. With a growing number of innovation initiatives generated at the office to address development challenges in the country, UNDP should ensure that innovation-related work is designed, monitored/ tracked, and results measured in full synchronization with existing programmes and projects.

## Management response: **Accepted**



UNDP will continue streamlining cross-portfolio synergies and adopting a multisectoral approach to development in Ukraine. Efforts will be undertaken to broaden programmatic objectives in implementation of the gender strategy, with the aim of achieving gender-transformative results. In the area of improving coordination with relevant development partners, UNDP will continue building on existing cooperation with other United Nations agencies in pertinent topical areas, leveraging the achievements of joint implementation of the recovery programme with FAO, UN Women and UNFPA; as well as other joint projects and initiatives implemented with UNICEF, WHO, UNECE (SDG financing) OHCHR, UNFPA, DPPA (Social Cohesion under the PBSO), ILO (women economic empowerment) and UNICEF (innovative Upshift), UNHCR on the humanitarian development nexus and IOM on migration.

UNDP Ukraine will also continue the efforts to improve RBM, including through updating the in-house monitoring platform IMRP in complementarity with the newly launched Quantum as part of the compliance with the corporate systems, as well as strengthening the skills of programme and project managers on application of results-based planning, programming and reporting.

◀ Recommendation 2 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
2.1 UNDP will establish thematic expert groups from programme and operations representatives to ensure a cross-portfolio approach to its programmatic interventions; all under the directions of the UNDP CPD and the UNSDCF. General mainstreaming of the multisectoral approach and enhanced coordination among different team members will take place during the current mechanisms of programme meetings, programme and operations meetings, project managers meetings and senior management meetings in addition to existing inter-portfolio meetings.	June 2022	Lead: All Programme teams with assigned technical leads based on CPD outcomes/ outputs under direct guidance of senior management Contribute: SPPRBM and Communications teams Support: Operations team		
2.2 UNDP will continue proactively reaching out to sister agencies through the existing coordination mechanisms such as the United Nations Working group, PMT, United Nations country team to explore further partnership and cooperation. The Agency-to-Agency meetings, launched in 2019 by UNDP, will continue to identify possible areas for collaboration.	December 2022	Lead: Senior management and programme team leads Contribute: All programme and SPPRBM Unit Support: Communications team		
2.3. Develop all staff capacity and provide guidance on project compliance and POPP requirements through structured inductions, training and learning materials, as well as detailed SOP for PPM.	January 2023	Lead: Learning team Contribute: Strategic Planning, Partnership, RBM unit, Operations, Programme teams		
2.4. Portfolios procurement plans will continue to be collected by the Procurement Unit and entered in the corporate system. PROMPT will continue to serve as the planning and monitoring tool for the procurement actions and strategy.	March 2022	Lead: Operations unit Contribute: All programme		

◀ Recommendation 2 (cont'd)

2.5. Continue strengthening oversight for programme/ project management based on results-based approach, through management engagement and enhanced institutional oversight mechanisms, including the support of Strategic Planning, Partnerships and RBM unit established following the country office restructuring.	December 2022	Lead: Strategic Planning, Partnerships, RBM units		
2.6. Establish regular cross-portfolio horizon scanning and sensemaking exercises (at least 2 per year) to surface emerging opportunities and risks, capture lessons learned from innovation pilots, share knowledge and explore entry points for new interventions.	December 2022	Lead: Senior management with SPPRBM and Accelerator Lab Contribute: All programme team including technical experts from projects		
2.7. In addition to the existing UNDP Ukraine's country office overarching communications strategy (2020-2022), which covers all programmatic areas of UNDP Ukraine, country office will draft communications, outreach and resource mobilization plans for each of the three portfolios, ensuring more synergies within and between portfolios.	September 2022	Lead: Communications and Strategic Planning, Partnerships, RBM units Contribute: All programme teams Support: RBEC teams on partnership and communications		
2.8. Fully implement the Gender Equality Strategy launched in 2019, in line with the Gender Equality Seal 2021-2023, and further enhance gender-transformative programming.	June 2023	Lead: Gender Focal Team guided by senior management Support: All operations, programme and projects teams		
2.9. Develop a menu of common indicators and/ or tags in IMRP for tracking the innovative tools and methodologies tested, piloted or scaled by projects, including those of Accelerator Lab, as well as the results of their utilization (in preparation of the transfer to the new CPD cycle).	October 2022	Lead: Strategic Planning, Partnerships, RBM unit and Accelerator Lab		
2.10. Develop concept for projects promoting gender equality and enhancing women's political participation, and empowerment of women on the way to climate justice.	July 2022	Lead: Democratic Governance, Energy and Environment		

# ANNEXES



Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the Independent Evaluation Office:  
<https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/12805>

**Annex 1.** Evaluation Terms of reference

**Annex 2.** Evaluation Framework

**Annex 3.** Documents Consulted

**Annex 4.** List of Projects for in Depth Review

**Annex 5.** Status of Country Programme Document (CPD) Outcome and Output Indicators Matrix

**Annex 6.** Country Office at a Glance

**Annex 7.** Country at a Glance











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