



Independent
Evaluation
Office

United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION RWANDA



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FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the third Independent Country Programme Evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Rwanda. This evaluation was carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP and covered the 2018–2023 programming period.

Rwanda has more than doubled its Human Development Index since 1990, marking the highest average annual growth globally. The country's progress was propelled by its emphasis on homegrown solutions, which significantly improved access to services and governance. Despite the challenging economic environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, its economy showed resilience and continued to rebound, paving the way to achieve its goal of a middle-income status by 2035 and a high-income status by 2050.

UNDP played a pivotal role in advancing Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation and demonstrated agility and flexibility to align with the pace of the government. It influenced the country's development agenda by focusing on development financing for economic empowerment and the environment, which was relevant and timely. This resulted in the establishment of Ireme Invest, a 'one-stop centre for green and sustainable investment' launched in 2022 at COP 27 in Egypt. The fund received \$104 million in commitments in its initial offer and has grown to \$247 million in two years.

UNDP's comparative strength rested in its capacity to convene, coordinate, and ensure coherence among all development interventions and strategic policy dialogues. This was underpinned by the trust it has been afforded by the government and development partners, gained through longstanding partnerships. However, UNDP's results at the subnational level, particularly in livelihood-related activities, were suboptimal. This was attributed to weaknesses in programme design, financing, long-term vision, and monitoring and knowledge management. UNDP also fell short of meeting the expectations of other development partners, particularly in addressing sensitive human rights issues advocated by donors and in strengthening the enabling environment for civil society.

In developing the next country programme, UNDP should build on its results in economic empowerment and environmental sustainability. It should revisit its approach to justice, human rights, and governance to emphasize long-term sustainability and innovative financing. It should capitalize on its position as a knowledge and strategic partner to the government and focus on high-level technical advisory roles. Moving forward, UNDP should also enhance its monitoring and evaluation capacity, especially at the subnational level, strengthen civil society organizations and the media, and continue advancing its work in gender equality and women empowerment. UNDP should also capitalize on its political capital to promote United Nations norms, especially in human rights.

I would like to thank the Government of Rwanda, national stakeholders, colleagues from the UNDP Rwanda country office, and the Regional Bureau for Africa for their support throughout this evaluation. I hope that the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations strengthen the next country programme strategy to achieve a sustainable and inclusive development pathway that serves the aspirations of the Rwandan people.



Isabelle Mercier
Director
Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP

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ACRONYMS

ADR	Assessment of Development Results
BRD	Development Bank of Rwanda
CC	Climate change
CP	Country Programme
CPC	Community Policing Committee
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSOs	Civil society organizations
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ENR	Environment and natural resources
FONERWA	Rwanda's Environment and Climate Change Fund
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GGCRS	Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy
HGS	Home Grown Solutions
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IECMS	Integrated Electronic Case Management System
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEMA	Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MINUBUMWE	Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement
MoE	Ministry of Environment
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NST1	National Strategies for Transformation
RBA	Rwanda Bar Association
RDRC	Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RGS	Rwanda Governance Scorecard
RMC	Rwanda Media Commission
RNP	Rwanda National Police
ROAR	Results-Oriented Annual Report
RRB	Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer
UNDAP	United Nations Development Assistance Plan
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

Evaluation Brief: Rwanda

Rwanda is a landlocked East African nation with an estimated population of 13.7 million (2022). The country has rebounded from the devastating 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and has made remarkable progress in socio-economic development. This recovery is evident through consistent economic growth, poverty reduction, and improved education access. Rwanda now aspires to achieve middle-income country status by 2035.

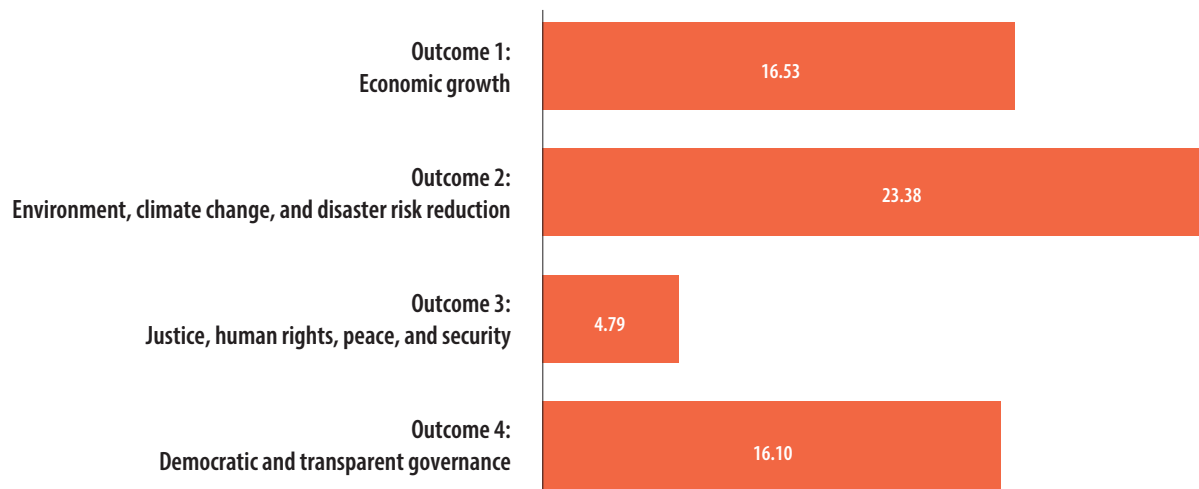
The evaluation assessed the UNDP Rwanda Country Programme for 2018–2023 (extended to 2024), which was structured around two pillars, each comprised of two outcomes:

Pillar 1. Inclusive and Sustainable Growth: Outcome 1 – Economic Growth; Outcome 2 – Environment, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Reduction

Pillar 2. Transformational Governance for Sustainable Development: Outcome 3 – Justice, Human Rights, Peace, and Security; Outcome 4 – Democratic and Transparent Governance.

UNDP’s total expenditure for this country programme was \$60.8 million.

Rwanda programme expenditure by outcome, 2018-2022 (US\$ million)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP played a pivotal role in advancing Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation, aligning with the pace of the government, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and supporting innovative solutions. While recognized for its development impact, the effectiveness of outcome delivery varied across programme areas. Notably, Outcome 1 witnessed significant contributions to innovative financing for the environment and youth employment, while in Outcome 2, UNDP excelled in shaping upstream policies. Outcome 3 saw substantial progress in access to justice and social cohesion, but attention to innovative financing was overlooked. For Outcome 4, UNDP advocated for civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media, but faced challenges in achieving long-term sustainable outcomes.

UNDP's comparative strength lies in bolstering institutions and reinforcing government programmes. Notably, it played a key role in creating Rwanda's Environment and Climate Change Fund, known as Ireme Invest, and operationalizing the Rwanda Cooperation. Additionally, UNDP facilitated the setup of the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management, developed Disaster Risk Reduction Standard Operating Procedures, and supported reporting on Rwanda's Nationally Determined Contributions.¹ UNDP also contributed significantly to transparency initiatives such as the Citizen Report Card and Rwanda Governance Scorecard, enhancing accountability and influencing decision-making for improved service delivery quality.

UNDP's subnational results, particularly in livelihood-related activities, were suboptimal. This was influenced by deficiencies in programme design, financing, partner selection, missed synergies, lack of long-term vision, and weak monitoring and knowledge management. These factors diluted UNDP's effectiveness, hindering broader adoption of its initiatives.

UNDP maintained a robust partnership with government institutions and was commended for its responsiveness to government partners and sensitivity to the country's context. However, UNDP fell short in meeting the expectations of other development partners, specifically in enhancing the civil society enabling environment, optimizing joint partnerships with UN agencies at the subnational level, and addressing sensitive human rights issues advocated by donors.

¹ The Paris Agreement (Article 4, paragraph 2) requires each Party to prepare, communicate, and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that it intends to achieve. See <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs>.

Recommendation 1. In the next country programme, UNDP should continue to provide support to the Government of Rwanda in the areas of (1) inclusive economic growth and (2) environment, climate change, and disaster risk reduction. UNDP should revisit its approach to (3) justice, human rights, peace, and security, and (4) democratic and transparent governance, with emphasis on the long-term sustainability and innovative financing of these sectors. UNDP should ensure that proven innovative activities and transformational results attain broader adoption. While moving at a fast pace to respond to the government's needs, UNDP should also strategically pause and reflect, and assess its technical, financial, and human resources so as to identify and prioritize flagship activities, and thus be better equipped to renew its strategic offer to the government.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should use the remainder of the country programme cycle to address some of the issues identified in this evaluation that can be resolved in the current cycle, especially in subnational implementation. In preparing for its next country programme, UNDP needs to strengthen its position as a knowledge and strategy partner to the government. UNDP should focus on high-level technical advisory roles emphasizing financing of various sectors, especially its governance portfolio. UNDP needs to rethink its value proposition for having subnational implementations, especially those that are not for testing proof of concepts/pilots.

Recommendation 3. UNDP should strengthen its capacity and resources for monitoring and evaluation, especially at the subnational level.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should continue to strengthen civil society and strategically advocate for United Nations' normative issues, especially regarding human rights. UNDP should continue to strengthen coordination with the broader development community.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should continue to strengthen its work in Gender Equality and Women Empowerment and extend the work on the Gender Seal to a broader set of stakeholders. Although gender is mainstreamed in the country office, UNDP could benefit from a Gender Focal Point with a more technical and deeper understanding of gender in development that could engage with partners (i.e., project design, monitoring, and research). Systematic monitoring of gender activities/results in project design, implementation, and closure would help UNDP adjust its tools to elevate activities/results from gender targeted and responsive to gender transformative.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION



This chapter presents the purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation as well as the methodology applied. It lays out the development context of Rwanda before introducing the UNDP country programme.

1.1 Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP's strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts for achieving development results. ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.²

This is the second independent country-level evaluation conducted by UNDP in Rwanda. The last ICPE was conducted in 2017. The current country programme (CP) covers the period 2018-2023, but in June 2023 the UNDP Board approved the extension of the CP until 2024. This ICPE covers all programme activities from 2018 to May 2023, which include development projects and non-project activities in the areas of economic empowerment, sustainable use of natural resources, the rule of law, and governance.

BOX 1. Evaluation questions

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

1.2 Evaluation methodology

The ICPE was conducted according to the approved IEO process. The evaluation methodology adhered to United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.³ The evaluation has four main evaluation questions (Box 1), which frame the whole exercise. In line with UNDP's gender mainstreaming strategy, the evaluation examined the level of gender mainstreaming across the country programme and operations. The detailed methodology of the ICPE is described in Annex 1 (Terms of Reference).

The evaluation relied on information collected from different sources to triangulate evidence:

- The main documents consulted by the evaluation team are listed in Annex 5.
- A tabulation of the programme portfolio and outcome and output indicator matrix in Annex 6.

² See <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml>.

³ See website of the United Nations Evaluation Group, <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>.

- In-person and phone interviews included 180 stakeholders (98 female; 82 male). The consultation included UNDP personnel, beneficiaries, and 50 institutions, including government representatives, UN country team representatives, development partners, civil society organizations, and academia.
- Field visits were conducted in: (1) Kigali: Gasabo, Nyarugenge; (2) Northern Province: Musanze; (3) Southern Province: Nyanza, Ruhango, Huye, Kamonyi, Muhanga; and (4) Western Province: Rubavu. The field visits were undertaken to assess the results of selected initiatives and to conduct semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- Geographical Information System (GIS) analysis complemented the data collection.

The draft ICPE report was quality-assured by IEO's senior management, internal peer reviewers, and two external reviewers, and was then submitted to the UNDP Rwanda Country Office and Regional Bureau for Africa for factual errors and comments. Finally, it was shared with the government and other national partners.

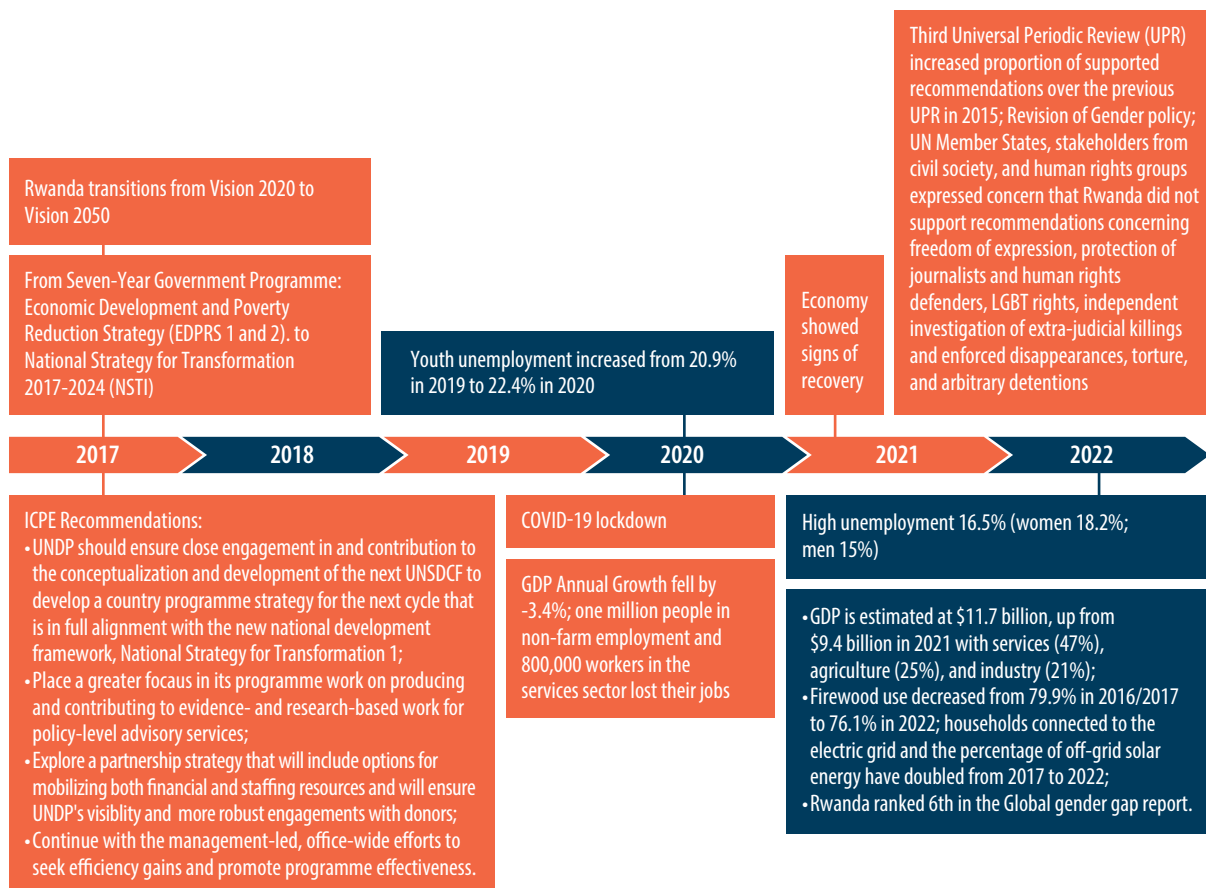
Evaluation limitations

Some of the projects in the country programme portfolio were in the middle of implementation, in which case the evaluation added a forward-looking element to the analysis. In cases where projects and non-project activities had little documentation, such as project technical and progress reports, the evaluation supplemented the analysis with additional interviews with project implementers and beneficiaries.

1.3 Context

Rwanda is a landlocked country with an estimated population of 13.7 million (2022). The country has made impressive human development progress since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, doubling its human development index (HDI) value since 1990 – from 0.250 to 0.534 in 2021–2022 – and recording the highest average annual HDI growth globally.⁴ The infographic below highlights some milestones relevant to the evaluation. For detailed context information, refer to Annex 1.

⁴ UNDP, "3rd Rwanda National Human Development Report."



Source: UNDP, 3rd Rwanda National Human Development Report; Rwandapedia (<https://www.rwandapedia.rw/>); World Bank, Rwanda Country Overview; Rwanda National Institute of Statistics; 2022 OECD data; Government of Rwanda, National Strategy for Transformation (2017–2024); Report of Human Rights Council, A/HRC/47/2 (December 2021); Rwanda United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2018–2023

The 2017 ICPE found that UNDP responded to Rwanda’s fast-changing development context by supporting target populations and using a mixed approach to development. The evaluation underscored the elements that contributed to the agency’s successful programming, which are: (i) programme design that meets Rwanda’s socio-economic and political context, (ii) close and favorable relationships with the government, (iii) its issue-based approach, (iv) application of Rwanda’s unique Home Grown Solutions embedded in the programmes, and (v) government ownership of results. The ICPE underscored that UNDP was instrumental in advancing Rwanda’s gender goals by enabling a business environment conducive to women’s participation. The report also highlighted that UNDP’s strategic engagement with various partners was mixed and should be improved.

1.4 UNDP country programme under review

The county programme was operationally organized into two Pillars, each with two specific CP Outcomes. However, each CP Outcome had its own distinct implementation modality and dedicated staff, and results were reported to the UNDP system by CP Outcomes. The Pillars mirror the objectives of the Outcomes.

Outcome 1 (Economic growth) and Outcome 2 (Environment, climate change, and disaster risk reduction) were grouped in Pillar 1: Inclusive and Sustainable Growth. UNDP worked to provide policy advice and activities aimed at inclusive and equitable economic growth and decent job creation, with particular attention to women and youth. Outcome 3 (Justice, human rights, peace, and security) and Outcome 4 (Democratic and transparent governance) were grouped in Pillar 2: Transformational Governance for Sustainable Development. UNDP supported social healing and peace-building initiatives to foster unity and social cohesion at the community level.

At the start of the CP in 2018, UNDP aimed to mobilize \$69 million (\$30 million from UNDP regular resources and \$39 million from other sources)⁵ to implement all outcomes. At the time of this writing, UNDP had mobilized \$60 million (\$30 million in regular resources and \$30 from other sources).

FIGURE 1. Annual Budget & Expenditure – including projects from the previous CP (2018–2022) in \$ million

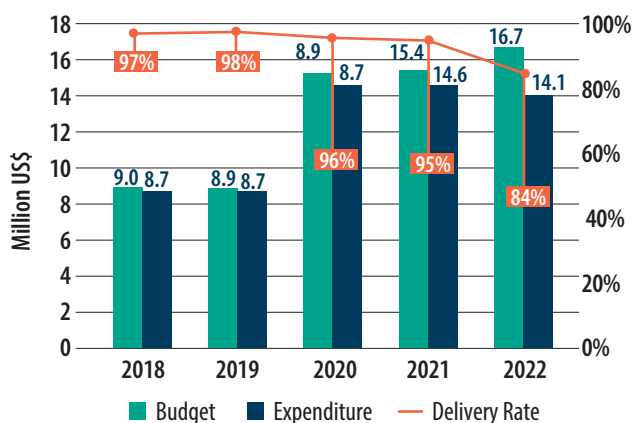
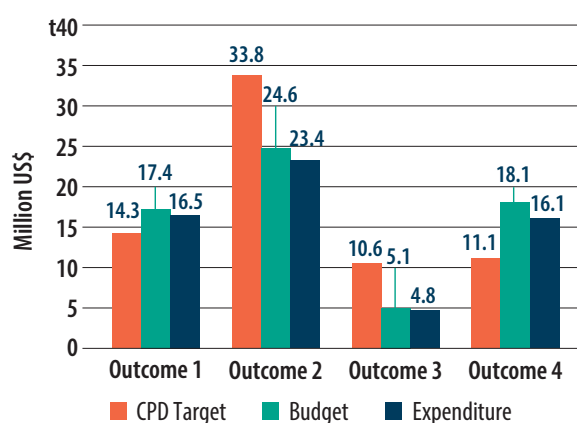


FIGURE 2. CP Target, Budget, Expenditure by Outcome (2018–2022) in \$ million



Source: UNDP financial system (Quantum) as of June 2023

⁵ The value of the mobilized resources is higher than is reflected in the UNDP system because the UNDP system only captures yearly budgets up to the current year and does not capture budgets for future years as identified in each project pro docs.

CHAPTER 2 FINDINGS



This chapter presents the results of the outcome analysis and an assessment of cross-cutting issues. The findings of the evaluation below are organized per CP Outcome, and synergies within and across Pillars/Outcomes are discussed in Finding 19 – Coherence.

2.1 Outcome 1– Economic growth

CP Outcome 1 (UNDAP Outcome 3). By 2023 people in Rwanda benefit from more inclusive, competitive, and sustainable economic growth that generates decent work and promotes quality livelihoods for all.

Output 1.1. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning has enhanced technical capacity to access, leverage, and utilize development finance to achieve national development objectives.

Output 1.2. Public-private partnerships and institutional arrangements are strengthened to create decent jobs and promote entrepreneurship, especially among women and youth.

FIGURE 3. Evolution of budget and expenditure of Outcome 1 (\$ million);

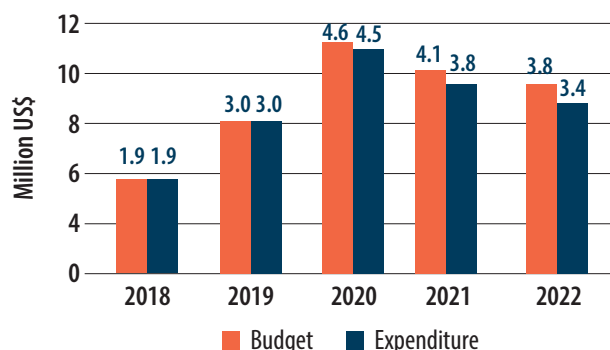
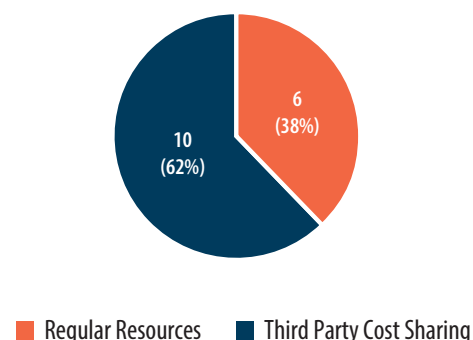


FIGURE 4. Expenditure by fund category of Outcome 1 (\$ million) ⁶



Source: UNDP financial system (Quantum) as of June 2023

With an overall delivery rate of 95 percent, Outcome 1 had the second largest budget (\$17.4 million) and expenditure (\$16.5 million) among all outcomes.⁷ The Outcome had three main areas: (1) supporting Rwanda’s economic development through assistance in development coordination, innovative finance, and youth; (2) a Joint Youth Programme that leverages past successes such as the YouthConnekt; and (3) support to the reintegration of Democratiques De Liberation Du Rwanda ex-combatants.⁸

⁶ UNDP funding definitions: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/UNDP_Funding_Compndium_2021.pdf.

⁷ About 64 percent of the total resources in Outcome 1 within the Joint Youth Programme; data download in Quantum as of June 2023.

⁸ Economic Growth and Inclusive Financial Support; Innovative Development Policy and Finance for Impact, [du-rwanda-%28fdlr%29](#).

All three indicators of Outcome 1 had no data for 2021 and 2022. Indicator 1.3, *Proportion of the population living below the national poverty line*, slightly decreased from the baseline of 39 percent (2018) to 38 percent (2020), but still far from the target of 18 percent by 2024.

Finding 1. UNDP helped to coordinate development finance in support of the goals of the National Strategies for Transformation (NST1), and strengthened the architecture of development partners by providing financial, technical, and logistical support to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. These coordination meetings helped confirm and communicate national priorities and to build a cohesive approach in delivering development interventions among various agencies.

The Rwanda development structure⁹ had three levels: the Sector Working Groups (SWs), the Development Partners Coordination Group (DPCG), and the Development Partners' Retreat (DPR). The Development Coordination Structure provided the space for the Vision 2050 and the NST1 to be translated into more nuanced and actionable pieces. Further, it provided strategic guidance and an opportunity to share development work depending on each partner's areas of comparative strengths.

UNDP supported each level of the coordination architecture, including agenda preparation, organizing and facilitating meetings, financing, and preparing strategic documents. Stakeholders mentioned that UNDP contributed to reviewing the Government of Rwanda's economic sectors focus, which led to closer attention paid to inclusive growth of youth programming, insurance for agricultural projects, and green financing, balancing the focus on tourism. Through these coordination meetings, development partners were able to enhance the alignment of their support to the national agenda. These meetings also helped to identify which economic sectors needed concerted effort and to push for the pooling of resources – shifting from multiple related projects to joint action – which decreased the government's burden of transaction costs.

Stakeholders appreciated UNDP's ability to stimulate and facilitate transformative ideas. Recently, UNDP staff have been publishing 'think pieces' on thought-provoking topics, which adds another layer of credibility to its coordination work.¹⁰ UNDP contributed to supporting Rwanda in creating a conducive environment for donors and diversifying sources of development funding (Finding 3 – Innovative financing).

Finding 2. UNDP assisted in enabling Rwanda to contribute to regional and global development knowledge by supporting the Rwanda Cooperation, which advocated Rwanda's Home Grown Solutions through South-South and Triangular cooperation. In doing so, jobs were created by facilitating exchange visits and exporting Rwanda's services to other countries through the Rwanda Cooperation.

Home Grown Solutions (HGS) are local trademark solutions that have been identified as vital elements in the success of Vision 2020, Vision 2050, NST1, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals targets. Some of the well-known HGS include *Umuganda* (community work that is also used as a venue for information dissemination and political discourse), *Girinka* (the 'one cow per family' initiative), *Imihigo* (performance contract),¹¹ *Umwiherezo* (the national leadership retreat), and *Umushyikirano* (an open forum

⁹ The Sector Working Groups (SWs) is coordinated and chaired by the Permanent Secretaries relevant to the sector and co-chaired by a donor or another organization on a rotational basis. The Development Partners Coordination Group (DPCG) is co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury from MINECOFIN. The DPCG meets on a quarterly basis to discuss cross-cutting issues from the SWs. The Development Partners' Retreat brings together development partners, the private sector, the government, and NGOs, and is chaired by the Minister of Finance.

¹⁰ "Rwanda's health, forests need a clean break with cook stoves," <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/187667/Opinions/rwandaas-health-forests-need-a-clean-break-with-cook-stoves>.

¹¹ See https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Policy_Brief_-_Performance_Contracts_and_Social_Service_Delivery_-_Lessons_from_Rwanda.pdf.

headlined by the President with his cabinet, where anyone can ask questions and raise issues). The HGS is at the core of Rwanda’s objective to share development innovations through South-South and Triangular cooperation.

Established in 2018, the Rwanda Cooperation (RC)¹² is mandated to serve as a hub for learning that promotes innovative initiatives through national and international cooperation. RC supports the HGS packaging and sustains its relevance and applicability to contemporary development challenges. UNDP has been pivotal in establishing the RC. An Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNDP and RC in 2019 detailing the agency’s support through: (1) capacity-building, including training of staff on South-South cooperation; (2) support to installing the infrastructure, housing, and furnishing; (3) setting up business processes and procedures on governance and service delivery; (4) formulation of the RC’s strategic plan; and (5) support in revamping the Rwandapedia (a learning platform dedicated to the HGS, <https://rwandapedia.rw/hgs/what-are-hgs>).

The RC is now fully operational, generating an income stream for the government and creating jobs for Rwandans, contributing to Outcome 1. Over 400 international delegations have visited Rwanda with the facilitation of RC since 2019 and have generated jobs through advisory services to other African nations.¹³ In addition, UNDP has supported the government in implementing knowledge-sharing initiatives through the hosting of global and continental events such as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Sustainable Energy for All, World Circular Economy Forums, African Protected Areas Congress, and YouthConnekt Africa Summit.

Finding 3. UNDP was catalytic in enabling the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and Rwanda’s Environment and Climate Change Fund to leverage considerable resources and bridge private and public partnerships to advance Rwanda’s inclusive green growth agenda through innovative financing solutions. The critical elements to this success were UNDP’s ability to purposefully allocate TRAC resources, take calculated and strategic risks, provide technical support, commission necessary research, and advocate for the government partners to take advantage of its non-financial resources to mobilize resources such as UNDP’s global network, stamp of approval, and international communication.

The indicator of Outcome 2, *Percentage of public expenditure on the environment, natural resources, and climate change as a proportion of total public expenditure*, has fluctuated from 7 percent in 2019 to 2 percent in 2020 to 5 percent in 2022 against a target of 8 percent; and the Indicator 1.2, *Private Investment as a share of GDP*, fluctuated from 13 percent in 2019 to 8.8 percent in 2020 to 26 percent in 2022 – in both cases due to the pandemic. The evaluation assessed that UNDP contributed to creating an enabling financial environment through various means. For example, the Sustainable Finance Roadmap (2022–2029)¹⁴ was launched in October 2022 by the Kigali International Financial Centre (KIFC) through the partnership between UNDP and the Government of Rwanda.¹⁵

¹² Its areas of expertise include public finance management, community health, governance, social protection, land management, energy and environment, ease of doing business, judicial reform, and gender equity, <https://cooperation.rw/about/#vision-mission-values-section>.

¹³ For example, the RC signed agreements with Chad and Eswatini to digitize their tax systems and set up an Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS), with Jamaica to replicate Rwanda’s Integrated Electronic Court Management System (IECMS), with Gambia to set up an IFMS, and with Kenya to set up Electronic Billing Management.

¹⁴ The Roadmap has three main objectives: (1) to enable the KIFC to develop financial instruments to support Rwanda’s ambition to be a sustainable finance hub, (2) to develop the necessary financial sector infrastructure to support sustainable finance instruments, and (3) to build a pool of first-class human capital needed to build and underpin sustainable finance infrastructure.

¹⁵ Kigali International Financial Centre (2022), “Sustainable Finance Roadmap (2022–2029),” <https://kifc.rw/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/KIFCSustainableFinanceRoadmap.pdf>. UNDP contributed to the development or revision of strategies such as the revised Aid Policy through MINECOFIN.

The partnership between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) and UNDP contributed to the establishment of the Rwanda Cooperation and to completing the process of setting up the Rwanda Finance Limited.¹⁶ UNDP was also instrumental in strengthening Rwanda's Environment and Climate Change Fund (FONERWA)¹⁷ and helped position the Development Bank of Rwanda (BRD) towards climate financing. Stakeholders mentioned that support to BRD entailed the development of a framework (policies and procedures) for financing green projects, which is what BRD is using to support other banks in building their own capacities for assessing applications for green project funding. These four institutions link the government, private sector, and development partners to strengthen businesses towards a green economy and sharpen Rwanda's ability to access innovative sources of development funding.

BOX 2. Ireme Invest

Launched by President Paul Kagame in November 2022 in COP 27 (Egypt), the Ireme Invest is envisioned as a 'one-stop centre for green and sustainable investment'. *Ireme* is the Kinyarwanda word for quality. It has two main components: a Project Preparation Facility housed in the FONERWA that offers grants to advance the feasibility of the bankability of proposed projects, and a Credit Facility through BRD that offers credit guarantees and concessional loans. UNDP helped establish Ireme Invest by providing technical advisory support and funding a dedicated pavilion in its launch at COP 27.

The fund capitalized \$104 million in its launch with commitments from the European Investment Bank, Agence Française de Développement, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the UK, the Global Climate Partnership Fund, responsAbility Investments/AGAG, the Development Bank of Rwanda, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. In two years, Ireme Invest had grown to \$247 million. The attractive feature of the Ireme facility is the element of de-risking green projects, which not only acts as the fund's sustainability measure but also whets the appetite and interest of potential investors. The Ireme Invest is projected to increase the capacity of the Government of Rwanda to mobilize \$11 billion required to implement Nationally Determined Contributions.¹⁸ In addition, other institutions in Rwanda that have been sensitized through Ireme Invest have pivoted in their resource mobilization. For example, the Ministry of Youth, which had encountered declining funding for youth programmes, opted to package their development requests along specific themes such as climate change and green economy.

In addition to the traditional grants and concessional loans, UNDP has supported a feasibility study to provide proof of concept on operationalizing a blended financing facility. The agency contributed to supporting the development of roadmaps used to court development agencies and especially helping MINECOFIN coordinate development partners, including the content used in international forums

¹⁶ Rwanda Finance Limited is a private company mandated to promote and develop Rwanda as a leading destination for international investment and cross-border transactions in Africa. It works with key stakeholders to develop and promote the Kigali International Financial Centre through investment promotion, policy advocacy, and sector upskilling. It also works to establish a regulatory framework for KIFC to become a leading international financial centre, <https://waifc.finance/profiles/rwanda-finance/>.

¹⁷ One of the first environmental and climate change investment funds in Africa. It is a basket fund where environment and climate change finance are channeled, programmed, disbursed, and monitored.

¹⁸ Results Oriented Annual Report, Rwanda 2022.

attended by the Ministry. Stakeholders mentioned that the strategies developed with UNDP support were instrumental in attracting the attention of partners such as the African Development Bank,¹⁹ the European Development Bank, BRD,²⁰ the Green Climate Fund, KIFC,²¹ and the Nordic Direct Fund for Investment.

Finding 4. UNDP contributed to creating decent work, increasing youth employability, and building capacities to participate in community dialogues and civic duties. This was achieved by sustaining the success of its previous youth projects, the YouthConnekt and i-Accelerator through the Joint Youth Programme, whose success has created a sizeable multiplier effect and attracted continued support.

The target of the country programme/UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Indicator 1.1, *Number of new decent jobs created*, was set at 1.07 million jobs by the end of the Country Programme Document cycle in 2023. Fragmented data were reported by UNDP and in the Annual Result Reports of the UN Development Coordination Office.²² While the contribution of UNDP was not clear, the YouthConnekt and cross-border trade (Finding 11) were underscored.

The current Joint Youth Programme (JYP)²³ is a four-year programme (2019–2022) that scaled up the successful YouthConnekt²⁴ and i-accelerator initiative²⁵ (launched in 2016). The JYP aims to leverage the youth dividend for Rwanda’s social and economic development.²⁶ The JYP had a positive mid-term evaluation, citing the success of its integrated trade and leadership skills among the youth through boot camps, training workshops, counselling centres, eco-bridge projects, vocational dialogue sessions, scholarships, and grants to start businesses. Stakeholders mentioned that the JYP contributed to restoring family ties among teenage mothers through psychosocial counselling and to helping vulnerable youth learn vital skills to secure employment or start their own business operations. The programme has given youth a bold voice, enabling them to articulate their issues and lobby for policy support, contributing to positive changes in the welfare of Rwandan young people. The government declared a ‘Youth Month’ to be observed every year, and a day has been set aside to host the president in youth dialogues. These dialogues have so far yielded benefits such as a two-year tax exemption for youth-owned start-ups. Another major win for youth due to the JYP was the directive regarding the Road Maintenance Fund, whereby the Ministry of Youth and Culture ensures that the fund also benefits young people who form companies that could be contracted. The results of JYP have attracted support from other donors as well.

¹⁹ The African Development Bank has committed to support a pharmaceutical foundation to be established under KIFC with a funding of \$100 million.

²⁰ Work is in progress to prepare \$250 million for a climate change financing programme targeting community resilience.

²¹ Virunga Fund with \$350 million.

²² UNDP reported in 2020 that 220,200 jobs were created. There is no UNDP data available for 2021 and 2022. The 2022 UN Development Coordination Office Annual Result Report noted that Rwanda had a 4.72 million labor force and that the UN contributed to creating 21,000 jobs; the 2021 Report cited 10,400 jobs created through Youth Connect; and the 2019 Report did not note any jobs created.

²³ The UN agencies involved include One UN Rwanda, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, and UN Women.

²⁴ YouthConnekt started as a programme in 2012 in partnership with UNDP and the government, when Rwanda hosted the first YouthConnekt Africa (YCA) summit. In 2018 the African Union’s executive council endorsed YouthConnekt as a mechanism to accelerate the realization of the African Union’s charter. Currently, YCA has a presence in over 32 countries in Africa; <https://www.youthconnektafrica.org/>.

²⁵ A mentorship-driven acceleration programme that supports young entrepreneurs with seed funding, training, and skills development to generate innovative solutions to sexual, reproductive, and maternal health and rights.

²⁶ JYP outcomes include: (1) increasing youth’s access to decent jobs, (2) empowering their participation in policy-making and civic engagement, and (3) increasing utilization of health services and adopting healthy and safe attitudes and behaviours. The programme is funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (\$8 million), UNDP (\$3 million), WHO (\$300,000), UNFPA (\$250,000), and UNESCO (\$125,000). The steering committee is comprised of One UN Rwanda, the Government of Rwanda, and the Imbutu Foundation. The Resident Coordinator played an oversight role (Mid-Term Evaluation: Joint Youth Programme, January 2023).

The success of the JYP is underpinned by the following:

- JYP leveraged the government’s strong political will to invest in youth²⁷ and was closely involved and gave full support to the programme.
- There was reliable funding by the Korea International Cooperation Agency, UN bodies, and other international agencies facilitated by UNDP.
- The JYP steering committee showed robust commitment, leadership, and management capabilities. The programme was flexible and allowed high-level changes to be made depending on the circumstances.²⁸
- UNDP’s cumulative knowledge and experience in youth development matters in Rwanda are made possible through a long-term and continuous engagement of the YouthConnekt/JYP programme staff.
- Donors appreciated UNDP norms that ensured all projects were gender sensitive and had gender indicators.

For all its success, resource constraints have limited the desired expansion of JYP in the areas of capacity-building for teachers, girls’ empowerment workshops, and initiatives to develop child protection. Young people in Rwanda continue to face challenges, including struggling with a high unemployment rate of 22 percent (compared to 14 percent adult unemployment), limited financial support to help address teenage pregnancy and for drug rehabilitation, as well as barriers in obtaining intellectual property rights for their innovations.

Another profound challenge faced by young entrepreneurs is the limited financial and follow-up support. In 2021 the Ministry of Youth and Culture launched a study²⁹ to evaluate the impact of YouthConnekt and i-Accelerator Rwanda. The study showed that 13.2 percent of youth enterprises stopped their business due to limited competitiveness capacity to respond to the demand or market in a timely and effective manner.³⁰ One way of addressing this is through building sustainable business linkages between youth-owned enterprises and larger corporate entities. This is the vision of the new UNDP programme supported by the EU in enhancing the competitiveness of youth-owned enterprises by supporting them to comply with standards and buyer preferences, as well as linking them to the export market.

²⁷ Mid-Term Evaluation: Joint Youth Programme.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Tracer Study, YouthConnekt and iAccelerator Rwanda beneficiaries (January 2022).

³⁰ Tracer Study, YouthConnekt (April 2023).

2.2 Outcome 2 – Environment, climate change, and disaster risk reduction

CP Outcome 2 (UNDAP Outcome 4). By 2023 Rwandan institutions and communities are more equitably, productively, and sustainably managing natural resources and addressing climate change.

Output 2.1. Environment and natural resources sector institutions have enhanced technical capacity to formulate and implement gender-responsive policies and plans and to mainstream environment and natural resources and climate change in other sectors (administrative division) and districts.

Output 2.2. Public institutions, civil society, and the private sector have improved technical capacities to rehabilitate and restore fragile ecosystems.

Output 2.3. Institutions at the national, district, and community level have improved technical capacities to reduce risks, to manage and respond to natural disasters, and to limit gender-differentiated impacts.

FIGURE 5. Evolution of budget and expenditure of Outcome 2 (\$ million)

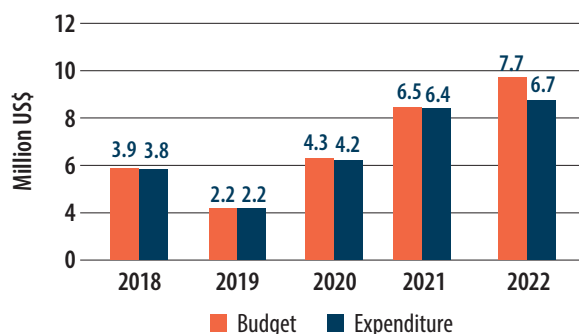
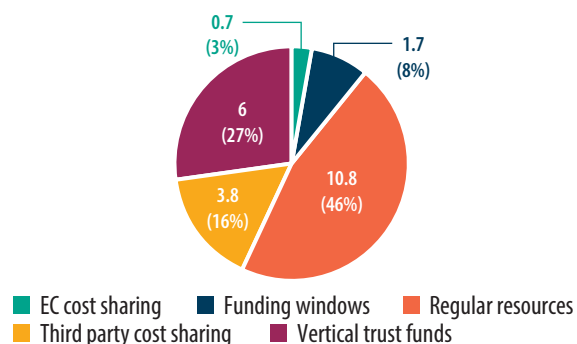


FIGURE 6. Expenditure by fund category of Outcome 2 (\$ million)



Source: UNDP financial system (Quantum) as of June 2023

Outcome 2 was implemented through a portfolio with planned resources of \$33 million. The country office was able to mobilize \$24.6 million and spend \$23 million.³¹ The delivery rate was 95 percent. UNDP's main government partners included the Rwanda Environment Management Authority on forest land restoration,³² the Rwanda Housing Authority, Meteo Rwanda, local district councils,

³¹ Data download in Quantum as of June 2023.

³² Forest Landscape Restoration in the Mayaga Region (2019–2025) project.

the Ministry of Local Government on climate-resilient rural settlement (*Imidugudu*),³³ the Ministry of Environment (MoE), the Environment and Climate Change Fund on green growth,³⁴ and the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management on disaster risk reduction.³⁵

Finding 5. UNDP contributed to Outcome 2 at the upstream level by helping to mainstream environment, climate change, and disaster risk reduction into sector policies, district development plans, and across different ministries by enhancing the technical capacity of government staff.

Mainstreaming of environment and natural resources, climate change, and disaster risk reduction (ENR, CC, and DRR) started in the 2008–2009 budget year and has been ongoing. Every fiscal year MINECOFIN trains economists, environmental planners, and budget officers³⁶ on mainstreaming ENR, CC, and DRR into other sectors and districts. Trainings were conducted by UNDP’s advisor, embedded in MINECOFIN, and staff from the Rwanda Environment Management Authority. In the training, MINECOFIN and the MoE use two key tools: (1) an environment and climate change checklist, which includes key performance indicators; and (2) an environment and climate change mainstreaming statement. The environmental mainstreaming statement, which is submitted along with the development plans, indicates environmental and climate change-related activities. MINECOFIN would conduct annual assessments to evaluate the extent to which the district planners and environment officers have understood the task of mainstreaming processes and challenges. At this point, however, there should be a focus on collecting data on changes in behaviours and tangible outcomes.

Trainings on environmental mainstreaming were also conducted for the private sector, NGOs, and CSOs, but using a different approach. Since MINECOFIN is not involved in the development of budgets for these organizations, its only role is to build capacity on specific elements, e.g., environmental compliance such as adherence to Environmental Impact Assessment/Audit guidelines.

With UNDP support, the Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (GGCRS) was revised. The GGCRS aimed at a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy by 2050 through diversifying energy sources, promoting green technology, and promoting resource-efficient industries; and the gaps identified were addressed to align the strategy with environment and climate change policy and the Nationally Determined Contribution. Through UNDP support, the GGCRS was mainstreamed into the industry sector, where a total of 55 experts from the public and private sector and CSOs (comprised of 18 women and 37 men) have been capacitated in developing climate-resilient agriculture project proposals. As a result, five project proposals were developed for funding.³⁷ Additionally, UNDP supported the first African-hosted World Circular Economy Forum, which attracted 352 attendees in person and 750 virtually, highlighting the importance that UNDP and Rwanda attach to the sector.

³³ Through the programme: LDCF/Ecosystem Landscape Approach to Climate Proof the Rural Settlement in Rwanda (2022–2028).

³⁴ Through the project: Strengthening Financial Capacity of the Environment and Natural Resources Sector (2019–2023).

³⁵ Through the project: Strengthening National and Local Disaster Risk Management Capacity Resilience and Enhancing Preparedness and Early Warning System in Rwanda (2018–2023).

³⁶ This is a most recent addition.

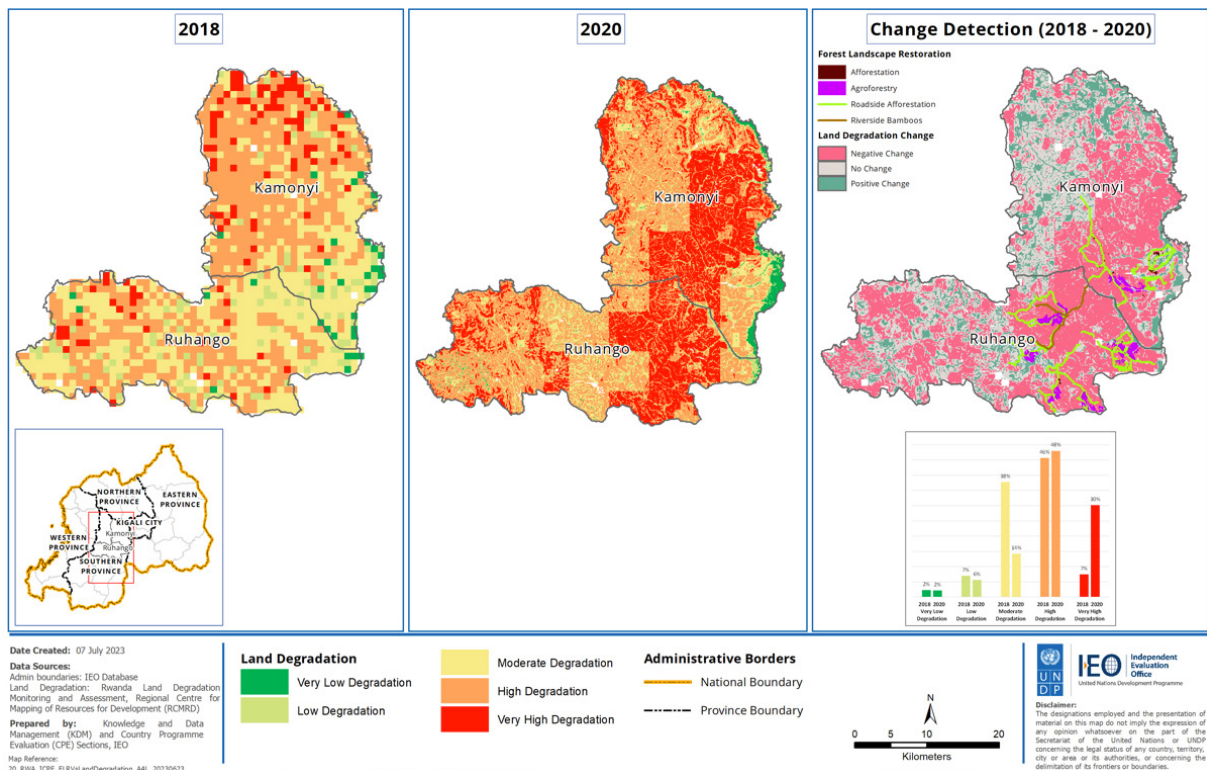
³⁷ Five projects: Enhancing communities’ Resilience to Food Shortages by Reducing Post-harvest Losses for Cereals; Safeguarding Communities and their Investments against Landslide and Other Flood Related Risks in Gakenke District; Overcoming Acute Food Insecurity for Households Living in Southern and Eastern Rwanda through Promotion of Cassava Value Chain; Building Climate Resilience for Fisher Communities through Promotion of Fish Value Chain; and Enhancing Land Productivity in the Peri-urban Areas of Rwanda through the Adoption of Small Scale Horticultural Production Techniques. Source: ROAR 2021/NDC Project Final Evaluation.

Finding 6. UNDP identified the most relevant sites for its restoration activities and contributed to improving the capacities of stakeholders to rehabilitate these fragile ecosystems. Though some positive changes were observed within the roadside and nearby villages, highly degraded areas remained unchanged. In addition, livelihood inputs were provided to communities to complement the environmental activities, though issues were raised on beneficiary selection, communication selection criteria, and general sustainability of these provisions. There is a need to step up restoration efforts with only two more years before the end of UNDP’s flagship restoration work.

Government staff and community members were introduced to forest landscape restoration, including climate-smart agriculture and the development of forest management. The Rwanda Environment Management Authority and the Forest Landscape Restoration³⁸ steering committee attributed the success of the restoration activities to: (1) a dedicated project implementation team, (2) community mobilization, (3) partnering with the non-governmental organization Action for Environmental Protection and Farming Activities, which had a good relationship with the community and with peer-to-peer learning.

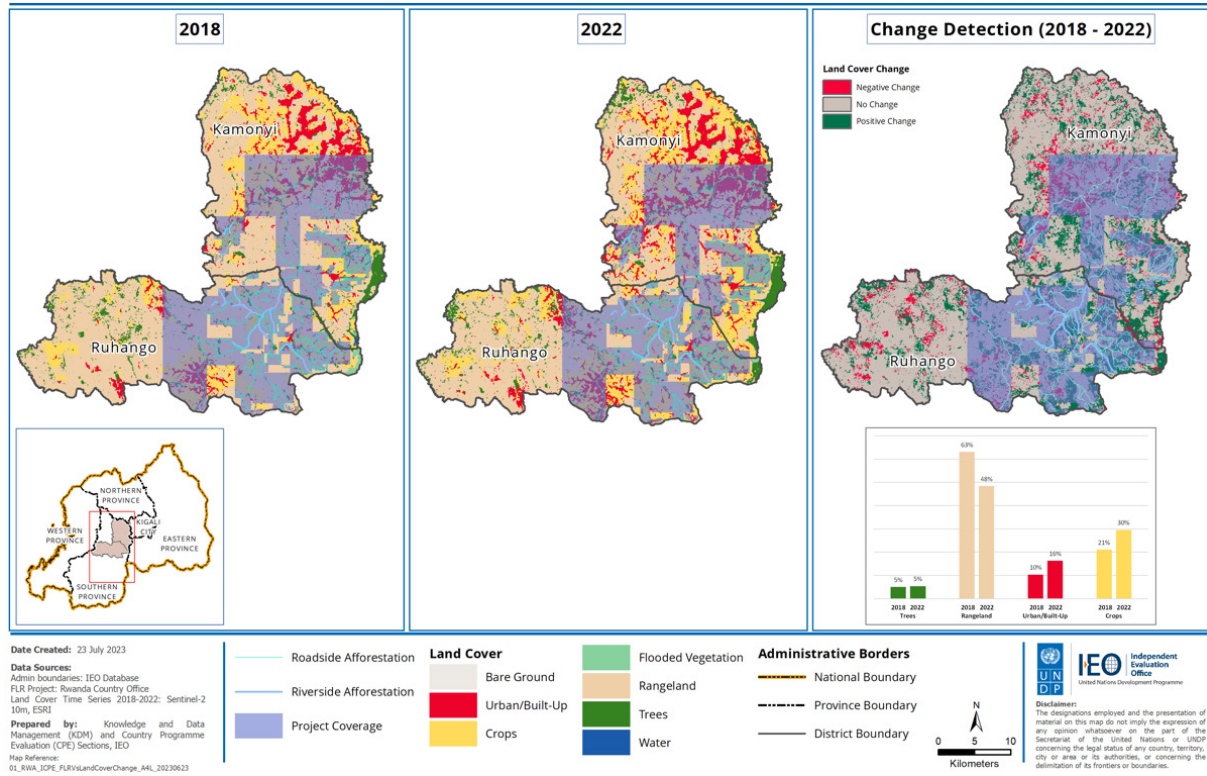
The evaluation conducted a GIS analysis of the highly degraded areas of Mayaga, where UNDP implemented its restoration activities. The GIS overlays showed that, in general, UNDP targeted the sites with “high degradation” and “very high degradation” for the reforestation intervention (Figure 7). Using polygons and differences in landscape cover change to measure the effect of UNDP’s intervention (Figure 8) showed a decrease in the expansion of rangelands. However, the measurement of tree cover difference from 2018 and 2022 showed there was no significant increase of tree cover, and the analysis showed that urban and crop areas had increased.

FIGURE 7. Map of forest landscape restoration in the Mayaga region showing degradation status and project sites (lines).



³⁸ Forest Landscape Restoration is UNDP’s flagship restoration programme.

FIGURE 8. Forest landscape restoration in Mayaga region (2020–2022) vs. landscape cover change (2018–2022) using converted lines to polygons.



Early results have been made possible through the improved knowledge and skills of district officials. Project beneficiaries mentioned that they are now using the combined technique of trench creation, tree planting, and planting of grass on contour lines to effectively rehabilitate degraded areas. The Napier grass provided by the project has helped control soil erosion, but has also helped increase milk production for livestock farmers, thus generating more income for households. According to UNDP’s Results-Oriented Annual Report (ROAR), UNDP assisted the government in restoring a total of 9,664 hectares of degraded lands. However, there is a need to step up UNDP’s implementation to meet its target of 20,000 hectares by 2025.

Stakeholders indicated a lack of follow-up by the project management. Some recipients of planting materials cited a lack of needed guidance for propagation and pest control. Recipients of livestock mentioned the lack of capacity training in veterinary care and animal husbandry. The evaluation noted poor linkage between the livelihood activities and district agriculture/veterinary technicians. In multiple cases, the evaluation found that local households did not understand the criteria the project used in involving them in the project vis-à-vis the distribution of resources. According to participants, the process of beneficiary selection would have been more transparent if it had been done in such a way that all local households were involved in the selection process.

Finding 7. UNDP supported the government to build national and local level capacities on disaster risk management (DRM) and was instrumental in mainstreaming DRM across different ministries. Moving forward, there is a need to advocate the Disaster Governance Strategy and address the technical capacity and resources gap, which remain a challenge for key institutions mandated to lead DRR, such as the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management and Meteo Rwanda.

UNDP contributed to addressing disaster issues in the country as intended in its Output 2.3.³⁹ The agency assisted in revising the *Rwanda National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy* to align with the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*. As a result, different institutions comply with mechanisms and procedures outlined in the strategy to manage disaster risks. This led to the updating of district-level development strategies being in line with the *Sendai Framework*, and disaster risk reduction mainstreamed into *Annual Action Plans*, *District Development Plans*, and policies of sectoral ministries.⁴⁰ It is important to note that Rwanda developed its *Disaster Governance Strategy*. The strategy is yet to be discussed by the Rwanda Governance Board, but once approved it will be included in the Rwanda Governance Board scorecard and will be reviewed annually.

UNDP supported the development of *DRM Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)* for emergencies, disasters, and shelter with the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) and Meteo Rwanda through technical advice and seed funding. Stakeholders interviewed expressed their appreciation of these SOPs and cited that they are still being used. In addition, the SOPs were used by MINEMA to table and mainstream DRM-related agenda to other ministries and facilitated MINEMA's inclusion in the government economic cluster. In addition, through MINEMA's pilot on community-based adaptation and socio-economic recovery, supported by UNDP, it was able to underscore the importance of socio-economic recovery in addition to physical recovery – both of which are now included in the MINECOFIN budget. The pilots were helpful in changing the mind-set of the communities, who now see that disaster can be managed.

UNDP assisted in Meteo Rwanda's ability to provide timely early warning information to consumers. As a result, Meteo Rwanda was able to generate and share information with researchers not only within Rwanda but also in the East and Central Africa region. Using Smartphones and calling toll-free Meteo Rwanda numbers to get weather information, the local population is now able to use this information to plan their activities more effectively, which has led to heightened levels of meteorological data consumption in the country.

UNDP helped strengthen disaster management planning by building the capacities of the National Platform for Disaster Management, and District and Sector Disaster Management Committees. In doing so, the public was made aware of hazards, vulnerability, and risks promptly through media channels and meetings targeting vulnerable populations in disaster-prone areas. For example, the city of Kigali and the districts of Rwamangana, Kayonza, and Ruzizi initiated mitigation measures such as sediment and debris removal in water channels and retrofitting houses to prevent disaster from floods and strong winds. Also, *Post Disaster Needs Assessment Reports*, learned from UNDP training, were used to mobilize funds to support people affected by the Nyiragongo volcanic eruption in May 2021. However, the stakeholders cited financing gaps in both MINEMA and Meteo Rwanda.

³⁹ Mainly through the project: Strengthening National and Local Disaster Risk Management Capacity Resilience and Enhancing Preparedness and Early Warning Systems in Rwanda.

⁴⁰ Infrastructure, environment, education, ICT, housing and settlement, urbanization, youth employment and productivity, transport, water and sanitation, and health.

Finding 8. UNDP supported the government in implementing the Nationally Determined Contributions, demonstrating its commitment to the Paris Agreement and identifying targets for reducing emissions across economic sectors. UNDP missed an opportunity by targeting wood fuel reduction rather than graduation, which would have been a long-term goal involving systems-level solutions involving alternative and renewable energy and influencing markets and supply chains.

UNDP supported the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) together with the MINECOFIN and MoE, to implement Rwanda's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commitments.⁴¹ Twelve districts were involved. MINAGRI was the lead agency in conducting studies on climate-resilient agriculture, including resource mobilization, risk mapping and mitigation measures, climate-resilient agriculture, and low-carbon actions. The evaluation deemed that relevant institutions that could have added value to the studies were not involved, such as universities and research institutions. In addition, stakeholders noted there was a need for seasoned and experienced professionals to lead, provide advice, and review the technical studies. Apart from the studies, UNDP also financially supported youth-led climate change resilient agricultural enterprises. MINAGRI had limited capacity to implement these NDC activities and relied heavily on the MoE for expertise. The evaluation assessed that the expertise should have been domiciled at MINAGRI, and UNDP should have ensured that needed capacities were made available before starting implementation.

The country office reported that some 11,000 households in the district of Kamonyi had received improved cook stoves, which ideally would reduce wood consumption by approximately 60 percent compared to the traditional stove.⁴² A total of four private schools received commercial-grade liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) stoves and cookers as pilots aimed to decrease firewood use. The field visit observed these inputs and saw the potential in reducing the large quantity of firewood used in schools, but noted that the LPG stoves and cookers were not fully used and traditional wood stoves were still mainly in use. UNDP missed an opportunity to set the aim of graduation from firewood. The gains that UNDP made in planting more trees and reducing firewood consumption are short-term and will be quickly overshadowed by the steady increase in population and development of the area, which would demand more wood fuel for cooking. By aiming mostly at firewood reduction, UNDP did not use its resources to lay down the precursor for graduation from firewood (i.e., market research on LPG, pilots related to small LPG tanks, etc.). Changing the perception and behaviours of local households to shift from firewood to other energy sources such as LPG will take significant time, which might affect the sustainability of results (i.e., planted trees, restored landscape) in the long run.

⁴¹ Deepening Efforts to Accelerate the Nationally Determined Contributions project from 2020 to 2022.

⁴² Results Oriented Annual Report, Rwanda 2021.

2.3 Outcome 3 – Justice, human rights, peace, and security

CP Outcome 3 (UNDAP outcome 5): By 2023 people in Rwanda benefit from enhanced gender equality, justice, human rights, peace, and security.

Output 3.1. Public institutions and legal aid providers have enhanced capacity to increase equitable access to quality justice while ensuring that human rights commitments are fulfilled.

Output 3.2. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, Rwanda National Police, and civil society organizations have strengthened capacity to develop and implement evidence-based mechanisms and programmes that promote social cohesion, peace, safety, and security

FIGURE 9. Evolution of budget and expenditure of Outcome 1 (\$ million)

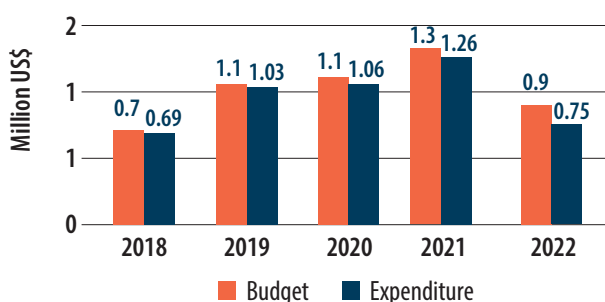
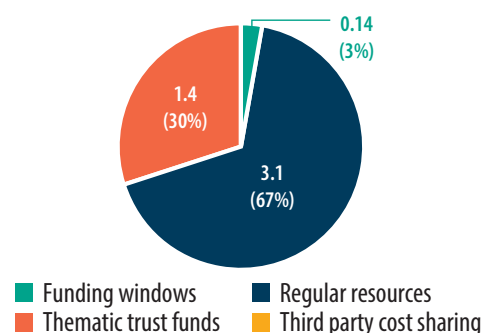


FIGURE 10. Expenditure by fund category of Outcome 1, 2019–2022 (\$ million)



Source: UNDP financial system (Quantum) as of June 2023

Outcome 3 had the smallest budget among all outcomes at \$5.1 million and an expenditure of \$4.7 million.⁴³ The delivery rate was at 94 percent. The largest share of mobilized resources came from UNDP regular resources (69 percent), followed by the Government of Japan at 17 percent, mainly for the Peace Building Academy. Other funds came from the Peace Building Fund (10 percent) and the Southern African Development Community (4 percent). The main government partners included the Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST),⁴⁴ Ministry of Defence,⁴⁵ National Human Rights Commission, National Unity & Reconciliation,⁴⁶ and Rwanda National Police.⁴⁷

⁴³ Data download in Quantum as of June 2023.

⁴⁴ Projects: Access to Justice for All; and Strengthening Rule of Law: Justice, Gender, Peace, and Security.

⁴⁵ Support to Rwanda Peace Academy activities.

⁴⁶ Projects: Promoting Access to Justice, Human Rights, and Peace; Strengthening Rule of Law: Justice, Gender, Peace, and Security; and Unity and Reconciliation.

⁴⁷ Projects: Crime Prevention Mechanisms; Strengthening Rule of Law: Justice, Gender, Peace, and Security; Promoting Access to Justice, Human Rights, and Peace.

Finding 9. UNDP contributed to improving access to justice for poor people and vulnerable groups. UNDP financial and technical support strengthened the capacities of key justice sector institutions to improve the accessibility of justice services and introduce innovations through the use of technology. The strong ownership by government partners was a key element in the results achieved, along with the position of trust that UNDP held with government partners. The justice sector still faces major challenges, including persistent judicial backlogs and an insufficient supply of legal aid services to meet demand.

UNDP built on the successes and lessons from the programme *One UN Access to Justice 2013–2018*. Its support helped to strengthen the implementation and use of the Integrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS),⁴⁸ which was launched in 2016. IECMS has been rolled out nationally and has received a high level of government ownership. Key informants claimed that the IECMS had transformed court administration from an inefficient paper-based system, introducing efficiency and transparency in the administration of courts. Technical staff in the Ministry of Justice were responsible for systems maintenance and a helpline. Court registrars were able to manage case allocation, inform parties and legal representatives, monitor progress on cases, and extract reports and data analytics electronically. Citizens and their legal representatives were able to register their cases and documents remotely, saving time and travel costs. Judge Presidents⁴⁹ were able to use the IECMS to monitor the performance of judges, and a *Judicial Performance Management* module has been added to the system. Completion of gender details in the IECMS is not yet mandatory.

Some major challenges experienced were related to unstable connectivity, resulting in the system slowing down significantly. Court officials resorted to using their mobile phones as an interim fix, and this presents a risk to information security.⁵⁰ The IECMS enabled poor citizens to receive free assistance at *Access to Justice Bureaus*. However, these bureaus were only present at the district level, and plans to extend these to the sector level could not be implemented due to resource constraints. Therefore, citizens who live furthest from the bureaus were still required to incur travel and time expenses.

UNDP intended to roll out a national campaign to provide citizens with knowledge of services they can access through the IECMS and how to access those services.⁵¹ However, there was no information available from UNDP or in MINIJUST reports on whether this citizen education indeed took place. The level of citizen satisfaction with online filing of cases with courts was 40 percent in 2019 and increased significantly in 2021 (83 percent) but declined in 2022 (76 percent).⁵² This suggests that the level of awareness and knowledge on using the system has improved from the baseline, but the difference between 2021 and 2022 should be flagged for concern.

The IECMS was expected to contribute to reducing the backlog of cases in courts through efficiencies in the management of cases. However, data showed that backlogs persist and were increasing, and a long way from the target of 13.3 percent for 2022–2023. The reasons were insufficient judges and inadequate budget to upgrade or build additional court facilities, making it difficult to reduce the backlog in cases.⁵³

⁴⁸ The IECMS provides a single entry point for all justice sector institutions (police, courts, prisons) to manage criminal cases from arrest to sentencing to corrections, and civil cases from lodgement to judgement to execution of judgement.

⁴⁹ The Judiciary is under the authority of the High Council of Judiciary, which is chaired by the Honourable Chief Justice who is also the President of the Supreme Court. Each court is led by a President.

⁵⁰ The evaluator observed the system slowdown, with the user resorting to using his personal mobile phone.

⁵¹ UNDP Project Document: Strengthening the Rule of Law in Rwanda: Justice, peace and security for the people (2018), p. 17.

⁵² Rwanda Governance Scorecards 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Editions, published by Rwanda Governance Board.

⁵³ Justice, Law and Order Sector Forward Looking Review Report, 2022–2023.

The Ministry of Justice employed contractual staff to assist with reducing the backlog and received some support from the Netherlands.⁵⁴ These short-term measures provided some interim relief, but they did not address the root causes of the backlogs.

UNDP was key in establishing the e-court system, which is an innovation of the government that has great potential to increase access to justice for inmates, reduce court backlogs, and reduce prison overcrowding. These virtual courts were introduced as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted the movement of people. The government adopted the concept of video-conferencing for court hearings in 2021 and installed virtual court kits in seven prisons.⁵⁵ UNDP provided financial support to construct courtrooms at three correctional facilities, namely, Nyarugenge, Rwamagana, and Rubavu, and to install IT equipment and teleconferencing in Nyarugenge. A total of 624⁵⁶ hearings (not cases) were conducted in the last quarter of 2022, and 870 hearings by April 2023.

Stakeholders identified several benefits and positive results of e-courts, including: reduced transaction costs for logistics by about 23 percent (i.e., transport, food, and security), reduced risk of disease transmission, reduced number of inmates under provisional detention, better security and access to files by inmates, and reduced risk of corruption. Some challenges that confronted the implementation of e-courts:

- The funding has been insufficient to construct and fully equip the e-court rooms.
- There was a lack of clarity on who makes decisions on the selection of cases for e-courts and the criteria used for the selection.⁵⁷
- There were no documented Standard Operating Procedures, and risks to e-court procedures have not been fully identified. For example, have inmates been adequately informed how to behave in the e-court? Are they able to have bilateral consultations with their legal representatives who are sitting in the physical court? Are special needs of inmates taken into consideration?

UNDP supported policy development in the justice sector. For example, some matters can be resolved outside the court system through *Alternative Dispute Resolution* (ADR). With UNDP support, the government developed the *Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy* (2022) in consultation with stakeholders in civil society and the private sector. The ADR complemented the court system and mandated mediation in civil and administrative matters as an alternative or first resort before court litigation. The policy also introduced restorative justice in selected criminal cases and enhanced commercial dispute resolution cases through mediation and arbitration. While the government had made budgetary provisions to implement the policy, it requires additional resources from development partners.⁵⁸ UNDP assisted the Ministry of Justice with funding the renovation of premises to house the ADR Centre, which would accommodate court-annexed mediation, trained and accredited mediators, and capture data on mediations done at the local level by *Abunzi* (mediation committees, which is one of the Home Grown Solutions).

⁵⁴ The Netherlands will no longer be providing finance directly to MINIJUST and instead will be putting funds into the EU. The EU, however, has only a small justice programme and will not be starting any new projects in the justice sector.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Justice, Backward looking Joint Sector Report of the Justice, Law and Order Sector 2021–2022 (October 2022) states that kits were installed in Nyarugenge, Rwamagana, Ngoma, Rubavu, Nyanza, Huye, and Nyamagabe prisons.

⁵⁶ Statistics provided by Rwanda Correctional Service.

⁵⁷ The Rwanda Correctional Service (RCS) indicated that the courts selected the cases, whereas the Judge President and Judge were emphatic that the selection was made by the RCS, and that inmates were required to consent to such a hearing.

⁵⁸ *Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy* 2022, p. 18.

UNDP supported the development of the first-ever *Criminal Justice Policy* for Rwanda, which the Cabinet adopted in 2022.⁵⁹ The policy aimed to ensure coordination and harmonization of the different institutions that comprise the criminal justice sector, so that crime is combated effectively, protecting people and property. The policy included approaches such as diversion from the criminal justice system, alternatives to imprisonment, and *Smart Justice*, and these may contribute to reducing court backlogs and prison overcrowding. The policy also identified the urgency of establishing a *National Justice Sector Research Unit* to provide evidence to inform policies. While implementation of the policy is expected to reduce the costs of the criminal justice system in the longer term, it will require significant investment upfront.⁶⁰

Another area where UNDP was active was in access to legal aid.⁶¹ UNDP provided financial support to the Rwanda Bar Association (RBA) to offer pro bono legal aid services to the most vulnerable groups, namely, gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, vulnerable inmates, and persons with disabilities.⁶² For the period 2019–2023, the RBA assisted a total of 1,889 persons (986 males; 903 female). The majority of those who received assistance were poor inmates (1,354; 71.7 percent) followed by GBV survivors (439; 23.2 percent), persons with disabilities (54; 3 percent), and refugees (42; 2 percent).⁶³ The number of beneficiaries exceeded the country programme target, except in the case of persons with disabilities.⁶⁴ The legal aid intervention paid particular attention to gender-based violence. A total of 547 female members of the RBA were trained on the GBV framework and how to deal with GBV cases, and survivors of GBV were trained to track their cases on the IECMS.

The *CP Outcome Indicator 3.1, Citizen satisfaction with access to legal aid*, has improved from 64.4 percent in 2018 to 90.44 percent in 2023, surpassing the target of 75 percent set for 2023.⁶⁵ It is plausible that UNDP's support to the RBA contributed to this improvement. Notwithstanding these positive results, access to legal aid for poor and vulnerable groups is an ongoing challenge, as the demand for legal aid services cannot be met with the current level of resources. For example, in the case of the RBA, it had ten lawyers to provide services to five correctional facilities. According to the Ministry of Justice, access to legal aid is a major issue for the Ministry as there are many people in need of legal assistance. The *Legal Aid Policy (2014)* stated that a Legal Aid Fund would be established under the Ministry of Justice to hold all funds allocated by the government and funds received from donors, as well as contributions from beneficiaries of the fund. The Legal Aid Fund has not yet been established, and the draft bill to establish the fund is in abeyance as the government considers the financial implications. The RBA has indicated that it is working with the Ministry of Justice and the Legal Aid Forum on the issue of the Legal Aid Fund and the review of the *Legal Aid Policy*.

⁵⁹ Ministry of Justice, *Criminal Justice Policy* (September 2022).

⁶⁰ The evaluator did not have access to the financial costing annex of the policy. The Permanent Secretary of Justice indicated that MINJUST would require financial support from development partners, including UNDP, to implement the policy.

⁶¹ The National Legal Aid Policy (2014) has the objective of ensuring that poor and vulnerable groups in Rwanda have access to quality legal aid services. The policy defines legal aid as legal advice, assistance, representation, education, and mechanisms for alternative dispute resolution, and covers civil, administrative, and criminal matters.

⁶² Legal aid is provided by several civil society organizations and universities, including the Legal Aid Forum, which serves as a platform for legal aid providers and provides small grants to CSOs. The Ministry of Justice also provides legal aid services through its Access to Justice Bureaus.

⁶³ These are not overlapping groups. Data provided by Rwanda Bar Association (Interview note 28) and confirmed in email from RBA to UNDP, 31 March 2023.

⁶⁴ Rwanda Bar Association provides pro bono legal aid services to individuals with disabilities based on a demand-driven approach. No targets for refugees were set in the Country Programme Document.

⁶⁵ Rwanda Governance Board (2022), Rwanda Governance Scorecard 5th Edition (2018) and 9th Edition (2019).

Finding 10. UNDP contributed to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and strengthened the monitoring of the implementation of adopted UPR recommendations and human rights action plans. UNDP also contributed to upholding human rights through improving access to justice for poor people and vulnerable groups. Stakeholders varied in their assessment of UNDP’s work, with some wanting UNDP to be more proactive in raising sensitive human rights issues, while some recognizing UNDP’s limitations.

UNDP provided technical and financial support to the National Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Justice in the *Third Periodic Review* (2019). This entailed supporting the preparation of the draft report, the stakeholder consultations, and training the Treaty Task Force members on how to proceed with the UPR process. This support was provided in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. The UPR process was concluded successfully with the adoption of 160 of 284 recommendations (56.3 percent) and noting 75 recommendations (26.4 percent); and the government of Rwanda was commended for this increase in adopted recommendations.⁶⁶ UNDP provided financial support for the development of the *UPR Management Information System* to improve the monitoring and reporting on the implementation of UPR recommendations and treaty obligations. The new system became operational in 2023 and users were trained, but the use is still in the early stages. The government trusts and appreciates UNDP as a supportive partner in the area of human rights.

Indicators for human rights are going in a positive direction, with room for improvement. The level of citizen satisfaction with respect for human rights is 88 percent (against a target of 95 percent), and the level of citizen satisfaction with the performance of the National Human Rights Commission is 83 percent (against a target of 90 percent).⁶⁷ While feedback from government partners was positive, other key informants identified shortcomings in UNDP’s engagement in the area of human rights. Development partners perceived reluctance on the part of UNDP to engage the government on sensitive issues. Though appreciating the delicate balancing act that UNDP and other United Nations agencies have in the country, the perception was that UNDP could be more proactive and push the normative agenda a bit more than it currently does. Stakeholders recognize that human rights issues are sensitive topics in many countries, and the UN has to use appropriate entry points, namely, adopted UPR recommendations, ratified treaties, and reports of the Special Rapporteur, to raise issues. Any issues outside these entry points are raised with the government via the Resident Coordinator.

UNDP’s support focuses on strengthening the capacities of the relevant state institutions and, to some extent, of civil society organizations involved in the UPR process. Civil society indicated that there is much-needed support from UNDP for research and advocacy on issues of citizen participation (which is one aspect of human rights) and there could be more direct funding made to CSOs. This issue is explored further under Outcome 4.

⁶⁶ Report of Human Rights Council, A/HRC/47/2 (December 2021); and Rwanda United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2018–2023, p. 10.

⁶⁷ The level of citizen satisfaction with respect for human rights is lower than in 2018 (95 percent) but has remained higher than 85 percent since 2019; Rwanda Governance Board (2022), Rwanda Governance Scorecard (data extracted from Citizen Report Card 2022).

Finding 11. UNDP contributed to further strengthening social cohesion in Rwanda. Its financial and technical support enabled public institutions to generate evidence, which informed programming and research on reconciliation. UNDP support enabled the implementation of social healing interventions on a small scale. While Rwanda has made enormous strides in fostering reconciliation, work needs to continue to address the trauma experienced by survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi, the perpetrators, and their respective families.

The *CP Outcome Indicator 3.3, Level of cohesion and mutual trust among Rwandans*, increased from 76 percent in 2018 to 98 percent in 2021. UNDP provided support to the former National Unity and Reconciliation Commission⁶⁸ to research and produce the *2020 Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer* (RRB). This barometer has been produced at five-year intervals since 2010 with the support of UNDP. The RRB was comprehensive and detailed, organized around six pillars, including social cohesion.⁶⁹ It measured and reported on the status of reconciliation from the perspectives and experiences of citizens (at the household level), identified favourable factors and challenges to reconciliation, and made recommendations. Data were disaggregated by district, gender, and age groups, providing policy and programme development information.

Research projects were identified, flowing from the recommendations of the RRB as well as other issues that came to the attention of the government. A study on the *Status of Unity and Reconciliation in Youth*, seeking to understand the intergenerational impact of the genocide against the Tutsis, was completed in 2019 and provided evidence for the development of a peace and reconciliation programme targeting youth. Research on resilience was completed in 2023, and the report was scheduled for validation in June 2023. Research on the impact of the psychosocial support provided to genocide survivors was planned. The Ministry of National Unity and Civil Engagement (MINUBUMWE) has recently published a call for civil society organizations to submit proposals for promoting social healing, cohesion, and resilience. The document references the findings of the 2020 RRB in its rationale for the request for proposals.⁷⁰

UNDP supported the Prison Fellowship Rwanda to implement social healing, which involved genocide inmates and their families as well as genocide survivors and their families.⁷¹ The project was initiated by NURC and the Prison Fellowship in response to the RRB finding that 26.9 percent of persons interviewed felt that they had not been healed from the wounds caused by the genocide and divisive politics – compared to 4.6 percent in 2015. A total of 924 inmates have participated in the social healing project (98 percent male). Family members of inmates (1,046) and survivors (1,120), mostly women, also participated. According to the Prison Fellowship, the initiative has been successful, but the full effect will only be evident by the time of the next Reconciliation Barometer. However, financial resources appeared to be a constraint, resulting in reduced coverage of the planned activities and training for local leaders to do the follow-up work to ensure that the results of the social healing dialogues are sustained. The Prison Fellowship has collected thousands of letters and recordings, but lacks the facilities for a heritage room or library to preserve these.

The need to prepare the approximately 30,000 genocide inmates for reintegration into their families and communities was identified as a major issue by stakeholders. The Prison Fellowship identified the need to support those who have graduated from the social healing dialogues with livelihood projects and cooperatives. Reintegration and post-dialogue support required resources that UNDP did not have. As such, UNDP needed to support its partners to mobilize resources. Other emerging issues include

⁶⁸ NURC was replaced by the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE) in 2021.

⁶⁹ Six pillars of RRB: Understanding the past, the present, and envisioning the future Rwanda; Citizenship, identity, and responsibility; Political culture and governance; Security and well-being; Justice, fairness, and rights; and Social cohesion.

⁷⁰ MINUBUMWE, Call for proposal for promoting social healing, social cohesion and resilience (June 2023).

⁷¹ Social healing intervention involves genocide inmates writing letters to genocide survivors, telling the truth, and asking for forgiveness. The Prison Fellowship volunteers facilitate meetings between genocide inmates and survivors.

intergenerational trauma. The 2020 RRB found that young people aged 18–35 were more likely to feel that they have not been healed compared to older persons (aged 65 and older). MINUBUMWE has signalled that research will be a priority for the new Ministry, along with developing a new generation barometer, in keeping with the long-term vision of building a resilient nation.

Finding 12. Local communities, cross-border traders, ex-combatants, and safety and security personnel benefited from interventions implemented with the support of UNDP. While there were immediate and important benefits for these beneficiaries, there were objectives that were not achieved. In the case of cross-border traders and ex-combatants, the economic goals of the interventions were not met, nor was the target of a financially sustainable Rwanda Peace Academy. UNDP support contributed to an increase in the number of trained Community Policing Committee (CPC) members. However, there is need for continuous measurement and evaluation to monitor the effectiveness of CPCs as a crime prevention approach.

The *CP Outcome Indicator 3.2, Citizens' trust in security organs*, increased from 90 percent in 2018 to 96.5 percent in 2021. UNDP had a clear line of contribution to this change through its financial support for the training of trainers for Community Policing Committees⁷² and its work on cross-border trade. As a result of the training, CPC members were better equipped to prevent and detect crime and feel encouraged to report crimes to the police.⁷³ The *Governance Portfolio Evaluation* found that the number of cases reported to the Rwanda National Police (RNP) increased from 25,000 in 2018 to 103,000 in 2021. However, limited monitoring data did not allow for measurement of UNDP's contribution to this increase.

The RNP claimed that the CPCs have helped to increase the trust that citizens have in the police. Trust and confidence in the RNP scored 96 percent in the *2022 Rwanda Governance Scorecard*, and has been above 90 percent since 2018.⁷⁴ The *2022 Citizen Report Card* indicated the level of citizen satisfaction with CPCs at 77 percent.⁷⁵ This was the first time that citizen satisfaction with CPCs has been assessed and reported. The RNP acknowledges that it had not conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness of CPCs, which was a major gap in the CPC intervention.

UNDP worked with cross-border traders between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Through a joint programme with FAO and WFP, UNDP provided support to the Rwanda National Police and the Rwanda Bar Association to build the capacities of women and youth to engage in legal cross-border trading. Between 2021 and 2023 district and local leaders, officials of security organs and customs, border officials, and members of cooperatives received training on human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, and harassment. Also, the RNP provided small grants to groups/cooperatives to grow their businesses and engage in cross-border trading in the Rubavu district. A total of 11 cooperatives with 327 members received support (239 female; 88 male) through the Peace Building Fund (PBF) project.⁷⁶ Building on synergies, the Rwanda Bar Association provided free legal aid to 143 members (83 male; 60 female).⁷⁷

The field visits to two selected cross-border projects found that the cooperatives were able to increase their production, but conditions for cross-border trade had not improved. Rather, the border was closed or revised crossing times were not convenient for trading. Some cooperatives were not able to access

⁷² CPCs were introduced as a crime prevention strategy engaging volunteer local community members. They are also a mechanism for the Rwanda National Police to be in touch with what is happening in local communities. There are 74,848 CPCs in all districts and operate at the village level. Each CPC has five members (a minimum of two women) and is headed by the village leader.

⁷³ See also p. 39 of the *Governance Portfolio Evaluation Report*, Yassin Tusingwire (April 2022).

⁷⁴ See Rwanda Governance Scorecards 2018 to 2022.

⁷⁵ Rwanda Governance Board (2022), *Rwanda Governance Scorecard 9th Edition*, quoting figures from the Citizen Report Card. This is the first year that citizen satisfaction with CPCs was assessed.

⁷⁶ Statistics provided by the Rwanda National Police.

⁷⁷ PBF end-of-project report (2023) states 116 benefited from legal aid, while ROAR 2021 states 143 benefitted, and ROAR 2022 states that 116 benefited. The Rwanda National Police indicated that the correct figure is 143.

their shop across the border, and were thus losing clients and stock, nor could they effectively negotiate prices with other UNDP-supported cooperatives. A youth group replaced their illegal cross-border activities with legitimate farming and were selling their produce in the Rubavu district. However, they have not yet generated sufficient income to share the profits and instead have reinvested in the cooperative. The evaluation attributed this to a lack of capacity development support and weak links to markets. The PBF cross-border project is complex, requiring the coordination of three United Nations agencies and their counterparts across the border, as well as government partners in the two countries. The conflict across the border in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the subsequent closure of the border are beyond the control of the project. Key informants pointed to the difficulties in the coordination of the project.⁷⁸

UNDP, in collaboration with UN Women, supported the reintegration of ex-combatants through the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) with the reintegration of *Democratiques De Liberation Du Rwanda* ex-combatants and their families. UNDP supported 554 ex-combatants, 249 women, and 832 children.⁷⁹ The aim was to reintegrate ex-combatants and their dependents socially and economically through providing access to social and economic services. In addition, the project aimed to raise awareness of armed groups outside Rwanda about reintegration opportunities. The final evaluation of the project found a high level of social acceptance/integration of ex-combatants and their families in communities across the country. Ex-combatants and their dependents received skills training and opportunities for employment, as well as opportunities to participate in cooperatives. They were able to access social and health services without discrimination. The evaluation cited examples of ex-combatants taking up new community roles, for example, on security committees in villages. The sensitization of armed groups across the border did not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and instead radio programmes were aired targeting these armed groups.

Results of the activities on supporting ex-combatants varied, with impacts from the shortening of the implementation period because of COVID-19. Ex-combatants were encouraged to join cooperatives, which were the main implementing mechanism of the RDRC. The evaluation team on visiting two of these cooperatives found that the ex-combatants were not benefiting to the same extent as other members. In the case of one cooperative, they had given jobs to 35 ex-combatants, but no ex-combatants were members of the cooperative, as they could not afford the membership fee. In the case of the second cooperative, there were four ex-combatants who were partially paid members of the cooperative, and so were not entitled to the same benefits as that of full members. Again, the membership fee is a barrier to entry to the cooperative.

UNDP supported the Rwanda Peace Academy (RPA) between 2019 and 2021 to strengthen its capacities as a regional training institution for peacekeeping and peacebuilding.⁸⁰ Over the period, the RPA trained 3,339 personnel – military personnel, including those from the East Africa Standby Force member states; police; correctional service personnel; and civilians – in conflict prevention, conflict management, and peacebuilding, as well as on sexual and gender-based violence. The research capacity of the RPA was enhanced with a research budget, online capabilities, and updated library resources. Two new training courses were developed (*National Security and National Resilience* and *Delivery and Development Orientated Leadership*). It is worth noting that one of the courses conducted is on the UN approach to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, an area of expertise of the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. From the UNDP reports, there appeared to be no involvement or partnership between

⁷⁸ Stakeholders highlighted the delay in the appointment of project coordinator as an example of getting project off to a bad start. Also, long distance from Kinshasa to Goma affected coordination.

⁷⁹ Peace Building Fund Reintegration of ex-combatants Final Evaluation Report (February 2022), p. 5.

⁸⁰ The Rwanda Peace Academy was established in 2008 with funding from the Government of Japan and UNDP, and continued to receive support until June 2021.

the RDRC and the RPA, for example, contributing to course content and research. Both institutions aim to become centres of excellence; and given the interrelated nature of their work, some form of collaboration could be beneficial.⁸¹

One of the objectives of the support was to assist the RPA on the path to financial sustainability. The RPA has developed a financial sustainability plan, which includes charging a fee for the two new courses it has developed. The mid-term evaluation of the Governance Portfolio conducted a year after the end of the RPA support project found that the RPA remains financially constrained, and as a result many commitments in the RPA Strategic Plan have not been implemented.⁸²

Aside from capturing the number of participants, UNDP and RPA have yet to develop a measure to determine the effectiveness of the training in the region. The RPA research unit claims that their research focuses on the quality of training and its contribution to results.⁸³ With regard to gender issues, the RPA developed the RPA Gender Policy; conducted courses on gender equality, women’s empowerment, and sexual and gender-based violence; and completed research on the role of women in peacebuilding. Forty-four percent of participants in the RPA training courses were women, just slightly below the target of 45 percent.⁸⁴

2.4 Outcome 4 – Democratic and transparent governance

CP Outcome 4 (UNDAP outcome 6): By 2023 people in Rwanda participate more actively in democratic and development processes and benefit from transparent and accountable public and private sector institutions that develop evidence-based policies and deliver quality services.

Output 4.1. The National Election Committee and CSOs have required capacities to increase public participation and engagement in democratic processes.

Output 4.2. Media institutions have reinforced technical capacity to increase access to quality information and promote active citizen participation in public processes.

Output 4.3. Public and private institutions at all levels are enabled to perform core functions for improved accountability, participation, and representation.

⁸¹ UNDP End of Project Reports on Strengthening the Capacity of the Rwanda Peace Academy (2019–2020, 2020–2021); Yassin Tusingwire (2022), Final Report of the Mid-term Evaluation of the Governance Portfolio Programme (April 2022).

⁸² Ibid, Yassin Tusingwire, p. 42.

⁸³ Ibid. A search of the RPA website shows that research was conducted on the impact of its training on peacebuilding, but the report is not on the website nor are other research outputs and policy documents that have been funded by UNDP and the Embassy of Japan.

⁸⁴ UNDP End of Project Reports on Strengthening the Capacity of the Rwanda Peace Academy (2019–2020, 2020–2021).

FIGURE 11. Evolution of budget and expenditure of Outcome 4 (\$ million)

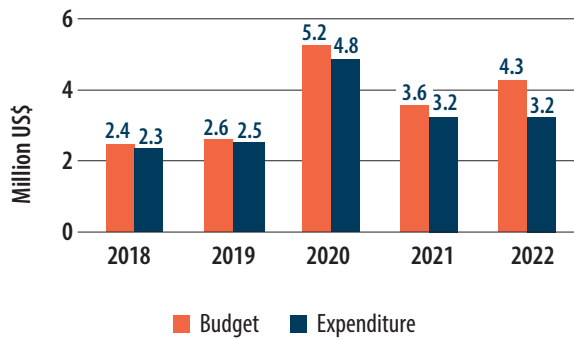
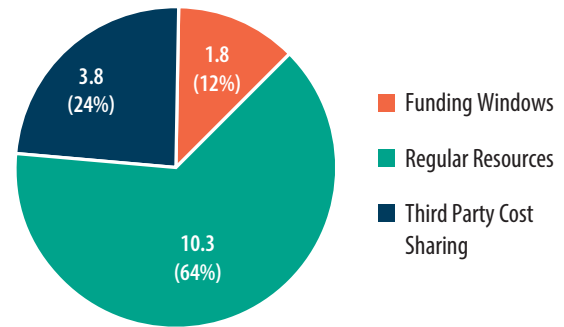


FIGURE 12. Expenditure by fund category of Outcome 4 2019–2022 (\$ million)



Source: UNDP financial system (Quantum) as of June 2023

Outcome 4 had the 2nd largest budget (\$18 million) among the CP outcomes, with an expenditure of \$16 million.⁸⁵ It had the lowest delivery rate in the CP at 89 percent as expenditures were programmed for the last half of 2023. It had 11 donors, though the largest contribution was from UNDP regular resources (64 percent) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (12 percent). UNDP sought to support the government’s effort to deepen democracy through enhancing transparency and accountability of public and private sector institutions and citizen participation in democratic and development processes.

Finding 13. UNDP supported citizen participation in governance through civil society organizations and the National Election Commission (NEC). The capacities of CSOs to manage and provide services to beneficiaries were strengthened through UNDP’s financial and technical assistance. While there is official recognition of the role of civil society in policy design and reforms to represent or amplify the voice of citizens, the enabling environment for civil society has not been sufficiently enhanced to allow them to play this role. The NEC increased the number of registered voters with the support of UNDP, but the reach of voter and civic education has not been systematically measured.

The CP Outcome Indicator 4.1, *Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability, and population group*, increased from 77 percent in 2018 to 84 percent in 2023. UNDP contributed to this change in several ways, for example, by helping civil society organizations to increase their capacities and improve their management systems and monitoring and evaluation capabilities, and by exploring innovative ways to implement their projects.⁸⁶ CSOs received induction training in managing and reporting on their grants, and according to key informants this has been invaluable. Among the aims of these micro-grants was to enable CSOs to sensitize participants on their rights and to promote their participation in decision-making and development processes. The Rwanda Governance Scorecard (RGS) 2022 report states that citizen participation in decision-making is 85.1 percent,⁸⁷ which is a vast improvement from a previous score of 45.5 percent in the RGS 2018 report and the Citizen Report Card 2017.⁸⁸ It is probable

⁸⁵ Data download in Quantum as of June 2023.

⁸⁶ Rwanda Governance Board Quarterly Progress Report on Strengthening Civil Society January to March 2022 indicates a total of 119 CSO participated and had improved management systems, against a 2023 target of 150 CSOs. An additional 26 CSOs participated in 2022, so the estimated number of CSO is 119. Awaiting the latest RGB report on the CSO strengthening programme.

⁸⁷ Rwanda Governance Board (2022), Rwanda Governance Scorecard 9th Edition, p. 30.

⁸⁸ Rwanda Governance Board (2018), Rwanda Governance Scorecard 5th Edition, p. 26.

that the Civil Society Strengthening Programme contributed to improvements in participation in the decision-making and development process. This, however, cannot be viewed in isolation from the Local Government Capacity Development Programme, also supported by UNDP.⁸⁹

Based on the available evidence, civil society's influence on policies has been limited: for example, on the inclusion of sunscreen lotions on the essential medicine list for persons with albinism; advocacy for the restoration of the Mpenge River now included in the Musanze District Master Plan; and advocacy for a budget for disability in two districts.⁹⁰ These are commendable advocacy initiatives, but were localized and did not feed into national-level policies. The capacity-building programme set a target of 10 policy dialogues at which civil society and the government would deliberate on specific topics. By March 2022 only three such dialogues were conducted (delays primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic),⁹¹ and there appear to be no mechanisms or procedures for follow-up actions.

There has been very little progress in strengthening the enabling institutional environment for civil society. For civil society to be impactful in policy-making processes and delivery on their mandate they need an enabling environment, which includes resources to conduct research to inform policy dialogues and advocacy. From the available evidence, the One-Stop portal for information and knowledge exchange, including resource mobilization opportunities, is still being developed.⁹² The Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) report and UNDP ROAR 2022 identified budgetary constraints as the reason for delays in conducting research and assessments. The *Civil Society Development Barometer* is an important instrument for monitoring the development of civil society, the last one produced in 2018. The RGB conducted two impact assessments of service delivery – one in public schools and the second in the transport sector.⁹³ Key informants indicated that they were not getting support for research on topics such as bottlenecks in citizen participation, and suggested that the topics were deemed sensitive.⁹⁴ The evaluation did not find any evidence of activities to improve the policy and regulatory environment for civil society.

UNDP contributed to the smooth implementation of Rwanda's election calendar (2018) through support to strengthen the capacities of the National Electoral Commission. With UNDP support, the NEC was able to improve online voter registration and conduct civic and voter education. The NEC achieved a voter registration of approximately 7 million (54 percent female; 45 percent youth) for the 2018 legislative elections. Voter turnout was 93 percent, which is extremely high for a country where voting is not mandatory. Improvements in online voter registration likely contributed to the increase in registered voters.⁹⁵

Finding 14. UNDP support for strengthening the media sector contributed to improving the skills of individual journalists and enabling the self-regulation of the media sector. Small financial grants assisted small media organizations to remain in business during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the media sector has a considerable way to go in building its professional capacity and financial sustainability.

UNDP's work with the media contributed to the *CP Outcome Indicator 4.2, Percentage of People satisfied with access to public information*, which has increased from 78 percent in 2018 to 89.4 percent in 2023. To build the capacity of the media sector, UNDP conducted workshops on diverse topics, including public policy

⁸⁹ Under the Deepening Democracy and Democratic Governance II Programme.

⁹⁰ Yassin Tusingwire (2022), Final Report of the Mid-term Evaluation of the Governance Portfolio Programme (April 2022), p. 31.

⁹¹ Rwanda Governance Board Quarterly Progress Report on Strengthening Civil Society (January to March 2022).

⁹² This information is based on the RGB January–March 2022 report and the UNDP ROAR 2022.

⁹³ Rwanda Governance Board (2021), Governance and Service Delivery in Government-Subsidised Schools (June 2021) is available on the RGB website. The report on the transport sector is not on the RGB website.

⁹⁴ The evaluation was also informed that responsibility for the production of the Civil Society Barometer has been taken over by the Rwanda Governance Board.

⁹⁵ The IDEA International database shows that there were 6,397,743 persons of voting age in 2018, which is less than the number of registered voters and the number of persons who voted in the 2018 election.

analysis, investigative journalism, ethics in digital journalism, showbiz/sports hosting, political debate for women journalists, disability inclusion, and empowering vulnerable women.⁹⁶ The training topics were based on a capacity needs assessment conducted by the former Media High Council in 2019, and further supported by the findings of the *2021 Media Barometer*.

Data from the *Rwanda Governance Scorecard 9th Edition* and *Citizen Report Card (2022)* indicated that citizens are satisfied with access to information (88.5 percent) and with the promotion of good governance (91.4 percent in 2022; 92 percent in 2023). However, journalists and media's satisfaction with access to information is very low (46 percent),⁹⁷ suggesting their limited ability to hold public and private institutions accountable. Though the training topics may have been informed by a capacity needs assessment, it appears they are not fully aligned to the media sector development strategy. It is also unclear how participants were selected for the training and if there is any relationship between these training events and the professionalization of journalists (e.g., academic journalism degrees). There were no training topics related to engaging with international media, which could have contributed to the media framing of Rwanda globally. Development partners were critical of the approach of short workshops and the lack of evaluation of the impact of the training on the professionalization of the media sector.

UNDP provided the larger proportion of financing for the operations of the Rwanda Media Commission (RMC). This enabled the RMC to conduct daily content monitoring of the media, receive and resolve complaints against the media, and oversee the accreditation of journalists. The evaluation was able to validate that the RMC resolved 98 percent of cases lodged during the period 2021–2022 against the Country Programme Document target of 85 percent, as reported by UNDP. According to the RMC, none of the decisions of the RMC have been appealed, and the RMC is satisfied that this reflects a better understanding on the part of government officials and the public of the role of the media in a democratic state.

The *Rwanda Media Barometer 2021* revealed many problems faced by professional journalists, including insecure employment conditions, the lack of facilities and technical equipment for persons with disabilities, and the profession remains overwhelmingly male. The number of accredited journalists has declined since 2019, possibly in part as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The RMC has reviewed the accreditation guidelines and has prepared draft guidelines for consideration in the revision of the *Media Policy*. Key informants identified the need for the current media policy to be reviewed and revised in light of the changes in institutions and digital media. The draft policy has been prepared for consideration by the Ministry of Local Government.⁹⁸ The *Media Barometer* reveals a very low score (37.6 percent) for the RMC on independence. There were strong perceptions that the RMC relies heavily on resources from development partners (including UNDP) for its day-to-day operations. The current business model of the RMC was not reflective of a financially sustainable institution. The revision of the media policy provided an opportunity for research on options for a financially sustainable media regulatory body. Based on research and interviews, it appears the RMC lacks transparency; and some stakeholders raised a concern on the legality of the RMC Board given that its mandate expired three years ago.

⁹⁶ UNDP Rwanda (2023), "Report on Deepening Democracy through Citizen Participation and Accountable Governance (II): Media Development and Professionalism: Donor Report to Swiss Development Cooperation 2021–2022." This is still a draft report, which has to be approved by the Resident Representative.

⁹⁷ This figure comes from the *Rwanda Media Barometer 2021*, which is the most recent.

⁹⁸ The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation (SDC) indicated that MINALOC requested that SDC appoint the media review consultant directly as UNDP was taking too long to recruit a consultant.

The media sector in Rwanda is small, and its financial sustainability is one of its biggest challenges. The *Rwanda Media Barometer* (2021) scored media industry viability and financial sustainability low (57.6 percent).⁹⁹ UNDP supported an assessment of the financial sustainability of the sector, which contributed to the development of a financial sustainability strategy. The agency also established a fund in the RGB to award small grants to media houses to mitigate the negative financial impact of the pandemic, supporting 56 to date. Key informants claimed that the grants have assisted these media houses in improving their financial position, though no concrete evidence has been provided to support the claim. It may be that the grants assisted media houses to keep operations going during the pandemic, but the evaluation assessed that all of these are short-term gains. There has been no assessment of the long-term effectiveness of the fund.

Finding 15. UNDP contributed to generating evidence for improving service delivery and accountability. However, more attention is needed on how the results of the various barometers and scorecards are disseminated to stakeholders and ordinary citizens.

The *CP Outcome Indicator 4.3, Citizen satisfaction with quality of service delivery*, increased from 72 percent in 2018 to 81 percent in 2021. UNDP contributed to this change by supporting the development of the *Local Government Capacity Development Strategy 2020–2024*. The strategy hoped to bolster local government capacity development initiatives through: (1) mainstreaming CD into planning, (2) budgeting and M&E frameworks of CD, (3) strengthening CD delivery, (4) strengthening CD needs assessment, and (5) strengthening CD programme management.¹⁰⁰ Implementation of the strategy is in progress.

One focus of UNDP was providing empirical evidence for planning and policy formulation and accountability. UNDP has been a long-standing partner in creating governance assessment instruments, namely, the *Rwanda Governance Scorecard*, the *Rwanda Media Barometer*, and the *Citizen Report Card* (CRC). The 9th Edition of the RGS was published in 2022, and the Scorecards have been referenced by government officials and in government reports. The *Citizen Report Card*, introduced in 2010, provides an assessment of citizen satisfaction with service delivery in the social, economic, and governance sectors. The results are available at the district level and online, and so the CRC potentially serves as a useful source of evidence for district-level planning. The *Rwanda Media Barometer* (*Finding 14 – Media sector strengthening*) has been a source of information for decisions on developing the media sector. The RGB had planned to conduct impact assessments of Home Grown Solutions, but this was not done due to lack of resources.¹⁰¹

The RGS and *Citizen Report Card* reports are submitted to Parliament, and ministers are required to account for unsatisfactory scores. However, the lack of tools and data gaps limit the ability to measure the extent to which these reports are used to inform policy and planning and thus to hold institutions to account. The mid-term evaluation of the Governance Portfolio reported that, according to key informants, the CRC is used to improve service delivery at the district level, and that the validation process brings stakeholders together to jointly review district performance and hold all service delivery parties (government, civil society, and private sector) to account.¹⁰² The RGS scores are not easy to interpret and there is a great risk that the results are interpreted incorrectly. Stakeholders engaged were not able to ascertain what was involved in the dissemination of the reports to Parliament, specifically, whether there is a presentation to a particular parliamentary committee to explain and discuss the results before ministers are called to account.

⁹⁹ Rwanda Media Barometer 2021, p. 27.

¹⁰⁰ Government of Rwanda, Ministry of Local Government (2020), *Local Government Capacity Development Strategy 2020–2024*.

¹⁰¹ Yassin Tusingwire (2022), *Final Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation*, p. 34 and interviews.

¹⁰² Ibid.

2.5 Cross-cutting issues, comparative advantage, and programme implementation

Finding 16. UNDP was agile in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through repurposing funds and mobilizing new resources to deliver livelihood support. It encouraged innovations in areas that would have been seen as the least priority during the height of the pandemic, such as e-courts for the judicial system.

A total of \$5.5 million (9 percent of the \$60 million country office expenditure) was directly tagged for COVID-related activities. UNDP helped to develop a *COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan* that helped Rwanda contain the spread of the pandemic and build resilience. In partnership with the Ministry of Environment, UNDP mobilized \$1.5 million to support the Government of Rwanda to implement a COVID-19 recovery project.¹⁰³ Earlier on, feasibility studies were conducted in eight districts, including the city of Kigali, to identify areas that needed urgent support. To identify beneficiary enterprises, the Ministry of Environment advertised a call for proposals, to which 100 entrepreneurs successfully pitched their ideas and were awarded 5 to 7 million Rwandan Francs (\$3,900 to \$5,500) each. In addition, the MoE worked closely with district-level staff to monitor the supported enterprises and help manage their funds. This project was implemented for only one year, which was too short a period to achieve a sustainable impact. Given the wide range of sectors involved, more relevant ministries should have been involved, including MINICOM, MINAGRI, and MINIFRA.

On Outcome 3, UNDP provided support during the height of the pandemic through the e-courts (*Finding 9 – Access to justice*). Support was provided by the accelerator lab on technology transfer, such as robots conducting sanitation. Some projects, such as those related to ex-combatants and the media, were repurposed for livelihood assistance specifically to mitigate the impact of COVID (*Finding 12 – Safety, peace, and security*; *Finding 14 – Media sector strengthening*).

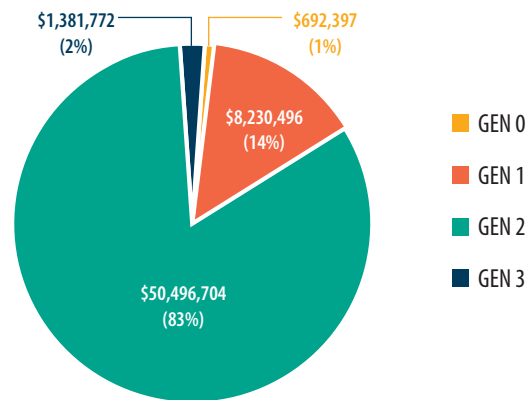
Finding 17. UNDP championed the use of the Gender Seal¹⁰⁴ in the private sector and government institutions in partnership with the Gender Monitoring Office, which helped broaden accountability towards gender equality in Rwanda. Based on the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale, UNDP’s gender results were mixed. The evaluation found that results from Outcome 4 were more ‘gender transformative’, while the rest of the outcomes were a mix of ‘gender-responsive’ and ‘gender-targeted’.

The *CP Outcome Indicator 3.4, Gender Gap Index*, has slightly increased from 80 percent in 2018 to 81 percent in 2021, which reflects the general need across all development actors to move into more gender-transformative programming. About 83 percent of UNDP projects were tagged as GEN2 (Figure 13). Table 1 summarized the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale analysis conducted by the evaluation. UNDP supported gender equality and women’s empowerment mainstreaming through partnering with government agencies and institutions that champion gender, such as Rwanda Cooperation (*Finding 2 – South-South cooperation*); MINICYOUTH (*Finding 4 – Joint Youth Programme*); Ministry of Environment (*Finding 5 – Environmental mainstreaming*); Ministry of Justice and Rwanda Bar Association (*Finding 9 – Access to justice*); Rwanda National Police, Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, Rwanda Peace Academy (*Finding 12 – Safety, peace and security*), and the Environment and Climate Change Fund, for which UNDP assisted in developing a gender mainstreaming strategy that informs its resource mobilization.

¹⁰³ Recovery Project for Youth and Women Micro-Enterprises.

¹⁰⁴ See <https://www.genderequalityseal.org/programme/>.

FIGURE 13. Share of Gender Marker Expenditure (2018–2022)



Source: UNDP

The Gender Results Effectiveness Scale analysis showed that results from UNDP work on democratic and transparent governance were ‘gender transformative’. For example, UNDP supported the devolution of authority from the central level to local government leaders and increased the number of women representatives at the local level, which has led to more gender accountability at the grassroots level. UNDP, in collaboration with UN Women, supported the Gender Monitoring Office to adapt the *Gender Seal* to the Rwandan context, bringing in regional expertise and advocating for getting private sector companies on board. The country office reported that 33 private institutions and nine public sectors participated in the *Gender Seal Certification programme*. Eight private companies and public institutions have been awarded the Gold Seal, and 10 were acknowledged.¹⁰⁵ The Private Sector Federation is advocating for preference to be given in procurement to companies with a *Gender Equality Seal*, which has translated to positive and pragmatic results. For example, the National Bank of Rwanda has developed a *Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2022–2027*, which seeks to promote gender equality in all the bank operations, to promote a gender-inclusive financial system, and to increase the productivity of both male and female staff.¹⁰⁶ The Gender Monitoring Office advocated for the inclusion of a gender standard in the national standards of the Rwanda Standards Board, and in April 2023 the RSB gazetted a new national standard: *Requirements for promotion, implementation, and accountability (RS 560:2023)*.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the Rwanda Standards Board signed a declaration to make standards and the standards development process gender-responsive.¹⁰⁸

UNDP work on development financing, environmental restoration, access to justice including legal aid, and media were more ‘gender targeted’. For example, women were included in beneficiary lists, but activities were not nuanced to address gender gaps. UNDP activities related to DRR and social cohesion were more gender-responsive, such as addressing the resilience needs of women to natural disasters and providing a conducive environment to allow GBV survivors to report their cases to authorities. There is still room to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment results are transformative, which aims to change gender norms, especially for subnational projects. For example, focus group discussions indicated that the division of labour in the Mudende Green Village is limiting women’s participation, whereby men

¹⁰⁵ UNDP ROAR 2022.

¹⁰⁶ National Bank of Rwanda (2022), *Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, July 2022–June 2027*.

¹⁰⁷ Rwanda Standards Board Official Gazette No.15 (10 April 2023), p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Rwanda Standards Board, *Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development* (undated) The standard has only been gazetted recently, and the evaluation does not have information on how the actual standard will be enforced and monitored.

cultivate farms and look after livestock while women and girls stay at home. Women and girls reported having been left out in the activities of the green village, and argue that they should be supported to start income-generating activities to support themselves. Also, a short survey conducted by Meteo Rwanda showed that there was still a gender differential gap in its activities. It was found that around half of all males are more resilient to disasters compared to 43 percent of females. These are worrying statistics, given that women are the majority in Rwanda and are heads of households.¹⁰⁹ Women have differentiated chores to attend to in comparison to men, and they often do not have enough time to attend training or awareness creation events. In addition, training venues do not have facilities such as breastfeeding units, which discourages some women from attending.

Finding 18. UNDP was recognized by stakeholders as an agile partner and an honest broker that brought the knowledge and expertise of its global network. UNDP played an important role in convening the different sector partners and stakeholders with divergent views and interests. Balancing the role of a trusted government partner with the expectations of development partners to be a critical voice is an ongoing challenge for UNDP.

UNDP was flexible and responded to the pressing needs of the country such as the COVID-19 pandemic (*Finding 14 – Support to the media sector during COVID; Finding 16 – COVID-19 pandemic recovery*). The agency has a proven track record in matching Rwanda’s appetite for innovation, as seen in: (i) the partnership with FONERWA and support to Ireme Invest (*Finding 3 – Innovative financing solutions*); (ii) technology transfers such as robots (*Finding 16*), 3D scanning techniques, computer-aided design, and computer-aided manufacturing in the production of prosthetics for persons with disability; (iii) forest landscape restoration (*Finding 6 – Ecosystem restoration*); and (iv) the Integrated Electronic Case Management System and e-courts (*Finding 9 – Access to justice*). UNDP was also able to support mainstreaming developmental topics that helped advance Rwanda’s vision nationally and internationally, such as media reform (*Finding 14 – Media sector strengthening*), *Home Grown Solutions* (*Finding 2 – South-South cooperation*), and Gender Seal in the private sector (*Finding 17 – Gender equity and women empowerment*). These results were underpinned by: (1) having the right calibre of dedicated staff that understands the needs of the government and the country context; (2) the ability to mobilize resources that benefits from UNDP’s operational size and capacity to deliver results; (3) the leadership afforded to UNDP by donors, other UN agencies, and the private sector; and (4) the presence of a strong global network (*Finding 3 – Innovative financing with FONERWA*).

Government partners viewed UNDP as non-partisan and positioned to convene diverse stakeholders from government, civil society, the private sector, and development partners. Several key informants viewed UNDP as a trusted, respected partner and an honest broker. For example, in the governance sector, UNDP serves as co-chair of the *Justice, Law, and Order Sector Working Group*, where UNDP has access to senior levels of the government and has the potential to influence the agenda.¹¹⁰

UNDP has been an important partner for non-state actors, not only for the financial support that it provides but also for its convening power to include civil society at the discussion table. While civil society organizations have positive perceptions of the value that UNDP had brought in the current country programme, there were shortcomings in UNDP’s support to civil society (*Finding 13 – Civil society strengthening and citizen participation*).

¹⁰⁹ Strengthening Disaster Risk Management Capacity in Rwanda project.

¹¹⁰ UNDP and the World Bank are the only UN entities co-chairing a Development Sector Working Group.

Development partners recognized UNDP's trusted position and credited the agency with giving a higher profile to issues that had not received the requisite attention in the past, such as disability. For example, UNDP invested resources in piloting innovations such as the introduction of a milling 3D machine for the orthopaedic workshop in the Gisagara HVP Hospital. However, development partners believed that UNDP could have done more, given its access to the government, and pushed the agenda on issues where UNDP can be a more critical friend to the government. Also, development partners flagged that there is a need for UNDP be more attentive in crediting and showcasing results of partner development actors through communication and visibility of joint initiatives.

Finding 19. The Country Programme Outcomes were operationally organized into pillars. Programmatically, the outcomes were implemented independently, but coherence across outcomes was observed. External coherence was weaker. Synergies within joint programmes with other UN agencies were more evident in Kigali-based activities and less outside the capital.

Outcomes 1 and 2 were housed in Pillar 1. There were synergies as environmental conservation links with livelihood focused on the sustainable use of natural resources (*Finding 3 – Innovative financing; Finding 6 – Ecosystem restoration*). The pillar had a senior manager who was meant to ensure programme coherence in terms of project design and implementation. The governance portfolio also showed linkages with the economic portfolio of the CP. For example: (1) the cooperatives supported have activities that relate directly to the objectives of inclusive growth, focusing on women and youth as well as persons with disabilities; (2) reform of cross-border illegal activities linked with trade and marketing support (*Finding 12 - Safety, peace, and security*); and (3) the promotion of gender equality in the private sector (*Finding 17– Gender equality and women empowerment*). Outcomes 2 and 3 were organically linked based on the topic, area of work, and partners. At the time of the evaluation the senior coordinator was just being brought on board for Pillar 2.

Having these linkages across the CP outcomes was a positive feature of the country programme. However, it required effective coordination and collaboration between staff of the respective units, as well as an appropriate 'home' for projects that straddle more than one outcome. For example, the *Reintegration of Ex-combatants* was a peace and security project that also linked to social cohesion and used cooperatives as a vehicle for the economic integration of ex-combatants. However, the project was managed by the country office's Inclusive Growth Unit and the rationale for doing so remains unclear. The lack of clarity and technical guidance from the Inclusive Growth Unit affected the partner selected (the Rwanda National Police) to implement and monitor trade and economic-related training, which the evaluation deemed unfit for the purpose. UNDP displayed strong coherence within its government programmes as elaborated in the effectiveness of its outcomes (see *Chapter 2 – Findings*).

Synergies with other UN agencies through joint programmes were also noted by the evaluation, such as with UNFPA, WHO, and UN Women through the Joint Youth Programme (*Finding 4 – Joint youth programme*); with UN Women through Gender Seal activities (*Finding 17 – Gender equality and women empowerment*); with FAO and WFP through activities related to cross-border trade and reintegration of combatants (*Finding 12 – Safety, peace, and security*); and with OCHR through the Universal Periodic Review (*Finding 10 – Human rights*). Synergies were not observed on joint programmes outside Kigali, such as the cross-border trade, which was a joint programme with WFP and FAO.

Finding 20. The UNDP country programme was aligned with the national priority of Rwanda. Regarding subnational implementation, based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index and population, the priority areas are the South, East, and West. UNDP did well in working in the South and West, but had limited presence in the East.

The UNDP Country Programme in Rwanda 2018–2023 was guided by the NST1, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2018–2023/4, and the UNDP corporate Strategic Plan 2018–2021. This alignment was complemented by UNDP’s strong involvement in the development coordination architecture, which allowed it to tailor its programme and respond to the changing needs of the country (*Finding 18 – Comparative advantage*). For example, UNDP’s unwavering support to youth is anchored to Rwanda’s visions of capitalizing on its youth dividend (*Finding 4 – Joint youth programme*); and working on innovative financing through FONERWA and Ireme Invest allows for the acceleration towards green growth.

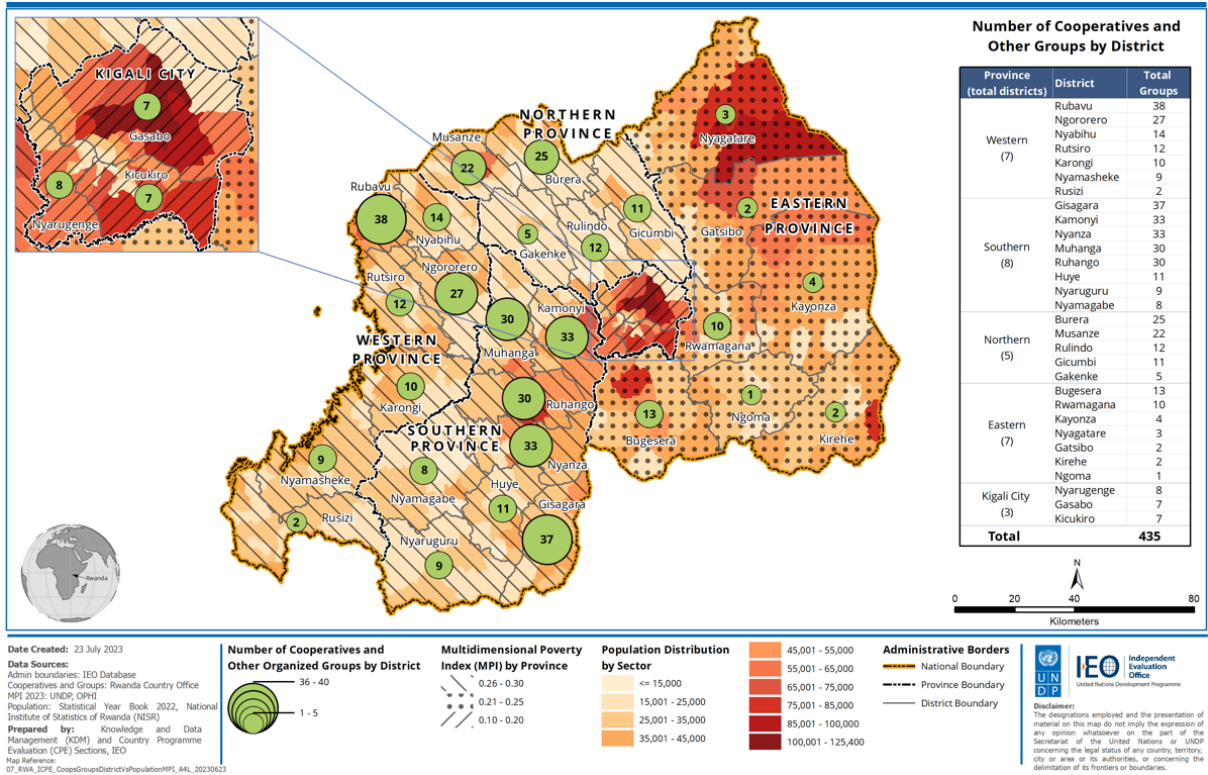
At the subnational level, UNDP worked with cooperatives to implement the majority of subnational projects in Rwanda. The evaluation mapped the cooperatives in the provinces that UNDP has assisted by providing inputs and/or capacity development. This was overlaid with the 2023 *Multidimensional Poverty Index* (MPI) values of provinces in Rwanda. In the analysis, the density of cooperatives was used as a proxy for UNDP presence. Figure 14 shows a heat map of the population with increasing hue signifying larger population density. The city of Kigali and the Eastern province are most populated. The overlay pattern shows the MPI per province. Table 1 shows the last three (and the latest) MPI for each province. Figures show that prior to the COVID pandemic, there has been a general decline in MPI across all provinces, using data from the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV). The 2019–2020 Oxford Poverty and Human Development Index (OPHI) data, which is not comparable with the EICV MPI, still gives an indication that the South, East, and West are priority areas, the South with the highest MPI and the East with the highest population share. The evaluation noted that activities in the Eastern province included the provision of home biogas systems at the household level.

TABLE 1. MPI of Rwanda provinces

Province	MPI 2010/11 (EICV-3)	MPI 2013/14 (EICV-4)	MPI 2016/17 (EICV-5)	MPI 2019-2020 (OPHI)	Population share 2019-2020 (OPHI)
Kigali City	0.120	0.066	0.068	0.118	11.1%
East	0.265	0.178	0.167	0.286	25.3%
North	0.185	0.145	0.114	0.245	16.4%
South	0.293	0.210	0.190	0.305	24.3%
West	0.248	0.189	0.158	0.290	22.9%

Source: OPHI, MPI Resources (2018), and Third National Human Development Report

FIGURE 14. Mapping of cooperatives assisted by UNDP in Rwanda



Finding 21. At the national level, the likelihood of broader adoption of results (sustaining, scaling, replication, mainstreaming, and market change) was higher when UNDP used its resources to leverage catalytic funding and provided technical support to strengthen institutional capacities. At the subnational level, sustainability was significantly enhanced when UNDP resources were used to scale up cooperatives' production and extend membership rather than funding start-up cooperatives or activities. At both the national and subnational levels, prospects for sustainability were weaker where UNDP funding was primarily used for direct implementation, instead of facilitating opportunities for other partners to step in. Risks to sustainability were higher in activities where UNDP did not ensure linkage to financing.

Several of the projects supported by UNDP had a high level of government ownership by its senior leadership, and this had increased the sustainability of capacities that UNDP had helped to build in these government institutions. The combination of UNDP technical advisory assistance, long-term capacity development support, and catalytic funding led to a high likelihood of sustainability of results. These were seen in some cases where the government provided the larger portion of financial resources as well as contributions-in-kind. Examples include the establishment of FONERWA and Ireme Invest (*Finding 3 – Innovative financing solutions*), assessments and research with MINUBUMWE and the Rwanda Governance Board (*Finding 11 – Social cohesion*), and the scaling and roll out of the Integrated Electronic Case Management System (*Finding 9 – Access to justice*).

Some UNDP-funded activities needed to have a proper exit strategy that included pathways to financial sustainability before UNDP fully stepped out. Such examples included updating and scaling the standard operating procedures with MINEMA (*Finding 7 – Disaster risk management*). Similarly, the government had seen the potential of the e-courts, and the Rwanda Correctional Service is likely to continue as a permanent alternative means for court hearings. However, there was a risk that given the financial constraints the government will be unable to roll out beyond the existing correctional facilities (*Finding 9 – Access to justice*).

Activities and results that relied almost exclusively on UNDP financing were less sustainable. Some examples include UNDP work on restoration where there was a weak link between government district-level support and UNDP-sponsored activities and inputs (*Finding 6 – Ecosystem restoration*). The support to the Rwanda Media Council was another example where close to 90 percent of its income came from UNDP and the Swiss Development Cooperation (*Finding 14 – Media sector strengthening*). As some donors signalled their intention not to work in the media space in its next regional/country strategy, the RMC is at risk of ceasing operations unless alternative sources of funding/financing are found. Similarly, UNDP largely funded the Rwanda Bar Association to provide services to marginalized groups. Though the association will continue to provide pro bono legal aid services as this is part of their mandate, they will not be able to scale up their services without external financing (*Finding 12 – Safety, peace, and security*). UNDP supported cooperatives and community-based groups involved in manufacturing, tailoring, shoe-making, and agriculture, etc. through livelihood capital investment and capacity development with the support of the Ministry of Local Government and the RNP. The evaluation saw that sustainability was higher when support is anchored to mature cooperatives and UNDP support was used to expand and recruit new members, rather than when resources were used to organize new organizations.

Many key informants identified insufficient funding as a constraint to scaling up existing initiatives. The evaluation did not find evidence of UNDP working actively with partners in government and civil society to develop financial sustainability strategies and/or to look for innovative financing options for justice infrastructure. An exception is the work done with the Rwanda Peace Academy on financial sustainability. The economic sustainability of the RMC is an issue that requires urgent attention.

Finding 22. There was a general weakness in monitoring CP activities, which did not detect and help resolve issues of beneficiary selection, the materialization of cost-sharing, weak implementation of capacity development activities, and synergies with government and UN agencies. Some national scorecards and barometers could have been used to monitor the CP outcomes and outputs by the country office. The country office needs to ensure collaboration on M&E across projects and outcomes, spot-checking of activities, use of technologies such as GIS, and ensure that M&E data is translated to inform decision-making and project design.

The quality of M&E in the country office varies greatly across outcomes and implementing partners. Staff with M&E roles did not systematically sample project sites and beneficiaries. Instead, convenience sampling was mainly conducted, which was not sensitive enough to identify implementation gaps such as issues on inclusions and exclusion criteria (*Finding 6 – Ecosystem restoration*), selection of beneficiaries, and assessment of the quality of inputs and training (*Finding 12 – Safety, peace, and security*). In some cases, implementing partners were able to provide detailed project statistics. However, UNDP has not taken full advantage of these data sets. The CP outcomes and outputs could have benefited from using national barometers and scorecards to track their progress, such as the media barometer and CSO scorecard.

The evaluation was not clear as to why data for the CP Outcome Indicators for 2021 and 2022 were not available in the UNDP corporate reporting system, although UNDP contributed to aggregated data in the 2021 and 2022 UN Development Coordination Office annual reports. At the time of this writing, the country office planned 15 evaluations: 11 were completed, one was overdue, and three were planned. Overall, of the 87 key actions from all the evaluations, only 44 (51 percent) have been completed. The evaluation also noted that 33 percent of these key actions were from 2018; and that 76 percent from 2022 were yet to be completed as of July 2023. Nine decentralized evaluations were Quality Assessed by IEO, of which seven were deemed moderately satisfactory and two were moderately unsatisfactory.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



This chapter presents the evaluation's conclusions on UNDP's performance and contributions to development results in Rwanda, recommendations, and the management response.

3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. UNDP has made commendable contributions in advancing Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation. It matched the pace of the government, brought other stakeholders up to the same speed, and supported innovative solutions. The effectiveness of the outcome delivery in its country programme varies. In Outcome 1, UNDP made a significant contribution to innovative financing for the environment and for youth capacity and employment. In Outcome 2, UNDP's effective contributions were mainly seen at the upstream policy level. In Outcome 3, UNDP made substantial progress on access to justice and social cohesion, but attention to innovative financing for this sector is lacking. In Outcome 4, UNDP advocated for CSOs and the media sector, but fell short in delivering long-term and sustainable results.

Rwanda is moving on its development journey with acceleration and speed that is fuelled by the clarity of its ambition to improve the lives of its citizens, firm leadership that wants to showcase the positive transformation of Rwanda to the region and the world, a youthful population, and cadre of dedicated, innovative civil servants. To keep up with the pace of the government, UNDP remained agile and flexible, strived for innovation, and took calculated risks. In doing so, it was successful in supporting the government and has gained the recognition of its development peers.

Through its facilitative role in the Development Coordination Structure and as a co-chair in the Justice Sector Working Group, UNDP has been able to advocate for and influence Rwanda's development agenda and, to an extent, to table development issues for other stakeholders. Development partners within the group believe that the UNDP leadership role should be significantly enhanced to bring strategic coherence, sector synergies, and greater operational effectiveness to leverage the large network of actors within the sector. Through working closely with the government within the coordination architecture, UNDP has been able to respond with agility and adjust its own programming to address emerging issues. The agency's focus on development financing for economic empowerment and the environment was relevant and timely, which benefitted from UNDP providing senior economic advisory, networking, and facilitation support. For example, UNDP support to FONERWA and the Development Bank of Rwanda to establish the basket fund Ireme Invest was a significant achievement for environment protection and creating livelihoods. With over \$247 million mobilized two years after its launch, the fund adds more credibility and robust structure to Rwanda's Green Growth agenda, driving climate change investments and allowing the private sector to engage in an inclusive and environmentally sustainable economy.

The success of Youth Connekt from its launch in 2012 to its continent-wide reach with Youth Connekt-Africa and its scaling through the Joint-Youth Programme was a testament to UNDP's contextual understanding and forward-looking. UNDP helped Rwanda capitalize on its youth dividend by engaging the youth on multiple fronts – including entrepreneurship, technical and vocational skills training, the arts, and participation in governance. This programme has also provided the space for various development actors to aggregate resources towards the common goal of empowering youth.

Rwanda actively wants to contribute its *Home Grown Solutions* to Africa and the world. UNDP, through its support to the Rwanda Cooperation, allowed for greater reach of this asset across the globe, which exemplifies UNDP's role as a global knowledge broker.

The Integrated Electronic Case Management System and e-courts were transformative results that helped unburden the judicial system. While early results are promising, the lack of a sustainable finance mechanism threatens gains. However, UNDP has been able to build the capacities of governance institutions to mobilize blended and innovative development finance. Related to this, UNDP still tends to design programmes with insufficient attention to future financing or sufficiently emphasizing the catalytic nature of UNDP funding (e.g., the case of the Rwanda Media Council).

Conclusion 2. UNDP’s comparative strength and where it has achieved the most significant results were in activities that helped to establish institutions and bolster government programmes.

UNDP’s success was underpinned by the trust it has gained from the government through its unwavering presence in Rwanda, its thought leadership and ability to rally development partners towards a vision, its appetite to take calculated risks, its commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment, and its dedicated staff.

The evaluation assessed that UNDP has been most effective in helping set up government institutions. For example: (1) UNDP was key in the establishment of FONERWA and, later on, the Ireme Invest; (2) it supported the creation of MINEMA and facilitated the development of the DRR SOPs; (3) it assisted the reporting and implementation of Rwanda’s Nationally Determined Contributions; (4) it was one of the first partners that contributed to operationalizing the Rwanda Cooperation as an institution with a South-South mandate; (5) it supported MINUBUMWE and the Rwanda Governance Board in crucial research; and (6) it supported the *Citizen Report Card*, *Rwanda Governance Scorecard*, and various barometers to enhance accountability and influence decision-making for improved service delivery.

The UNDP portfolio has been highly responsive to gender equality and the empowerment of women. There were gender transformative results achieved by UNDP. Gender dimensions were considered during the planning and designing of projects, but there is a gap in considering gender in monitoring and evaluation. UNDP worked to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, driven by a passionate commitment on the part of the country office leadership and staff, but these efforts were piecemeal across the country programme and without a cohesive narrative.

Conclusion 3. The quality of UNDP’s results at the subnational level (i.e., livelihood-related activities) was suboptimal. It was influenced by weaknesses in programme design and financing, unsuitable choice of implementing partners, missed opportunities for synergies, lack of long-term vision, and weak monitoring and knowledge management, all of which diluted UNDP’s effectiveness and ability to achieve broader adoption.

There was a preponderance of ‘downstream’ projects in the UNDP portfolio, seeking to strengthen the capacities of ‘end beneficiaries’ and not the capacities of the civil society organizations and institutions charged with providing services. These ‘end beneficiary’ projects, though valuable as they may be to the participants in the cooperatives and groups, were primarily about inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods. UNDP governance staff were not experts in these areas, nor were implementing partners such as the Rwanda National Police.

Across all outcomes, insufficient funding was a common refrain from government partners, civil society, and the media sector, with an expectation that UNDP needs to find more resources in the next country programme. For example, in Outcome 3 some of the areas covered in the governance portfolio were not attractive to donors (e.g., prisons), while in other areas, such as elections, the government had declined external funding. Financing the governance portfolio has been conventional: grant funding from bilateral development partners, vertical funds, UNDP core resources, and emergency funding for the COVID-19 response.

In activities involving community beneficiaries receiving inputs or capacity development support, there were issues of poor design of development targets and intervention, unclear beneficiary selection, poor communication of selection criteria, incompatibility of inputs and recipients, weak synergies with local government programmes, limited capacity of implementing partners, and the low possibility of broader adoption.

UNDP policy work at the national level with links to subnational level pilots had compounding effects. For example, the *Rwanda National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy* was revised at the national level to be aligned with the *Sendai Framework*, which shows that the country is progressively strengthening the implementation of its disaster risk reduction policy. This policy work has been localized and mainstreamed through updating *District Annual Action Plans*, *District Development Plans*, and policies of sectoral ministries in line with the *Sendai Framework* and the mainstreaming of DRR.

Conclusion 4. UNDP maintained its long-standing, strong partnership with government institutions, and its partnership with the private sector has been evolving positively. UNDP fell short in meeting the expectations of other development partners, such as by failing to strengthen the enabling environment for civil society, by not optimizing joint partnerships with UN agencies at the subnational level, and by tabling sensitive human rights issues advocated by donors.

UNDP's position as a trusted partner of the Government of Rwanda is beyond doubt, and affirmed by the interviews at senior levels of the government administration. This strong partnership has contributed towards the achievement of results. Public sector governance institutions are clear about their priorities and the strategic direction of their portfolios. They are also well organized and have systems in place to hold themselves accountable. These institutions trust UNDP to engage in sensitive areas that deal with the traumatic past. UNDP, for its part, had ensured that its support was well aligned to the transformational agenda, and had brought technical expertise to the table. UNDP's responsiveness to government partners and sensitivity to the country's context and its traumatic past is commendable, but there were areas where this responsiveness and sensitivity has been at the cost of UNDP being an assertive partner on its normative mandate.

UNDP's relationship with the private sector has been evolving and is on a positive trajectory. However, UNDP's partnerships with some development partners and other UN agencies were less than optimal, and in some cases fractious. Some stakeholders had an expectation that UNDP, given its position of a trusted partner of the government, its expertise in development issues, and its normative mandate, would provide leadership to development partners in engaging the government on strategic and sensitive issues. UNDP was not meeting some of these expectations, especially with some bilateral donors, and is at risk of losing support. UNDP had been conservative in using its political capital in tabling issues that other development partners find relevant but might be too sensitive for government counterparts.

Activities aimed at strengthening CSOs focused less on strengthening civil society as an institution for influencing policy and more on their role in service delivery. In doing so, perceptions of civil society as implementers of government policies and programmes were perpetuated and took civil society further away from influencing policy and holding public and private institutions to account.

Civil society sees UNDP as a valuable partner doing its best within the current environment, though it believes that UNDP could do more to strengthen the enabling environment for civil society. UNDP has been less effective in its contribution to strengthening non-state institutions, namely, civil society and the media sector. The strategy that UNDP has adopted in working with these two sectors was not effective. UNDP support to these two sectors is mediated through the Rwanda Governance Board, the body responsible

for the registration of civil society organizations and capacity-building of the media sector. This creates a conflict of interest (real and perceived) and potentially limits the space for these two sectors to push for the changes or improvements they want and need in the policy and regulatory environment.

3.2 Recommendations and management response

RECOMMENDATION 1.



In the next country programme, UNDP should continue to provide support to the Government of Rwanda in the areas of: (1) Inclusive economic growth; and (2) Environment, climate change, and disaster risk reduction. UNDP should revisit its approach to: (3) Justice, human rights, peace, and security; and (4) Democratic and transparent governance, with emphasis on the long-term sustainability and innovative financing of these sectors. UNDP should ensure that proven innovative activities and transformational results attain broader adoption. While moving at a fast pace to respond to the government's needs, UNDP should also strategically pause and reflect, and assess its technical, financial, and human resources to be able to identify and prioritize flagship activities to renew its strategic offer to the government.

In order to ensure that there is a high likelihood of broader adoption (mainstreaming, replication, scaling, sustaining, and influencing market change), UNDP, with its government partners, should identify and prioritize flagship initiatives to support. Some examples of key activities/results could include support to: (1) the development coordination structure, (2) Ireme Invest and Joint Youth Programme, (3) Rwanda Cooperation, (4) Gender Seal for the private sector, and (5) Integrated Electronic Case Management System and e-courts.

After identifying these flagship initiatives, milestones and flexion points need to be mapped with both government and wider development partners to determine the type of support that is required. UNDP should develop the next CPD through systems thinking with the intent of maximizing synergies. For example, e-courts have great potential as a mechanism for increasing access to justice for poor inmates. UNDP could benefit from a thorough review to improve implementation and guide the roll-out to the remaining correctional facilities. The e-courts module still needs to be integrated into the Integrated Electronic Case Management System, and it is advisable that the implementation review be conducted to ensure that the business processes are mapped for its broader adoption. In addition, financing should be one of the priorities to scale this initiative.

In designing its governance and access to justice portfolio, emphasis should be on helping these sectors achieve financial sustainability, taking lessons from CP Outcomes 1 and 2. UNDP staff should include a Senior Governance Adviser with international experience and capacity to move the governance portfolio beyond the 'normal' implementation. This person should be tasked to assist the government in further developing innovative financing for governance. In the immediate horizon, UNDP should commence research on innovative development financing options for governance. This could assist in finding financing options for the Rwanda Media Council, as well as options for the Justice, Law, and Order Sector to address the major infrastructure backlogs in its courts and correctional facilities or the Prison Fellowship's need for a secure space to preserve its work on social healing.

Management response:



UNDP partially accepts the recommendation and commits to continue advancing work in the areas of: (1) inclusive growth; (2) environment and climate change; (3) justice, human rights, peace, and security; and (4) democratic and transparent governance and youth empowerment. Special attention will be given to ensuring continued work leverages on the learnings from CPD Outcomes 1 and 2 to generate transformational results and attain broader adoption. The CO welcomes the recommendation to conduct research on how innovative finance can be applied to strengthen financial sustainability of interventions, but wishes not to limit it to the governance portfolio but rather apply it to all areas of UNDP programming. The CO also welcomes the recommendation to identify UNDP flagship projects, but notes that priority should be given to projects that enable a shift towards portfolio-approach programming that leverages on the unique capacities and expertise of UNDP Rwanda’s different thematic units for enhanced impact.

Furthermore, the CO acknowledges the recommendation to include a Senior Governance Advisor with international experience. However, with limited financial resources and recognizing the need for deep contextual understanding when managing governance interventions in Rwanda, the CO will not contract this capacity. Notwithstanding the statement, the CO will, as appropriate, seek this expertise internally through UNDP networks when developing new interventions and reviewing existing ones.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Conducting research on innovative development financing and partnership options for all UNDP programming.	April – May 2024	Inclusive Green Economy Unit		
1.2 Assessment and identification of potential flagship projects that enables portfolio-approach programming.	April – May 2024	Management Support Unit		Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION 2.



UNDP should use the remainder of the country programme cycle to address some of the issues identified in this evaluation that can be resolved in the current cycle, especially in subnational implementation. In preparing for its next country programme, UNDP needs to strengthen its position as a knowledge and strategy partner to the government. It should focus on high-level technical advisory roles emphasizing financing of various sectors, especially its governance portfolio. UNDP needs to rethink its value proposition for having subnational implementations, especially those that are not for testing proof of concepts/pilots.

UNDP will need to make a step change in its strategy for the next country programme. While it has achieved results in the current programme, the context in the country, in the region, and globally is shifting, and the current strategy will not suffice. UNDP should reposition itself as a knowledge and strategy partner to the government. The emphasis of UNDP's work should be on providing the government (and other stakeholders) with quality advice, based on thorough research and UNDP's global experience. 'Downstream' work should be for demonstration purposes, testing the application of a particular policy or approach. It also entails the ability to advise the government on innovative development finance options beyond aid. Particular attention should be paid to project design and beneficiary selection.

UNDP should capitalize on its integrator role and the trust it has built within the larger development community. Internally, UNDP should continue to build the capacity of its staff to be development thinkers and communicators, writing 'think pieces' that unpack, demystify, and challenge the concept and practice of development in Rwanda (and in the African context). If possible, the agency should collaborate with its government and development sector partners in these exercises. UNDP could take advantage of its global network and pool of expertise to add more value to these flagship initiatives; and it could advocate the lessons stemming from these initiatives for regional and global consumption. In doing so, the Regional Bureau for Africa should advocate for and provide resources and capacity to package knowledge from Rwanda.

UNDP should commission research on governance issues for UNDP's use in its advisory work. These are distinct, innovative, and forward-looking studies supporting the government's research agenda. Such studies should enable UNDP to identify options to better assist the government and other partners and to broaden the evidence base that the government draws on. Any research commissioned should be clear on how the research will be used.

Management response:



The CO fully acknowledges the findings of the ICPE and is committed to incorporating its recommendations into the design of the new CPD cycle. Recognizing the need for improvement, the CO will transition to a portfolio approach, strengthen its role as a knowledge and strategy partner to the government, and focus on high-level technical advisory roles, particularly in financing and resource mobilization for key economic sectors. The office will also reassess the value proposition for subnational implementations, ensuring alignment with broader development goals.

◀ Recommendation 2 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Incorporate the findings of the ICPE into the design of the new CPD cycle, transitioning to a portfolio approach.	December 2024	Transformative Governance		Ongoing
2.2 Provide technical support from a high-level technical advisor to guide the design and implementation of the Programming Cycles (CPD), particularly with a focus on financing and resource mobilization for key economic sectors.	December 2024	Inclusive Green Economy		Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION 3.



UNDP should strengthen its capacity and resources for monitoring and evaluation, especially at the subnational level.

Information and knowledge are critical for UNDP, yet the management of these has been less than effective. UNDP should ensure consistency between its reports and its implementing partners. Government partners have good monitoring information on the implementation of projects and programmes, but UNDP did not make use of this information beyond routine reporting. Information and knowledge in the governance portfolio resides in the heads and on the computers of individual officers. There was no systematic analysis of information and reflection on data to improve programmes and, importantly, for advocacy and policy dialogue. In some cases, there were differing data between UNDP and government reports.

In strengthening the country office’s monitoring and evaluation capacity, UNDP should ensure that projects have a form of independent evaluation of implementers or those involved in project management. At the time of writing, UNDP had increased the number of M&E staff, recruiting international and national M&E professionals. For projects in the pipeline, UNDP should ensure that M&E is allocated appropriate resources. Moreover, the country office would benefit from staff with GIS capacities to improve the selection of beneficiaries, track the progress of interventions, measure the changes made from initiatives at the landscape level, aggregate information, and recommend measurement for M&E (i.e., mapping of cooperatives involved in UNDP activities), at the same time developing products to communicate UNDP results.

Management response: 

UNDP appreciates your thoughtful recommendation regarding the need to strengthen the capacity and resources for monitoring and evaluation, particularly at the subnational level. Your insights are valuable, and we recognize the importance of having robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in ensuring the effectiveness and impact of our programmes. In response to this recommendation, UNDP is committed to be taking the below actions:

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Enhance the proficiency of the UNDP programme team in portfolio design and management, stakeholder engagement, results-based management, and evaluation practices.	December 2024	Management Support Unit		
3.2 Enhance/foster partnerships to create a collaborative framework with implementing partners that strengthens our efforts at the subnational level to ensure that beneficiary selection is inclusive. Emphasis will be on effective communication and transparency in the selection process.	December 2024	Management Support Unit		
3.3 Explore and implement technology solutions that can streamline and enhance the monitoring and evaluation process, such as GIS, etc.	December 2025	Sustainable Growth Unit		

RECOMMENDATION 4.



UNDP should continue to strengthen civil society and strategically advocate for the United Nations' normative issues, especially regarding human rights. UNDP should continue to strengthen coordination with the broader development community.

The sustainability of the Rwanda Media Council requires urgent attention given that the government has reported that a new media policy is being developed. UNDP, under the leadership of the Resident Representative, should convene the Media Council, the Ministry of Local Government, the Rwanda Governance Board, and development partners to find and agree on a solution for the financial sustainability of the Media Council and to address the issues of corporate governance of the Council (i.e., the Rwanda Media Fund). UNDP should bring thoroughly researched options to the dialogue, and should work with partners to develop a sustainability strategy for the Civil Society Platform as well as the Multi-Stakeholder Disability Platform.

UNDP has the opportunity to elevate its work with cooperative and community-based groups that are involved in its programme. UNDP should work with the Rwanda Governance Board, the Ministry of Local Government, and the Ministry of Commerce to devise strategies for the sustainability of these groups.

As a trusted UN agency with access to the government, UNDP should ensure that it actively listens to its sister UN agencies and advocates issues within its mandate and norms. These discussions may sometimes be uncomfortable, but they are necessary. UNDP is privileged to be able to have these talks with the government. In doing so, UNDP could use reports and findings of other UN agencies to underscore issues. For example, it could point to recommendations made in the *United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review*, such as guaranteeing the rights and protection of marginalized groups – e.g., the LGBTQ community. Another issue worth noting from the Universal Periodic Review is the need to take all necessary measures to combat impunity for the crimes of enforced disappearance and human trafficking. UNDP should be aware of these issues and reflect them in its next country programme.

UNDP needs to have more intensive, regular consultations with other non-UN development partners. It should ensure close coordination, appropriate division of responsibilities, and promotion of transparency in terms of the goals and objectives of partners active in different sectors of interest. UNDP should therefore work together with its partners in the process of developing new policies and programmes, instead of seeking their validation and support without their initial involvement.

Management response:



UNDP fully accepts the recommendation and is committed to continuing its efforts to strengthen civil society while strategically advocating for the United Nations' normative issues, particularly in the realm of human rights. The focus will include key areas such as Disability Inclusion, Reconciliation, Universal Periodic Review, and Gender Equality. This commitment underscores the importance of actively engaging with civil society and championing normative issues to further advance UNDP's mission and to contribute meaningfully to the promotion of human rights and inclusive development.

◀ Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Convene a dialogue on the implementation of UPR recommendations in partnership with MINIJUST, OHCHR, and NHRC.	December 2026	Transformational Governance		
Engage CSO's in Universal Periodic Review Monitoring and Reporting.	December 2025	Transformational Governance		Ongoing
4.2 Continuous support to CSOs who engage in gender and disability inclusion programmes.	December 2024	Transformational Governance		Ongoing
4.3 Engage CSOs in the provision of legal aid to the most vulnerable.	December 2024	Transformational Governance		
4.4 Advocate for the inclusion of Human Rights in the New Sector Strategic Plan (JRLOS).	December 2024	Transformational Governance		
4.4 Engage the National Human Rights Commission and other key partners to undertake initiatives that promote human Business and Human.	December 2025	Transformational Governance		

RECOMMENDATION 5.



UNDP should continue to strengthen its work in gender equality and women's empowerment and extend the work on the Gender Seal to a broader set of stakeholders. Although gender is mainstreamed in the country office, UNDP could benefit from a Gender Focal Point with a more technical and deeper understanding of gender in development that could engage with partners (i.e., project design, monitoring, and research). Systematic monitoring of gender activities/results in project design, implementation, and closure would help UNDP adjust its tools to elevate activities/results from gender targeted and responsive to gender transformative.

The evaluation appreciates the efforts of the country office to mainstream gender. Stakeholders acknowledged UNDP's work in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), but also noted that, as gender is being successfully mainstreamed, there is a need to have a nuanced understanding and collective effort to achieve transformational change towards GEWE. UNDP could also benefit from improving how GEWE is being monitored in its activities and how this information is being used to enhance its work across its portfolio. There is a need for a continuous effort to empower implementing partners who are on different levels of technical knowledge and understanding of GEWE to ensure that what is planned for is reflected at the grassroots level.

Management response:



UNDP has accepted a recommendation to enhance its work in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, extending the Gender Seal initiative to a wider range of stakeholders. The organization will develop an integrated monitoring framework that incorporates gender considerations at every stage of the project lifecycle. The UNDP Rwanda Country Office will appoint a technically capable Gender Focal Point to enhance gender responsiveness and engage with partners. This focal point will provide expertise in project design, monitoring, and research, contributing to a more inclusive development agenda. The country office will also strengthen gender action plans for sustained progress.

◀ Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Develop and implement an integrated monitoring framework that systematically incorporates gender considerations at every stage of the project lifecycle, including design, implementation, and closure.	December 2024	MSU and Gender Focal Persons		
5.2 Continue mainstreaming gender into UNDP's new portfolios, and the CO will officially appoint a technically capable Gender Focal Point.	December 2024	MSU and Gender Focal Persons		
5.2 Strengthening implementation of the gender action plans of the country office.	December 2024	MSU and Gender Focal Persons		

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database.

ANNEXES



The annexes listed below may be found on the IEO website at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/23395>

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Country at a glance

Annex 3. Country office at a glance

Annex 4. Project list

Annex 5. Documents consulted

Annex 6. Status of country programme outcome & output indicators

Annex 7. Performance rating



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