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United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION  
**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
OF CONGO**



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# INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability  
responsiveness MANAGING FOR RESULTS relevance COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
HUMAN COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability NATIONAL OWNERSHIP efficiency  
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### INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: Democratic Republic of Congo

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## IEO TEAM

**Directorate:** Isabelle Mercier (Director) and Alan Fox (Deputy Director)

**ICPE section chief:** Richard Jones

**Lead evaluator:** Amanuel Zerihoun

**Associate lead evaluator:** Angela Naletilic

**Research associates:** Rim Benhima and Solomon Mamo

**Evaluation advisory panel members:** Apollo Nkwakwe and Dr. Koyabe Bramwell

**Evaluation consultants:** Cheikh Faye, Faya Francois Bourouno, Aurelian Mzibzain, Guy Kalasi, Jean Robert Gbema

**Publishing and outreach:** Flora Jimenez and Iben Hjorth

**Administrative support:** Antana Locs

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**UNDP staff:** Damien Mama UNDP Resident Representative, Rokya Dieng Deputy Resident Representative, Lolo Esaho Shungu Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Marlon Kiyedi Operations Analyst, and all staff of the country office in the Democratic Republic of Congo who contributed their time to conduct this evaluation.

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# FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the first Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP. The evaluation covers UNDP interventions implemented between 2020 and 2023 in the context of the country programme 2020-2024.

DRC is the largest, and fourth most populated, country in sub-Saharan Africa. Endowed with immense natural resources, DRC is the second largest tropical forest region in the world, with around 60 percent of tropical forests on the African Continent, and about 60 percent of the Congo Basin, within its borders. The country also has abundant and unparalleled mineral resources. Despite its immense assets and potential, the development trajectory of the country has been shaken by political and security crises, alongside a legacy of weak administrative capacity and State presence over its vast territory since independence. DRC has experienced prolonged periods of insecurity and conflicts of various intensity due to the presence of local and foreign armed groups in its Eastern regions, with an estimated 100 armed groups currently active in the country. Climate change events such as drought and rainfall variability result in floods, soil erosion and agricultural losses, creating compounding and cascading vulnerabilities. Ranked 175 of 189 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index, DRC is estimated to host the third largest population of poor people in the world. In 2023 DRC held the highest internally displaced population in Africa, with an estimated 6.4 million internally displaced people, and close to 3 million returnees.

The UNDP programme in DRC was designed to respond to this national context, the priorities outlined in the National Strategic Development Plan, and other developments such as the scheduled transition of peacekeeping operations. It focused on three key outcome areas: governance and effective institutions, inclusive growth and rural development, and stabilisation and resilience. This evaluation report emphasizes the important role played by UNDP, through its relevant and continuous support to national authorities, in responding to the protracted and multi-faceted crises facing the country, earning itself an image of trust and credibility. It highlights important UNDP contributions to strengthening institutional capacity and service delivery for communities, in the areas of rule of law, development planning, decentralisation, access to finance and livelihoods. In addition, UNDP has continued to play a key role in enabling development financing during the period covered by this evaluation through its fund management, including of the national REDD+ Fund and the Stabilization Coherence Fund. UNDP has also been pivotal in supporting the development and execution of 'PDL-145', an unprecedented initiative for rural development and DRC Government commitment to bridge the urban/ rural divide in the country.

While the evaluation recognized the significant challenges inherent to the DRC context, and several successful UNDP contributions, it also noted recurrent operational hurdles across all programme areas affecting the implementation of activities, which could cause reputational risks. In addition, the implementation of the country programme missed opportunities to build strategic synergies within and across programme areas, limiting the overall ability of UNDP to demonstrate the added value of integrated programming and respond to existing and emerging multidimensional development challenges.

I would like to thank the Government of DRC, national stakeholders and colleagues from the UNDP country office and Regional Bureau for Africa for their support throughout the evaluation. I hope that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will help strengthen the implementation of the next country programme strategy to enable inclusive and sustainable development pathways for the people.



**Isabelle Mercier**  
**Director**  
**Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP**

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>ACTIF</b>    | Action, Change, Transformation through Financial Inclusion      |
| <b>ADR</b>      | Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism                        |
| <b>CAFI</b>     | Central African Forest Initiative                               |
| <b>CENI</b>     | Independent National Commission for Elections                   |
| <b>CISM</b>     | Integrated Multisectoral Services Centre                        |
| <b>CLPD</b>     | Local Peace and Development Committee                           |
| <b>CMS</b>      | Change Monitoring System  |
| <b>CPD</b>      | Country Programme Document                                      |
| <b>CPVS</b>     | Presidential Strategic Monitoring Cell                          |
| <b>CSO</b>      | Civil society organization                                      |
| <b>DDR</b>      | Disarmament, demobilization and recovery                        |
| <b>DIM</b>      | Direct Implementation Modality                                  |
| <b>DRC</b>      | Democratic Republic of the Congo                                |
| <b>DRR</b>      | Disaster risk reduction (and prevention)                        |
| <b>DTE</b>      | Decentralized territorial entity                                |
| <b>FONAREDD</b> | DRC National REDD+ Fund   |
| <b>GDP</b>      | Gross domestic product  |
| <b>GEWE</b>     | Gender equality and women's empowerment                         |
| <b>GTCRR</b>    | EDD Climate Working Group                                       |
| <b>IAMP</b>     | International Assistance Management Platform                    |
| <b>ICPE</b>     | Independent Country Programme Evaluation                        |
| <b>IDP</b>      | Internally displaced person                                     |
| <b>IEO</b>      | Independent Evaluation Office                                   |
| <b>IGF</b>      | Inspectorate General of Finance                                 |
| <b>INS</b>      | National Institute for Statistics                               |
| <b>ISSSS</b>    | International Strategy in Support of Security and Stabilization |
| <b>JERODD</b>   | Young Rapporteurs for the SDGs                                  |
| <b>LDC</b>      | Local Development Committee                                     |
| <b>LDP</b>      | Local Development Plan  |
| <b>LNOB</b>     | Leave no-one behind   |

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>LPG</b>     | Liquefied Petroleum Gas  |
| <b>M&amp;E</b> | Monitoring and Evaluation  |
| <b>MEAL</b>    | Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning                              |
| <b>MFI</b>     | Microfinance institution   |
| <b>MONUC</b>   | United Nations Organization Mission in DRC                                       |
| <b>MONUSCO</b> | United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in DRC                         |
| <b>MPTF</b>    | Multi-partner trust fund   |
| <b>NAM</b>     | Electoral Needs Assessment Mission   |
| <b>NDC</b>     | Nationally Determined Contribution   |
| <b>NGO</b>     | Non-governmental organization  |
| <b>NIM</b>     | National Implementation Modality   |
| <b>P-DDRCS</b> | Programme for Disarmament, Demobilization, Recovery, Community and Stabilization |
| <b>PASMIF</b>  | Microfinance Sector Support Programme  |
| <b>PDL-145</b> | Local Development Programme for the 145 territories                              |
| <b>PIREDD</b>  | Integrated Programme for the Oriental Province                                   |
| <b>PNSD</b>    | National Development Strategic Plan  |
| <b>PPBSE</b>   | Planning, Programming, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation                      |
| <b>REDD+</b>   | Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation +                   |
| <b>SALW</b>    | Small Arms and Light Weapons   |
| <b>SCF</b>     | Stabilization Coherence Fund   |
| <b>SDG</b>     | Sustainable Development Goal   |
| <b>SSU</b>     | Stabilization Support Unit   |
| <b>UNCDF</b>   | United Nations Capital Development Fund  |
| <b>UNDP</b>    | United Nations Development Programme   |
| <b>UNFCCC</b>  | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change                            |
| <b>UNFPA</b>   | United Nations Population Fund   |
| <b>UNHRO</b>   | United Nations Joint Human Rights Office   |
| <b>UNICEF</b>  | United Nations Children’s Fund   |
| <b>UNSDCF</b>  | United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework                     |

# Evaluation Brief: Democratic Republic of Congo

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) of UNDP in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2024. The evaluation covers the programming period of 2020-2023. This is the second country level evaluation carried out by the IEO in the DRC. The purpose of the evaluation was to strengthen accountability to national stakeholders and the UNDP Executive Board, promote organizational learning and inform the development of the next UNDP country programme.

DRC is the largest, and fourth most populated, country in sub-Saharan Africa. Endowed with immense natural resources, DRC is the second largest tropical forest region in the world, with around 60 percent of tropical forests on the African Continent, and about 60 percent of the Congo Basin, within its borders. In addition, the country has abundant and unparalleled mineral resources. Despite its immense assets and potential, the development trajectory of the country has been shaken by political and security crises, alongside a legacy of weak administrative capacity and State presence over its vast territory since independence. DRC has experienced prolonged periods of insecurity and conflicts of various intensity due to the presence of local and foreign armed groups in its Eastern regions. The country has hosted various peacekeeping operation mandates since its independence to support stabilization and peacekeeping efforts, but armed conflict has continued with an estimate of over 100 armed groups active in the country. In addition to economic and social discrimination, women are particularly impacted in this environment, as conflict-related sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war in the region. As a result of conflict, DRC held the highest internally displaced population in Africa, with an estimated 6.4 million internally displaced people and close to 3 million returnees in 2023. DRC ranks 182 of 189 countries on the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative country index, reflecting the country's vulnerability to climate change events, notably droughts and floodings, and the great need for investment and innovations to improve readiness.

The current UNDP country programme in DRC (2020-2024) is guided by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the same period, and aligned with objectives of the National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023. In addition, the programme was launched in the context of the gradual transition of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in DRC (MONUSCO), as per the transition plan request by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, adopted in 2021. During this programme, UNDP focused on three outcomes: governance and effective institutions; inclusive growth and rural development; and stabilization and resilience. Between 2020 and 2023, total programme expenditure amounted to approximately US\$ 200 million, with approximately 70 percent of expenditure driven by programmatic engagement in large programmes in the areas of local development (PDL-145), the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), stabilization, and support to the justice sector.

## Findings and conclusions

UNDP is recognized as an important partner of the DRC authorities, due to the relevance of its support to national priorities, its field presence, and the continuity of its support through the protracted and multi-faceted crises facing the country. This has, over time, earned UNDP strong positioning as a trusted and credible development partner, recognized for its convening role and operational and technical capabilities. The UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2019 -2023 for DRC builds on longstanding support to the country's transition to peace, stability and prosperity, and to the evolving context such as the transition of MONUSCO. The priority areas of the programme are of particular importance to support the country's capacity to manage its development trajectory and build ownership, placing institutions and locally driven development at the heart of its interventions. In this regard, the programme has demonstrated important contributions and successes.

UNDP played a key role in supporting national authorities in the design, and later execution, of the local development programme PDL-145. Financed through government cost-sharing, the size and unprecedented nature of the programme has made it a significant undertaking, through which UNDP facilitated the delivery of more than 700 health, school and administrative infrastructures in 54 rural territories covering nine provinces of the country. UNDP has played an important role in strengthening capacity at the institutional, organizational and individual levels in the areas of rule of law, development planning, decentralisation, and for the sustainable management of natural resources. UNDP has played an important facilitation, fiduciary and management role in the Stabilization Coherence Fund as part of the hybrid stabilization unit together with MONUSCO. Notably, the management of the monitoring and evaluation function of SCF has demonstrated added value, improving data availability and reporting capacity, while leveraging existing national capacity for its implementation. While revisions in the national response to stabilization and disaster risk reduction have slowed the governance and operation of the Fund, UNDP was able to adapt to circumstances and support efforts to consolidate the Government's renewed strategy.

Numerous longstanding operational challenges have affected many UNDP interventions at downstream level, including the efficiency and quality of its contribution and partner engagement. While the evaluation recognizes the inherent operational challenges that development and humanitarian interventions face in DRC, it also found scope for UNDP to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency and the sustainability of its interventions. UNDP programme interventions have remained highly fragmented both in design and local execution. The absence of linkages between UNDP interventions, and in some cases with other partners, has limited the potential reach and depth of interventions. Overall, the implementation of the country programme is marked by a highly projectized structure that has not enabled to catalyse opportunities for synergy within and across thematic programme areas. Over time, this arrangement has been exacerbated by the decreasing delegation of authority to an expanding field presence, creating gaps in stakeholder engagement and the ability of UNDP to meet expectations at provincial level. While all stakeholders recognized the strong convening role of UNDP, enabling it to advance upstream support and policy reforms, if unaddressed, recurrent operational challenges could cause important reputational risks.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** Engage national authorities in participatory assessments of key sectorial policies guiding UNDP institutional capacity development efforts to strengthen advocacy, stimulate policy and institutional changes, where necessary, while reinforcing national ownership.

**Recommendation 2.** Anchor UNDP downstream interventions into area-based approaches with a view to strengthen synergy and maximize the UNDP contribution, prioritizing provinces subject to MONUSCO withdrawal.

**Recommendation 3.** Capitalize on the initial success of the change monitoring system developed under the Stabilization Coherence Fund and expand its use to relevant areas of the next country programme and to national policies.

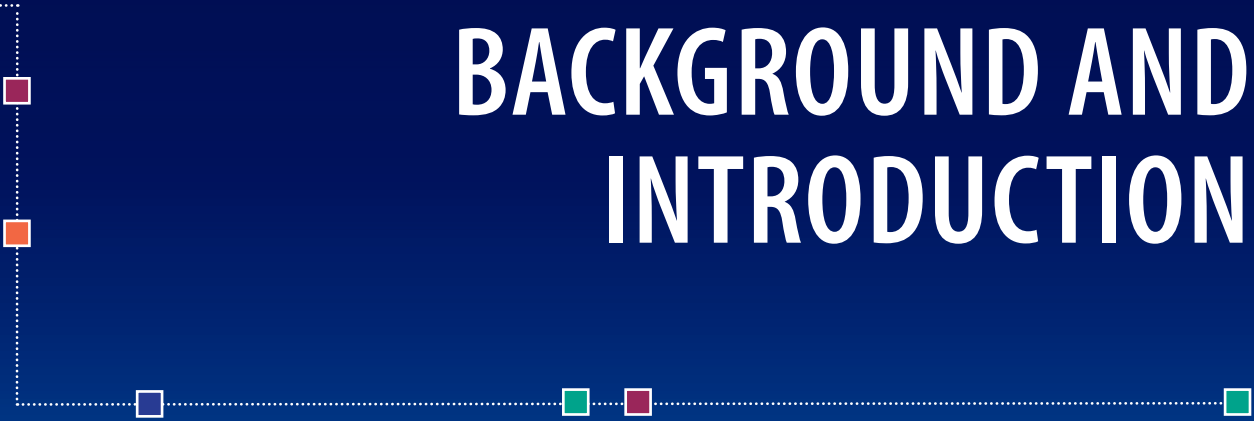
**Recommendation 4.** Strengthen gender-responsiveness and the leave no one behind principle in interventions, to reflect differentiated approaches that respond to the vulnerabilities of target groups.

**Recommendation 5.** Strengthen the linkage between programmatic partnerships and operational capacity-building efforts, with a view to proactively enabling gradual and performance-based shifts toward national implementation modalities, where possible.

**Recommendation 6.** Strengthen the alignment of operational, managerial and programmatic capabilities with UNDP geographical presence, with a view to strengthening local representation and fostering a more integrated working environment within and across portfolios.

# CHAPTER 1

# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION



This chapter presents the aims, objectives and scope of the evaluation and the methodology used. It also sets out the development context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the UNDP country programme.

## 1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

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

This ICPE was conducted in 2023, and covers the UNDP programme in DRC for the period 2020-2024, with a view to contribute to the preparation of the new UNDP programme, which will start in 2025. It assessed the three outcome areas described in the country programme document (CPD) for this period.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the Terms of Reference (Annex 1), the ICPE includes all UNDP activities in the country regardless of their source of funding, and therefore includes those funded by UNDP regular resources, bilateral donors and the Government. The ICPE also covers all projects and activities from the previous programming cycle that have continued or ended in the current cycle (see Annex 2 for the list of projects).

The ICPE was guided by four main evaluation questions (Box 1). The evaluation matrix (see annex) which guided the evaluation process was structured around the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria for the design of the questions, sub-questions, indicators and data sources.<sup>3</sup> This matrix was used to organize the available evidence by evaluation question, to assign a performance score to the country office for each indicator in the matrix, and to help the evaluation team draw well-supported conclusions and recommendations.

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

---

### BOX 1. Evaluation questions

1. What 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 performance and the sustainability of results?
- 

<sup>1</sup> DP/2019/29.

<sup>2</sup> DP/DCP/COD/3.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://web-archiv.e.oecd.org/2020-09-04/540455-revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>

## 1.2 Evaluation methodology

The ICPE was conducted according to the approved IEO process, and the methodology adhered to the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.<sup>4</sup> The evaluation team collected, analysed and triangulated qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources to ensure the validity of its findings, conclusions and recommendations.

A review was conducted of UNDP strategic and programme documents, project and monitoring reports, evaluations, research papers and other country-related publications (see Annex 5 for a list of the key documents consulted). An analysis of UNDP programme portfolio was carried out, and extended to the previous programme cycle 2014-2020 to understand the evolution of implemented projects and UNDP strategic direction.<sup>5</sup>

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders as part of a data collection mission to DRC in August 2023. Interviews were used to collect data and assess stakeholder perceptions of the reach and effectiveness of programme interventions; determine factors affecting performance; and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the UNDP programme. Overall, a total of 362 individuals involved in UNDP programmes were consulted in this evaluation, including government representatives, United Nations personnel, civil society organizations (CSOs), development partners, and final beneficiaries. Women accounted for about one-third of stakeholders met across all groups. The full list of interviewees is available in Annex 4.

Field visits were conducted in five of the 26 provinces where UNDP implemented its programmes (Kongo Central, Kasai Central, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika). This enabled interviews with the local authorities of these regions, but also *in situ* observations, and engagement with the final beneficiaries of interventions at community level. These provinces were selected taking into account the concentration of UNDP interventions and the representation of its different portfolios of interventions.

The draft ICPE report underwent quality assurance procedures, including an external peer review and an internal review by the IEO evaluators. The report was then submitted to the country office and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa to identify factual errors, and finally shared with the Government and other national partners.

## 1.3 Evaluation limitations

The ICPE faced several constraints worth noting. The first relates to the unique geography and accessibility challenges prevailing in all regions of DRC. Travel between and within provinces is subject to uncertainties which sometimes limited the ability of the evaluation team to reach project sites and facilitate community-level interactions. In this regard, the evaluation team depended on the availability of flights and faced several cancellations which did not always allow for access to more remote programme areas.

Secondly, three areas where UNDP has supported interventions on stabilization and access to energy could not be selected due to the prevailing security situation, notably in Ituri and North Kivu. In the latter, the evaluation was limited to the Capital city of Goma and field visits were not possible. The State of Emergency also limited the availability of some stakeholders to engage in the evaluation.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/documents/ADR/communication/ICPE%20English%20Brochure.pdf> and <https://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914>

<sup>5</sup> DP/DCP/COD/2.



Thirdly, the data collection mission had to adapt to several activities related to the electoral context and other ongoing UNDP activities, which in some cases limited the logistical capacity of the evaluation team. While contingent on the level of representation and participation of women in UNDP programmes, the evaluation team actively sought to achieve gender parity in the stakeholder interviews conducted for this ICPE, but was only able to achieve one-third of all evaluation interviews with women.

## 1.4 Country context

DRC is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa, and its fourth most populated, with a population of 107 million in 2021, 60 percent of whom were under the age of 20. It has a modest coastline of 37 kilometres (km) on the Atlantic Ocean, but shares 10,744 km of borders with eight neighbouring countries.<sup>6</sup> With approximately 152 million hectares (ha.) of natural forests, DRC is in the second largest tropical forest region in the world and hosts about 62 percent of the tropical forests of the African continent, one of the countries with richest biodiversity. With vast tracts of arable land, the country contains an impressive river system, including about 60 percent of the Congo Basin, and has one of the highest volumes of fresh water in Africa.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the country has abundant and unparalleled mineral resources, and is home to, among other minerals, the second largest reserves of copper and about half of the world's cobalt reserves,<sup>8</sup> two essential minerals widely used in clean energy technologies and expected to support ongoing global energy transitions.<sup>9</sup>

Despite its immense assets and potential, most people in DRC have not benefited from the related wealth. The development trajectory of the country has been shaken by political and security crises since 1996, alongside the legacy since independence of weak administrative capacity and State presence over its vast territory. Ranked 175<sup>th</sup> of 189 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index, DRC is categorized as a low human development country, characterized by widespread poverty (74.7 percent of the population are estimated to live on less than \$1.9 per day), notably in its rural areas. According to World Bank data, DRC has the third largest population of poor people in the world,<sup>10</sup> and 26.4 million people in the country are estimated to be food insecure, equivalent to one in four Congolese people.<sup>11</sup> There are significant inequalities in access to electricity from the grid (2 percent of households in rural areas versus 47 percent in urban areas) and clean energy for cooking (1 percent in rural areas versus 12 percent in urban areas).<sup>12</sup>

DRC has experienced prolonged periods of insecurity and conflicts of varied intensity, due to the presence of local and foreign armed groups in its Eastern regions. The country has hosted various peacekeeping operation mandates to support stabilization since its independence, but armed conflict has continued. Various reports estimate that there are more than 100 active armed groups in the country, and the east of the country in particular has faced protracted conflict for several decades. Between 2016 and 2019, the centre of the country also experienced eruptions of political-ethnic violence linked to the *Kamuina Nsapu* crisis. These events perpetrated by armed groups and members of the security forces lead to the deaths of several thousand citizens and, at its peak, the displacement of an estimated 1.4 million people, giving rise to an acute

<sup>6</sup> Angola, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

<sup>7</sup> World Bank (2021) Climate Risk Profile DRC.

<sup>8</sup> Amnesty International (2023) DRC: Powering Change or Business as Usual, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR62/7009/2023/en/>

<sup>9</sup> The country's mineral deposits include more than 50 identified ores, a dozen of which are exploited: copper, cobalt, silver, uranium, lead, zinc, cadmium, diamond, gold, tin, tungsten, manganese and some rare metals such as coltan.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank Group (2022) Country partnership framework for DRC for the period 2022-26.

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://www.unocha.org/democratic-republic-congo>

<sup>12</sup> International Energy Agency (2022) World Energy Balances <https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics/data-product/world-energy-statistics-and-balances>



humanitarian crisis.<sup>13</sup> In North Kivu, the resurgence of the armed group M23, after being dormant for almost a decade, sparked a significant humanitarian crisis and population displacement. In addition, DRC has recently seen increasing community-level conflicts in western regions, illustrating the fragile security in the country.

As a result, DRC has the highest population of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Africa, with an estimated 6.4 million IDPs and close to 3 million returnees, predominantly due to insecurity and armed conflict. At the time of the evaluation, around 87 percent of IDPs were in the eastern regions of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu.<sup>14</sup> It is estimated that, in 2023 alone, the population of IDPs and returnees increased by an additional 2.8 and 1.75 people respectively.<sup>15</sup> DRC ranks 182nd of 189 countries in the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative country index, highlighting the great urgency for action and need for investment and innovation.<sup>16</sup>

DRC is vulnerable to climate change events such as drought and rainfall variability, resulting in floods, soil erosion and agricultural losses.<sup>17</sup> This fragility profile has been exacerbated by various (and sometimes recurrent) health crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and recurrent epidemics of cholera, measles and Ebola.<sup>18</sup> These further affect the socioeconomic fabric and aggravate human insecurity, while also diverting the attention and resources of the State and partners from strategic and development issues.

Women have been particularly impacted in this environment. Conflict-related sexual violence is a significant issue, and sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war in the region. For example, in 2022 there were 1,053 reported cases of sexual violence in North Kivu, of which 700 were attributed to non-state armed groups.<sup>19</sup> Under 17 percent of girls complete secondary school, half as many as boys, and early marriage of girls and teenage pregnancy are widespread. The fertility rate rises from an average 2.9 children for educated women, to 7.2 children for those without education. Half of all women in DRC report having experienced physical violence and one in three have experienced sexual violence, occurring in large part on the margins of conflict, but also from intimate partners and within the family. Economically, women have a high labour force participation rate, estimated at nearly 62 percent, but earn much less than men and have fewer productive assets. Education, access to resources, risk and vulnerability to shocks, including exposure to sexual and gender-based violence, explain gender gaps in wellbeing.

In 2021, DRC ranked 49<sup>th</sup> of 54 African countries on the Mo Ibrahim Index on Governance. The persistence of armed conflict, particularly in the east of the country, alongside the complexity, recurrence and duration of political and security crises, disrupt any progress achieved, particularly in terms of access to justice, the promotion of the rule of law and the restoration of State authority. Corruption is also a concern, and in 2021 the country ranked 169<sup>th</sup> of 180 countries on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. In 2018, after three years of political crisis due to the postponement of elections, DRC experienced its first political transition after 18 years of presidential rule. In December 2023, the country held presidential, legislative, and its first municipal elections.

<sup>13</sup> Mercy corps (2019), Kasai conflict assessment, Current Dynamics & Potential Interventions; Human rights council (2019) Report of the team of international experts on the situation in Kasai.

<sup>14</sup> S/2023/932; MONUSCO (2023) Report of the Secretary-General.

<sup>15</sup> UNOCHA (2023) DRC: Personnes déplacées internes et retournées.

<sup>16</sup> University of Notre Dame (2023) Country Index, DRC. <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/>

<sup>17</sup> African Development Bank (2022) Democratic Republic of Congo Economic Outlook.

<sup>18</sup> In addition to direct morbidity, which has been contained as on the rest of the continent (91,738 cases of contamination and 1,376 deaths as of July 22, 2022 for the whole country), COVID-19 had a negative impact due to its dissuasive effects on use of the health system, resulting in decreased hospital and prenatal consultations, and reduced use of family planning and contraception, in particular. Nearly 23 million children did not receive scheduled vaccinations in 2020, the highest number in over a decade, according to data compiled by the World Bank. The largest cholera outbreak in the country in 15 years affected 22 out of 26 provinces and caused 905 deaths from, 44,282 cases detected. At the end of 2019, an Ebola epidemic, mainly confined to the provinces of Ituri and North Kivu caused 2,185 deaths from detected 3,157 cases.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations: Sexual Violence in Conflict. DRC.

The economic performance of DRC has progressed over the period 2010-2021, with an average annual growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) of 5.9 percent, despite a contraction of economic activity during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>20</sup> The current momentum of strong and sustained growth in the country has not yet succeeded in creating enough quality jobs to absorb the thousands of young men and women who enter the labour market each year. The unemployment rate is estimated at 15.5 percent, and disproportionately affects young people (15-24 years old). Limited private sector development and competitiveness remain a challenge, as reflected by the 2020 World Bank Ease of Doing Business Index, which ranked DRC 183<sup>rd</sup> of 190 countries and territories.<sup>21</sup> Despite a fast-growing service sector, economic growth has been largely driven by industry, notably mining (45.3 percent) followed by services (33.2 percent), while agriculture and manufacturing accounted for only 19 percent and 18 percent, respectively, as a share of its GDP in 2021.<sup>22</sup>

## 1.5 The UNDP programme under review

The United Nations system has had an important and long presence in the DRC since the country's independence.<sup>23</sup> Following unrest in eastern regions of the country in 1998, and the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 1999, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Organization Mission in DRC (MONUC) to observe the ceasefire and disengagement of forces and maintain engagement with all parties to the Ceasefire Agreement.<sup>24</sup> The peacekeeping mandate was renewed until 2010, when it was updated to establish the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in DRC (MONUSCO), to reflect the evolving needs for peacebuilding, stabilization and the consolidation of State authority, and the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders.<sup>25</sup> As of February 2023, MONUSCO had a total 17,753 personnel, including 16,316 uniformed personnel, making it the third largest active peacekeeping operation in the world.<sup>26</sup> The United Nations country team in DRC is composed of 21 resident agencies and, as of November 2023, there were an estimated 291 development and humanitarian actors operating in DRC, 73 percent of which were local non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>27</sup>

In 2018, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2409, which for the first time called on the Secretary General to develop a phased, progressive and comprehensive exit strategy for MONUSCO. In 2021, the Security Council approved a transition plan articulating a phased drawdown of MONUSCO against measurable performance benchmarks.<sup>28</sup> However, sustained and renewed conflicts in eastern regions of the country have strengthened public discontent, and prompted national authorities to request an acceleration of the mission drawdown and a reduced number of performance benchmarks.<sup>29</sup> In December 2023, at the

<sup>20</sup> World Bank World Development Indicators, 'GDP growth (annual %)-DRC'.

<sup>21</sup> World Bank World Development Indicators, 'Historical data – Doing Business – with scores'.

<sup>22</sup> World Bank World Development Indicators, 'Services, value added (% of GDP)'; 'Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP)'; 'Manufacturing, value added (% of GDP)'; and 'Industry (including construction), value added (% of GDP)'.

<sup>23</sup> DRC became a member of the United Nations in 1960. Between 1960-1964 the country hosted one of the first United Nations peacekeeping operations with significant military capabilities, the United Nations Operation in the Congo, to help the Congolese Government restore and maintain the political independence and territorial integrity of Congo, maintain law and order throughout the country, and put into effect a programme of training and technical assistance. The partnership between UNDP and DRC officially started in 1976 with the signature of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, as the legal basis for the relationship.

<sup>24</sup> Security Council resolution 1279, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1279>.

<sup>25</sup> Security Council resolution 1925, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1925>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/monusco>

<sup>27</sup> UNOCHA (2023), Operational presence 3W, November 2023.

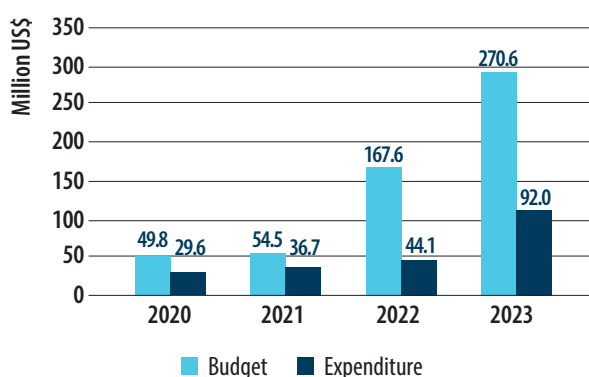
<sup>28</sup> S/2021/807.

<sup>29</sup> Notably, continued armed conflicts in Ituri and the intensification of conflict in North Kivu led by the armed groups CODECO, ADF-Nalu, and the reemergence of the M23 group after almost ten years of inactivity and their occupation of large areas of North Kivu in 2020. The Congolese Government expressed its intention to retain only four of the 18 benchmarks contained in the transition plan, namely the protection of civilians; implementation of P-DDRCS; security sector reform; and the electoral process, and to transfer the remaining benchmarks to the United Nations country team for implementation.

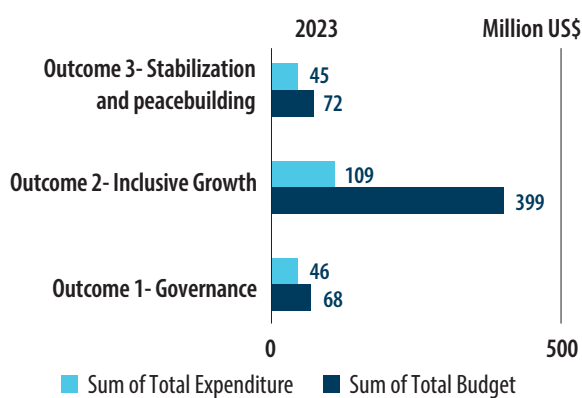
request of the Government of DRC, the United Nations Security Council adopted an immediate phased plan for the withdrawal of MONUSCO presence in South Kivu and for an overall reduction in its military, police and civilian personnel to continue in 2024.<sup>30</sup>

Since the wave of conflict started in 1994, UNDP key priority areas in DRC have been to support the reconstruction process, including policy and legislative formulation, to strengthen government institutions and the electoral system, fight poverty, and promote economic development by leading and managing aid coordination. In addition, UNDP has played a significant role as an implementing agent, to channel funding through pooled fund mechanisms such as the DRC Humanitarian pooled fund, the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and successive basket funds for electoral support and other thematic areas.<sup>31</sup>

**FIGURE 1. UNDP budget and expenditure by year (2020-23)**



**FIGURE 2. Budget and Expenditure by Outcome (2020–2023)**



Since elections in 2018, DRC embarked on a comprehensive development journey, with the adoption of its first national development plan, the 2019-2023 National Development Strategic Plan (PNSD).<sup>32</sup> This strategic framework builds upon lessons learned from previous iterations, lays the groundwork to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aligns with the African Union Agenda 2063. The plan attributes widespread poverty and other challenges to DRC development to non-inclusive economic growth, particularly in extractive sectors like mining and oil, and to macroeconomic and sectoral governance issues that lead to imbalanced public expenditure that favours consumption over productive investments. At the time of its publication, overall financing for the PNSD was estimated at CDF 81.3 trillion (\$47.55 billion), with an estimated funding gap of \$25.71 billion (54 percent).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2024 was developed in alignment with the strategic priorities of the PNSD, with an estimated total of \$4.9 billion needed for its implementation, equivalent to approximately 10 percent of the total estimated development financing identified in the PNSD. According to the UNSDCF results framework, UNDP is expected to contribute to all of the identified outcomes of UNSDCF.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Security Council resolution S/RES/2717.

<sup>31</sup> UNDP IEO (2012) Assessment of Development Results in the DRC.

<sup>32</sup> DRC (2019) National Strategic Development Plan, 2019-2023.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework – DRC, Annex 7.

UNDP country programme operated with a budget of approximately \$539 million between 2020 and 2023, with total expenditure amounting to approximately \$200 million, across three outcomes:

- **Outcome 1: Strengthen governance and peacebuilding** (findings 1-5), represented about 13 percent of the programme budget and 23 percent of total programme expenditure between 2020 and 2023. Support under this outcome builds on the longstanding UNDP role in advancing governance and peacebuilding objectives in the country. In line with the PNSD 2019-2023, UNDP specifically aimed to contribute to the Justice Sector Reform Strategy 2015-2025, MONUSCO Transition Plan, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2022-2026, decentralization and development planning processes at national and local levels. In addition, building on its past record in the country, UNDP aimed to support the country's electoral processes scheduled to take place in 2023.
- **Outcome 2: Sustainable diversification and transformation of the economy** (findings 6-12), represented close to 75 percent of the programme budget and is the highest area of programme expenditure, with about 54 percent between 2020 and 2023. Outcome 2 aligns to national strategies including the National REDD+ Strategy, the Presidential Program for Accelerating the Fight against Poverty and Inequality, and the Financial Inclusion Roadmap. UNDP was selected as one of the execution agents for a DRC Government flagship programme, the "Programme de Développement Local 145 Territoires" (PDL-145). Launched in 2022 with a budget of \$337 million financed by the DRC Government, it accounted for 31 percent of total recorded country programme expenditure between 2020-2023, and about 60 percent of programme expenditure under this outcome. The nationwide programme aims to build and rehabilitate basic infrastructure (schools, health centres, administrative buildings) in the 145 territories of DRC. Due to its scale, PDL-145 contributes to all the effects of the country programme, through its emphasis on access to basic social services.
- **Outcome 3: Access to basic social services and humanitarian assistance** (findings 13-15), represented about 8 percent of total programme budget and 26 percent of total programme expenditure between 2020 and 2023. Support under this outcome built on the UNDP role as an administrative and managing agent of the Stabilization Coherence Fund (SCF). The SCF is a pooled fund hosted by the MPTF to support stabilization efforts in DRC in line with the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS)<sup>35</sup>. Beyond its management agent role, UNDP has provided important contributions to the political and technical management of the Fund through its role in the Stabilization Support Unit (SSU), a hybrid unit set up with MONUSCO which has formed the political, technical, and operational secretariat of the Fund. Under this outcome, UNDP also aimed to pursue its contribution to the National Gender-Based Violence Strategy, expanding its past support in the area of service delivery to victims of gender-based violence, and to contribute to climate resilience-building capacity for disaster risk response and preparedness.

Programmatic expenditure has been dominated by engagement in selected thematic areas, notably the PDL-145, local development and, the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) programme, stabilization, and support to the justice sector, which together represented 69 percent of expenditure between 2020 and 2023.

UNDP presence in DRC has been significant and among the largest in the region. As of September 2023, the country office was composed of 426 personnel across all categories, the largest UNDP country office staff in the region and representing approximately 9 percent of the total workforce of the Regional Bureau for Africa.<sup>34</sup> UNDP programmes have historically been focused in the capital and eastern regions of the country

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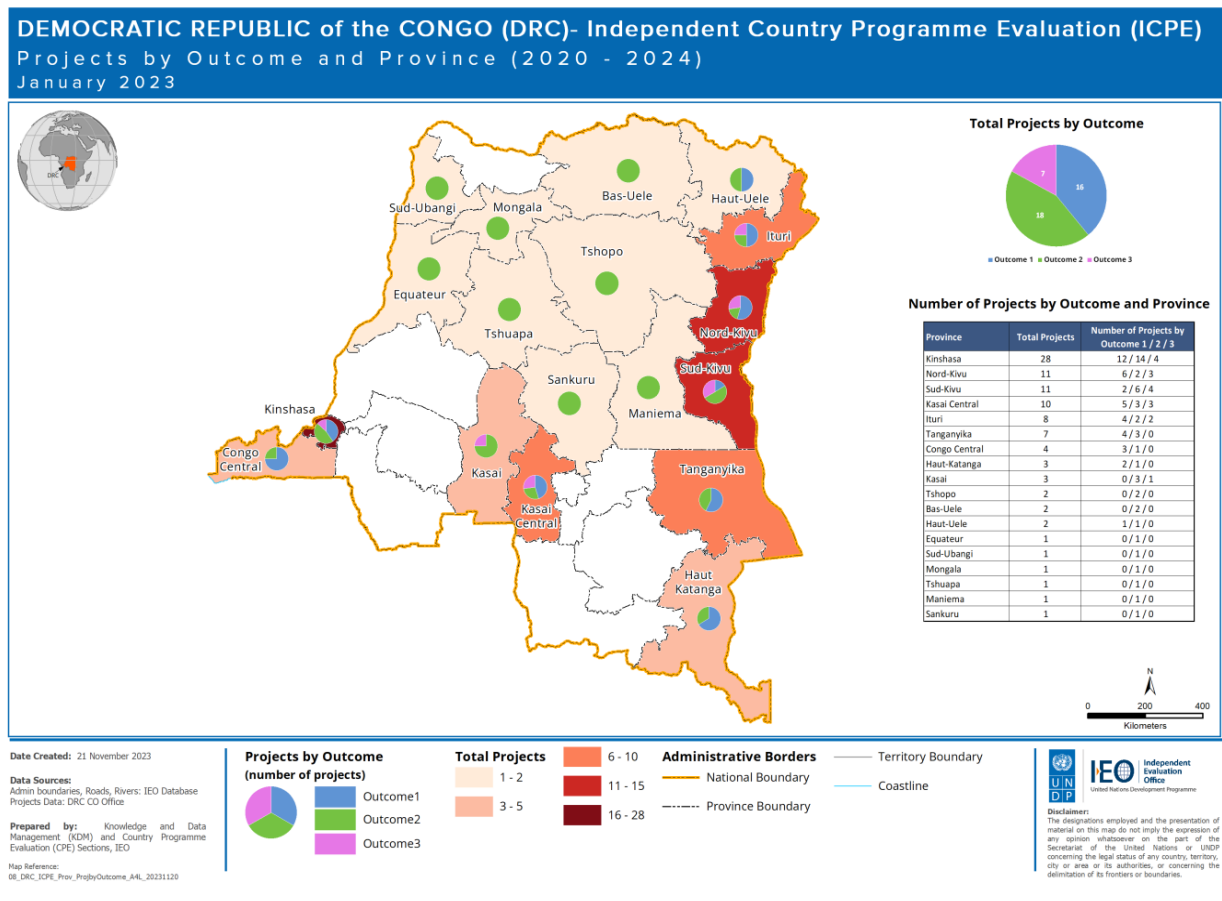
<sup>34</sup> Data extracted from UNDP corporate dashboard, January 2024.

(North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri), but have expanded over time to respond to emerging demands, notably the Kasai Crisis (Kasai, Kasai Central), the MONUSCO withdrawal (Tanganyika), implementation of REDD+ programmes (Tshopo, Bas Uele, Haut Uele, Ituri), and implementation of PDL-145 (Equateur, Maniema, Sud Ubangu, Sankuru, Tshuapa). In 2023, the country office counted 15 areas of field presence outside of the capital and had a programmatic footprint in 18 of the 26 provinces of DRC.

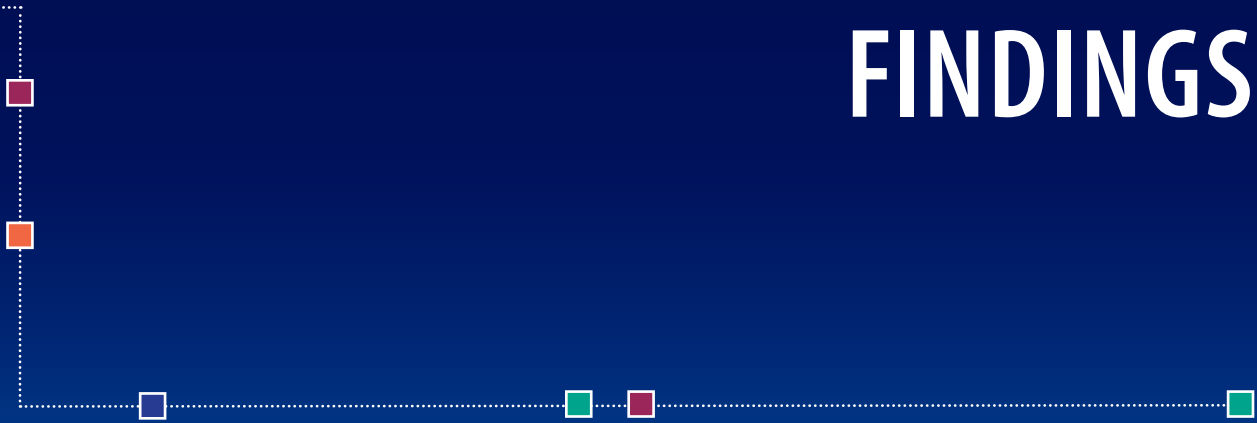
**FIGURE 3. Thematic engagement by programmatic expenditure (2020-23)**



**FIGURE 4. UNDP projects by outcome and province (2020-24)**



# CHAPTER 2 FINDINGS



## 2.1 Governance and effective institutions

**Outcome 1:** Peace Consolidation, Human Rights, Civil Protection, Social Cohesion and Democracy

**Output 1.1:** Constitution-making, electoral and parliamentary processes and institutions strengthened to promote inclusion, transparency and accountability especially for women and youth.

**Output 1.2:** Institutions and systems enabled to address awareness, prevention and enforcement of anti-corruption measures to promote citizens' participation, inclusion, accountability and the well-being of populations, notably women and youth.

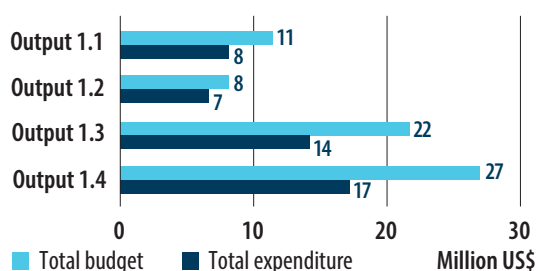
**Output 1.3:** Capacities, functions and financing of rule of law and national human rights institutions and systems strengthened to expand access to justice and security, with a focus on women and other marginalized groups.

**Output 1.4:** Planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation chain at national, provincial and local levels, including, the INS, have strengthened capacities for SDG delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

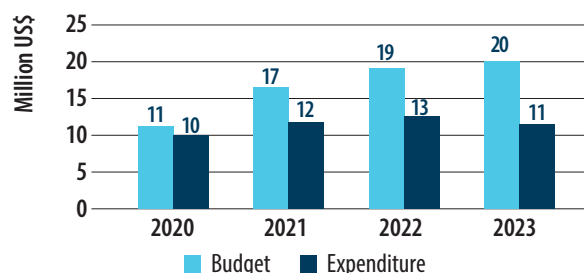
The first outcome of the country programme consisted of five outputs aimed at strengthening capacity for rural livelihood development and promoting youth and women's entrepreneurship, while facilitating an enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable growth, namely through improved access to finance and energy, natural resource management and climate change adaptation. A total of 26 projects and initiation plans were implemented under this outcome, with a budget of \$69.4 million and expenditure of \$44.1 million.

This outcome contributes to the achievement of goals outlined in relevant policy frameworks and strategies, notably PNSD 2019-2024, the Justice Sector Reform Strategy 2015-2025, and the MONUSCO Transition Plan. Programme expenditure under this outcome was led by: UNDP support to the justice sector (output 1.3) through the United Nations joint justice programme implemented with MONUSCO, United Nations Joint Human Rights Office and a team of experts; and UNDP support for decentralization (Output 1.4). Together these two areas of work accounted for 58 percent of programme expenditure for this outcome. Other components of the governance portfolio are also significant, such as anti-corruption (12 percent) and strategic planning (12 percent). Support for security sector reform and constitution-building (Output 1.1) attracted less programmatic expenditure during the period covered by the evaluation, each with 6 percent.

**FIGURE 5.** Outcome 1 budget and expenditure by CPD output (2020-2023)

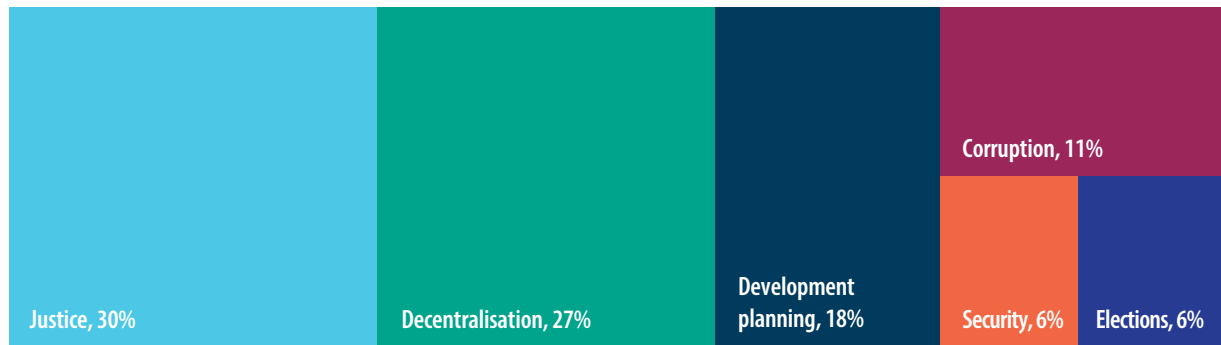


**FIGURE 6.** Outcome 1 budget and expenditure by year (2020-23)





**FIGURE 7. Outcome 1 expenditure by thematic area (2020-23)**



**Finding 1: UNDP has continued its longstanding support to advancing judiciary reforms and the prosecution of conflict-related international crimes and sexual violence.** The significant structural challenges faced by the sector have led to resources being targeted towards supporting recurrent operational capacity needs (infrastructural and financial) rather than structural reforms, which limits the potential scale, reach and sustainability of the programme.

UNDP has provided consistent support to the justice sector in both civilian and military jurisdictions, through various projects and partnerships of this and previous country programmes, to support access to justice with a view to strengthening the authority of the State in conflict and post-conflict areas and tackle the impunity of sexual violence and international crime. Evaluations have credited past UNDP interventions and partnerships for improving legal protection, the prosecution of international crimes by military jurisdictions, oversight, and the supply and demand for access to justice, notably in cases of sexual violence.<sup>35</sup> Notably, UNDP played an instrumental role in the development of the country's first national justice sector reform policy and strategy document in 2017.<sup>36</sup>

During this programme, UNDP support to the justice sector was consolidated under the Joint Justice Sector Reform Programme 2020-2024, implemented with MONUSCO and the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNHRO). This flagship programme, a component of the phase-out of MONUSCO, channels support for justice sector reform from the two agencies to support a progressive transfer of expertise, competencies and activities to central and decentralized authorities, to meet (national and provincial) transition strategy benchmarks.<sup>37</sup> It also integrates technical assistance from a United Nations team of experts on the rule of law and sexual violence in conflict, delivered under distinct projects. The project sought to intervene at central level to: (i) support the management and coordination of the justice sector reform action plan; (ii) strengthen the accountability of actors across the judicial chain; and (iii) improve the quality of and demand for justice services, with an emphasis on international crimes and sexual violence in the conflict context.

The joint programme has launched several important initiatives to strengthen management and oversight of the justice system at the central level, including the deployment of digital systems to improve national and local management and monitoring of various processes in the penal chain. The Ministry of Justice and the High Judicial Council were provided with five digital solutions for improved management and monitoring of magistrates, and prison management systems piloted in civilian and military jurisdictions to improve the

<sup>35</sup> DCAF (2021) Evaluation finale conjointe des programmes d'appui à la Justice en République Démocratique du Congo mis en oeuvre par le UNDP entre 2015 et 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Previously, Justice sector support was anchored in the DRC Poverty Reduction Strategy as well as some sectoral policy documents such as the National Strategy for the Fight against Sexual and Gender-based Violence.

<sup>37</sup> Project document for the justice sector reform joint programme for DRC 2020-2024.



production of statistics and management of the prison population. An interconnected judicial activities information and management system was also piloted in four civilian and military prosecutor offices, to help secure the traceability of judicial proceedings across the chain. While ongoing, these initiatives are helping to structure judiciary operations and address relevant challenges faced by the sector, though with varying degrees of adoption so far. Interviews with judicial actors who had been supported with digitization interventions under preceding programmes, demonstrated limited sustainability beyond the lifespan of computer equipment delivered by the projects.

The evaluation field visits and interviews in all provinces highlighted the continuous challenges faced by the judicial system in terms of poor working conditions and inadequate infrastructure. This is a recurrent problem in facilitating access to justice, with high turnover of magistrates in difficult and remote localities due to the poor working environment and sometimes lack of access to basic needs. This was recognized in the MONUSCO transition plan as an indicator of its benchmark for the effective and functional presence of State institutions.<sup>38</sup> The joint programme supported the construction and rehabilitation of eight judicial infrastructures, including the constitutional court, a courthouse, five peace courts and the rehabilitation of military courts. This support was greatly appreciated by justice stakeholder respondents and has become a priority in the strategy to ensure the functioning of the judicial chain, notably within the MONUSCO transition.

The joint programme also delivered training to strengthen the capacity of criminal justice actors in the investigation and prosecution of gender-based violence issues and of prosecutors, court personnel and clerks in file management. The evaluation noted that the capacity-building approach was fragmented, raising questions of sustainability and coherence. data available did not enable to establish the sustainability of trainings delivered. The country has a framework for ensuring the coherence and monitoring of all capacity-building companies, and has established the National Institute for Judicial Training and the Police Academy, but capacity-building activities are yet to be fully anchored in their work and feed into their formal curricula.<sup>39</sup>

Capacity-building activities are complemented with operational support for prosecutions and investigations of international crimes, and through mobile courts in penitentiaries to reduce the backlog of pre-trial detentions. Support was given to judicial authorities, such as courts of appeals, the High Court, peace courts, and police units in targeted provinces, in terms of basic office equipment, documentation resources and, in some cases, energy access to be able to deliver on their mandates. This support has enabled 2,011 victims of human rights violations (including 898 women victims of gender-based violence) to access justice. Notable results include: five perpetrators convicted in the first degree; 232 victims (including 93 women) obtained justice; 447 prosecuted individuals received free legal aid (including 37 people prosecuted for crimes against humanity and war crimes, murder, rape and pillaging in Kasai Central).<sup>40</sup> Support to mobile courts has enabled partnerships with bar associations who have provided judicial assistance to both victims and perpetrators.

Overall, implementation of the programme has tended to show greater attention to supporting the provision of justice than demand, which has been limited to the provision of legal representation in mobile courts. Interviews with provincial justice sector actors emphasized the persistence of structural challenges that continue to hinder the efficient and effective delivery of quality justice services. For instance, several confirmed that the records of many auxiliary personnel responsible for the administration of courts were not registered, and thus they did not receive salaries. Similarly, they repeatedly emphasized the absence of

<sup>38</sup> S/2021/807, Benchmark 11.

<sup>39</sup> Under the umbrella of the Ministry of Planning, the National Service for Capacity Building was established as a one-stop shop for capacity-building in DRC: the programme helped it to develop a strategic plan that has yet to be implemented.

<sup>40</sup> Based on the programme and office progress reports.

an operating budget for routine activities supported by the programme as a driving factor for the effective prosecution of cases, the operation of mobile courts, and inspection visits within jurisdictions. While this support was considered important, it was found to be too limited in duration and scope.

The scope and reach of programme interventions were limited by demands and levels of available funding, but the noted focus on supporting the provision of justice was somewhat balanced by demand side support through the joint gender-based violence programme (see finding 18).<sup>41</sup> However, lack of available funding limited support for other objectives of the joint programme,<sup>42</sup> and little progress was noted in the development of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism or strengthening cooperation with judicial actors.<sup>43</sup> This aspect of the programme, in line with priorities set in the justice sector reform plan, is of significant importance to enhancing the coverage of State authority, given the accessibility and funding challenges faced by judicial actors.<sup>44</sup>

The evaluation did not find clear evidence of links between the joint programme and the transition it intends to support. Despite its relevance to the context, programme implementation has not changed approach from previous justice sector programming implemented by UNDP to reflect the urgency of the MONUSCO transition, despite being positioned as a pilot and flagship programme to support this transition. While the programme was coherent with the transition, extending support to provinces where MONUSCO already exited (Kasai and Tanganyika), infrastructure support provided in the capital (such as the construction of a building for the constitutional court or work on prisons in the capital) calls into question the extent to which the programme is a significant component of the transition. In addition, several interviewees questioned the extent of joint implementation, pointing to a lack of harmonization of MONUSCO and UNDP operations, notably in the area of infrastructure building, where programme modalities between the two entities have not allowed for pooled resources and activities appeared to be implemented separately. While it has been noted that participating agencies engaged bilaterally, the first steering coordination meeting between all actors only took place in 2023.

**Finding 2: UNDP has continued to support planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation (PPBSE) processes in DRC and support the mainstreaming of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in planning and reporting frameworks and aid coordination and management.** Though relevant, UNDP support has been dispersed across various initiatives reflecting a fragmented planning architecture, posing challenges considering limited resources.

UNDP has continued its support to PPBSE through strengthening institutional frameworks and capacity development. In the previous cycle, UNDP provided technical and financial assistance and enabled DRC to lay the foundations for the development of the first PNSD. During the cycle under review, UNDP continued this support to strengthen development coordination and the management capacity of central, provincial and municipal authorities to implement PNSD 2019-2023, mainstream the SDGs and international commitments, and coordinate aid.

<sup>41</sup> Initiated with a planned budget of \$15.6 million, the programme was launched with 30 percent of resources. UNDP was able to mobilize resources from the Government of Sweden through a programme framework agreement, but an overall gap of 70 percent of total estimated funding requirement at the time of design was yet to be mobilized at the time of the evaluation.

<sup>42</sup> At the time of the evaluation, programme interventions appeared to have been limited to the production of two studies on the functioning of ADR to support advocacy in Kasai and Ituri provinces, though programme staff in different provinces indicated that activities were planned for 2024.

<sup>43</sup> The project document for the programme placed emphasis on ADR with a view to: (i) generate learning on the way they operate and improve their coordination; (ii) strengthen their capacity in dispute resolution and consideration for human rights; and (iii) strengthen cooperation between judicial and ADR actors in targeted areas.

<sup>44</sup> In addition, popular preference for those mechanism has been broadly demonstrated, as mediation services through ADR are considered a trusted and efficient means of settling disputes and conflicts related to minor civil cases. As such, in the field these mechanisms are increasingly viewed as a way to ensure that justice support is people centred. At the time of the evaluation, however, the programme interventions appeared to have been limited to the production of two studies on the functioning of ADR to support advocacy in Kasai and Ituri provinces, though programme staff in different provinces indicated that activities were planned for 2024.

Following the validation and dissemination of PNSD, UNDP supported various initiatives at central government level, including the production of the Voluntary National Review report, providing information on the level of achievement of the SDG indicators and the participation of DRC in the High-Level Political Forum. The SDG Indicator Cluster Survey 2019-2020, conducted by the Congolese Observatory for Sustainable Development, provided provincial poverty profiles from monetary and multidimensional perspectives. This provided 18 provincial ministries with analysis of their area's fragility and a baseline for progress towards implementation of the SDGs, and promoted the integration of the SDGs and PNSD into the formulation of provincial development plans. At the time of this evaluation, operationalization of the PNSD was supported in partnership with United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), UN Women, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), through a joint programme of the Joint SDG Fund to develop an Integrated National Financing Framework and policy proposals to enhance private sector financing.<sup>45</sup>

Various initiatives were carried out with the Government to strengthen the management of national development and coordination of aid. UNDP supported the Ministry of Planning to adopt a national official development assistance policy and revitalize the International Assistance Management Platform (IAMP) by updating its computer system. This has made it possible to set up a dashboard to monitor the implementation of the PNSD in relation to the SDGs prioritized by the DRC and the international commitments made by the country with regard to the New Deal or the commitment to fight fragility (Global Partnership). UNDP supported the establishment and ongoing work of the country's first delivery unit within the Presidency, the Presidential Strategic Monitoring Cell (CPVS).<sup>46</sup> UNDP organized experience sharing and study visits, which were decisive in building consensus for the establishment and design of CPVS. This work also facilitated the formulation and launch of PDL-145, drawing on the experiences of UNDP in supporting such programmes in Senegal and Togo. UNDP support enabled the rapid operationalization of CPVS, bridging the gap between its creation by decree, and its inclusion in the country's national budget. In this regard, the UNDP project served as a conduit for resource mobilization to provide administrative funding for the CPVS, while also supporting interventions to anchor it in the institutional apparatus, raise awareness of its mandate, and establish an internal implementation strategy and sectoral roadmaps for the implementation and monitoring of presidential priorities by sectoral ministries.

UNDP facilitated the formulation of 11 provincial development plans, including their related implementation and budgetary tools, and aligned with national plans. This enabled methodological guides for provincial and local planning developed in 2010 to be updated,<sup>47</sup> to integrate international commitments and align with PNSD and provincial and local planning tools.<sup>48</sup> UNDP played an important role in launching and strengthening consideration for the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach in DRC. Since 2019, various studies and analyses of risks and vulnerabilities have been conducted, helping to build consensus among national and international partners around the definition of the concept and collective results around the triple nexus. Following this, UNDP supported provincial planning ministries in the development of management and monitoring tools for the localized implementation of the nexus approach, notably in Kasai and Tanganyika, where provincial-level task teams and working groups were established and functioning. Based on the available evidence, these initiatives have helped to build a shared understanding, and provincial nexus groups were functional and piloting locally driven and contextualized nexus approaches.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> These studies were technically validated and presented during a high-level national dialogue on development financing in November 2023.

<sup>46</sup> The CPVS is an advisory structure whose mandate is to ensure the continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Presidency's priority programmes within government action and to provide advisory support services to the President.

<sup>47</sup> The guide has been technically validated and at the time of the evaluation was awaiting validation by policymakers.

<sup>48</sup> Such as the SDGs, the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus and climate change.

<sup>49</sup> ALNAP (2022) The State of the Humanitarian System.

The decentralization programme piloted the Young Rapporteurs for the SDGs (JERODD) initiative, to promote the participation of young people in development action and citizen reporting. In its pilot implementation in North Kivu, university student volunteers received training and participated in a data collection exercise on development aid in North Kivu with development partners. Under the aegis of the Provincial Ministry of Planning, the data collected was fed into an online database made available by the project. The pilot initiative was being replicated in other provinces at the time of this evaluation, but, based on the pilot implementation, this did not emerge as a successful experiment in promoting the availability of aid data. Challenges included the lack of cooperation from development partners in making information available, the lack of systematic oversight by UNDP, and concerns about the validity of the data and the legitimacy of the overall initiative by actors from relevant provincial institutions. Respondents also noted communication issues, which led to disappointment among volunteers about employability prospects, an important source of motivation for their participation. Many of the volunteers interviewed expressed expectations, which they felt were communicated by the project initially, regarding internship, employment and training opportunities to facilitate their transition into the labour market. Although JERODD positively engaged young people around the SDGs, their role in collecting data on aid coordination did not seem adequate, and the facilitation of the partnership needs to be further supported in order to better meet the expectations of the participants.

Overall, the role of UNDP in strengthening capacity for aid planning and management is recognized and appreciated by partners. The PPBSE tools developed since 2008 have been updated to strengthen coherence within and between directorates and sectoral ministries. However, progress in providing a lasting solution to the challenges of structuring national development policies has been relatively limited. Indeed, the objectives and challenges that UNDP has been working on during this programme cycle are recurrent and were noted in the previous independent evaluation of the country programme conducted over ten years ago in 2011.<sup>50</sup>

Despite this, the evaluation notes that the resources available for UNDP support in the area of development planning and coordination are insufficient considering the multitude of actors and needs, and the limited progress in achieving the objectives. Support was provided until 2022 through various *ad hoc* projects. From 2022, after a complete capacity assessment of the Ministry of Planning and its directorates, a “structuring” programme was set up with a budget of \$15 million over four years, provided through the PPBSE Reinforcement project. However, at the halfway point at the end of 2023, only 20 percent of this budget had been mobilized, and had mainly relied on UNDP core resources. In this regard, although the evaluation did not perceive any tensions relating to the responsibilities of the different structures, the multitude of actors supported presents a challenge of fragmentation of the limited available resources.

**Finding 3: UNDP has been supporting planning and local governance in selected subnational entities in support of decentralization.** Although in early stages, and on a limited scale, the programme has piloted support to local investment, public procurement and revenue collection which has been successful in addressing local development needs while fostering local ownership and community participation.

During the implementation of the previous country programme, UNDP aimed to strengthen provincial capacity within Decentralized Territorial Entities (DTEs), with a focus on developmental planning, coordination, resource management and M&E, though with limited progress.<sup>51</sup> These activities were continued under this cycle and complemented with budget management capacity-strengthening and local investments in pilot DTEs in the provinces of Tanganyika, Kasai Central and Kongo Central.

<sup>50</sup> For example, the operationalization of IAMP, which continued to benefit from UNDP support during this cycle, faced the same challenges. Although support started in 2006, by 2011 it was noted that the maintenance, participation and effective use of IAMP by the authorities and development actors had not been achieved. The continuation of UNDP support to IAMP, and the views of respondents to this evaluation, suggest that this situation has not changed. The review also noted fragmentation of the planning system between different directorates in different entities (Planning and International Cooperation).

<sup>51</sup> UNDP DRC (2016), Evaluation Finale Programme Pays Cycle 2013-2017.

In order to strengthen decentralization and promote local governance, awareness-raising sessions were conducted in neighbourhoods and clusters of targeted DTEs. In total, over 1,200 community leaders and members were reached in nine targeted DTEs, and committees established in each neighbourhood and group, with representation on the Local Peace and Development Committee (CLPD) of the DTE. CLPD members benefited from capacity-building sessions on their role as decision-making assemblies pending municipal elections and the establishment of communal and sector councils. The establishment of these mechanisms strengthened local participation in the design of local development plans, integrating the SDGs in 11 DTEs, including the validation of Local Development Plans (LDPs) in six DTEs.

In partnership with UNCDF, the project aimed to strengthen public management and the financial capacity of LDPs. The six DTEs that finalized their LDPs were funded for implementation of the gender-sensitive investments identified in their plans.<sup>52</sup> In partnership with provincial branches of the Agency for the Regulation of Public Procurement, project management and public procurement cells were set up in each beneficiary DTE, which received capacity-building on public procurement procedures from experts from the Agency. Through this support, the six DTEs piloted public procurement processes in line with regulations.<sup>53</sup> Investments were selected by local actors through the CLPD established and supported by the project, and various gender-sensitive investments prioritized.<sup>54</sup> Field visits suggest that these investments generated interest among local actors and showed socioeconomic impact where the work was sufficiently advanced. The intervention also promoted good management practices at the municipal level, such as access to banking services, and the collection of revenue from supported investments.<sup>55</sup> The evaluation found evidence of the increase in revenues recorded by the municipalities for the financing of their budgets.

In general, the approach piloted by the project showed positive initial results in terms of structuring budget management and planning processes and improving local revenue collection. Although local government respondents noted delays and difficulties encountered by DTEs in the public procurement process, the combination of training and practical experience for targeted DTEs was considered a good approach to strengthen accountability and ownership of processes. While the evaluation could not further verify this, respondents highlighted the innovative nature of the approach for DRC, noting that the level of agency promoted by the approach constituted a new way of engaging in local development and governance support. In addition, the support for strengthening management capacity promoted by the programme helped to improve local budgetary and fiduciary management, to align investments with the aspirations and needs of local constituents, and enable the delivery of public services, constituting tangible markers of the State's presence. In DRC, decentralization is a policy with few state resources. These investments fill a gap in institutional capacity for local governments without budgetary resources, human resources or proven procedural frameworks. In addition, the financing made available also responded to feedback expressed by respondents at national, provincial and local levels highlighting the absence of financing and support to implement the various planning and budgetary frameworks supported by UNDP interventions.

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<sup>52</sup> \$100,000 for the four DTE in Kasai central et du Tanganyika; (ii) \$62,933 for Luima; and (iii) \$60,598 for Lufu.

<sup>53</sup> This included: (i) the development of the Procurement Plan and the tender files; (ii) the competitive bidding following a call for tenders open at the national level for 45 days and the holding of public opening sessions; (iii) the organization of meetings of the sub-committees on the analysis and award of contracts.

<sup>54</sup> This included access to drinking water; agricultural transformation; public lighting to reduce insecurity and gender-based violence, training centres to improve women's literacy and income-generating activities, and local markets spaces.

<sup>55</sup> For example, in the municipalities of Luiza and Nganza, the evaluation was able to verify increased revenue collection (ranging from \$1,500 to \$2,000) from the management and issuance of public contracts through the sale of tender documents as part of the public procurement process. To strengthen revenue collection capacity in Kasai Central and Kongo Central, UNCDF piloted a financial inclusion component aimed at strengthening synergies between household access to finance for agricultural activities, and communal taxation on farming permits. The project has also worked on carrying out fiscal assessments, accompanied by a plan to improve revenue and strengthen capacity (e.g. in Tanganyika and Kongo Central). The funds are housed in bank accounts and four signatures are required for withdrawals (head of DTE, vice-president CLPD, DTE accountant and UNDP).



Various challenges noted by this evaluation suggest the need to continue this support to further stabilize the intervention model before it is scaled up. In particular, this relates to the strengthening of project management capacity and the continuation of support and capacity-building for all actors involved to ensure the sustainability of efforts. The evaluation noted shortcomings in contract management and quality monitoring of infrastructure (compliance with technical prescriptions, specifications, dosing of materials etc.). In addition, although the investments (and revenues collected from investments) supported by the project were traceable, the management of other sources of municipal revenue did not change or benefit from the good management practices initiated by the project.

Finally, the continuity of local participation supported by the project through the CLPDs requires sustained attention. The effective participation of CLPD members was not always in evidence, and some members interviewed did not seem to have fully mastered their roles.<sup>56</sup> The elections held in December 2023 included ballots for the first local elections in DRC and will see the establishment of local elected representatives and municipal councils, to replace CLPDs. It will be important to analyse the new local political dynamics in targeted DTEs to identify emerging needs, and where appropriate capitalize on the installation of community leaders who were members of the CLPDs within the municipalities.

**Finding 4: UNDP supported the development and updating of institutional frameworks for the fight against corruption, and implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, through tools to promote transparency and accountability.** However, several solutions are still at pilot stage, and some face acceptance challenges.

The UNDP country programme in DRC focused on the implementation of initiatives to promote institutional transparency and accountability and improve the efficiency of public administration. This objective has taken shape through support to development planning mechanisms and participatory local governance, which emphasized accountability to citizens and improved service delivery.

This support has emerged through various interventions aimed at strengthening the institutional framework for responding to and preventing corruption through technical solutions. UNDP helped to organize the 2021 General Assembly on the Fight against Corruption, which brought together institutional, private and civil society actors to assess the situation, and build consensus on the relevant reforms, actions and implementation strategies. UNDP facilitation and support throughout this process enabled the technical validation of the new National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2022-2026, in December 2021, under the aegis of the Ministry of Justice and the new Agency for the Prevention and Fight against Corruption established in 2020.<sup>57</sup> In 2022, UNDP also supported work to develop a priority action plan to enable operationalization of the Strategy.

UNDP also provided support to various actors in the fight against corruption, including enabling operationalization of the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) resolution, and support to the recurrent activities of other bodies such as Inspectorate General of Finance (IGF) and the Observatory for the Surveillance and Control of Public Ethics. To assist DRC in meeting its international commitments, UNDP also supported anti-corruption bodies to participate in international conventions, including help to finalize the second round of peer reviews for the United Nations Convention on the Fight against Corruption, and technical expertise and training for data collection and reporting to the Convention in 2022, in partnership with UNODC.

<sup>56</sup> CLPDs are organized as constituent assemblies, and chaired by local administrators, who in some cases did not appear to be inclined to promote participation in the management of local affairs.

<sup>57</sup> The report of the General Assembly had still not been published in 2023. A drafting committee was set up at the close of the forum to lead consultations to revise the 2010 National Anti-Corruption Strategy, the implementation plan of which had never been adopted by the Government due to the political context of the time.

In the area of prevention, UNDP supported several initiatives to promote implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, including capacity-building for civil society actors to participate in the prevention and detection of corruption.<sup>58</sup> The project also promoted the training of officials from the bodies responsible for corruption control, heads of division and other public service executives. With a view to strengthening the judicial response, in 2023 the project developed a training module for newly recruited magistrates, with the High Judicial Council and National Judicial Training Institute. UNDP also provided support to various actors in the fight against corruption, including enabling operationalization of the ALPC, and support to the recurrent activities of other bodies such as the General Inspectorate of Finance (IGF) and the Observatory for the Surveillance and Control of Public Ethics.

Various digital solutions were developed to promote transparency in the delivery of public services, and to support the functioning of inspection bodies.<sup>59</sup> However, respondents highlighted strong resistance to the use and integration of these tools in the day-to-day work of the targeted institutions, including the Senate, where an electronic voting system was made available, and Kinshasa airport, where a digital solution for the collection of airport taxes was developed. The tools put in place for the justice sector seemed to suffer the same fate at the time of this evaluation, although COVID-19 showed that this path was reasonable and necessary.

Project support focused more on the consequences than the root causes of corruption. Respondents, particularly from the justice sector, highlighted the challenge of lack of registration of many court officers which means that some civil servants do not receive salaries. In some of the courts visited for this evaluation, an estimated over 60 percent of staff fell into this category. Similar observations were made by police personnel who, in the absence of an operating budget, acknowledged that their ability to intervene and investigate cases depended largely on funding by complainants. Various respondents also pointed to the favourable outcomes of proven corruption cases involving senior politicians during the programming period, suggesting that this undermined the stated political ambitions with regard to anti-corruption measures and policies.

The project is being implemented with a limited budget compared to the needs and number of actors in the anti-corruption chain.<sup>60</sup> However, UNDP support has made it possible to revitalize the institutional effort to respond to and prevent corruption, and to create a framework for consultations and actions to bring together the various actors around the National Strategy, even if the results remain modest.

**Finding 5: UNDP support to the electoral process has been limited due to an unfavourable political and subsequently financing environment.** While UNDP managed to provide some preparatory support in the pre-election phase, its contribution to promoting participation has not materialized as planned in the CPD.

UNDP played an important role in supporting electoral processes in DRC, including in recent years. Through its participation in United Nations electoral assistance, in collaboration with MONUC and then MONUSCO, UNDP has been an important actor supporting the country's electoral process and in strengthening the

<sup>58</sup> This including mapping CSOs involved in the fight against corruption and the subsequent identification of 28 CSOs to receive capacity-building and support to build a network and monitor corruption case trials.

<sup>59</sup> IGF has been supported to update its functional capacities, update its information technology and audit systems, with the training and the acquisition of licenses of updated audit management tools. With this support, the project reported the identification of 87 cases of fraud and corruption in procurement processes, and the initiation of 42 investigations and trials involving public officials. In the justice sector, the High Judicial Council has been equipped with an information and career management system for magistrates, and supported for the registration of up to 60 percent of the workforce at this stage. Similarly, a case Management System was piloted in the military and civilian penitentiaries of Makala and Ndolo to assist in the management of the prison population. Finally, an interconnected judicial activities management system has been installed and piloted in the offices of four civilian and military prosecutors in order to strengthen the traceability of judicial proceedings through the criminal chain. Digital management tools have also been developed to facilitate voting sessions in the Senate and guarantee transparency (electronic voting), and the digitization of airport tax collection.

<sup>60</sup> ALPC Ministry of Justice, Observatory for the Monitoring of Corruption and Professional Ethics, IGF, the Court of Auditors, the High Judicial Council, the Courts, and attached prosecutors' offices, the National Police, and civil society.

capacity of the Independent National Commission for Elections (CENI) over time.<sup>61</sup> The last election, in 2019, which led to the first political transition in DRC, took place in an challenging international and national political context.<sup>62</sup> The Government decided not to seek international logistical support for those elections, resulting in limited technical assistance from MONUSCO and UNDP, and marking a turning point which continued into the 2024 electoral process.<sup>63</sup>

In the pre-electoral context, UNDP commissioned several studies to inform the preparation of the elections. As early as 2019, a review of the legal instruments governing elections was produced, followed in 2020 by a study on DRC electoral processes, which included analysis of the experience of using voting machines that were the subject of much controversy during previous elections, and of electoral violence. Technical assistance was provided for the preparatory work for drafting the electoral law approved in June 2022. Despite the time lag between the preparatory assistance provided for the amendments to the electoral law and the approval of the law, these efforts served as a basis for launching programmatic support. However, they do not appear to have had a measurable influence on the ongoing process as evidenced by the fact that proposed legal requirements for gender parity on electoral lists were not retained and were eventually replaced by an incentive (reduction of registration fees) that was not perceived to have affected the electoral lists of political parties.

An electoral assistance programme was developed, accompanied by a basket fund, in accordance with the recommendations of the report of the Electoral Needs Assessment Mission (NAM).<sup>64</sup> However, delays in signing and launching the programme (this was finally done in February 2023, nine months before the electoral deadline) meant that the participation and financing of development partners was not galvanized.<sup>65</sup> The project manager of the electoral assistance programme did not take office until the second half of the election year. With other sources of funding, the programme began deploying conflict prevention interventions for electoral violence in key provinces in August 2023, three months before the election deadline.<sup>66</sup> Although the deployment of these interventions offered interesting solutions and innovations, including tools for monitoring online electoral violence, their late deployment cast doubt on their ability to achieve their objectives and influence the 2023 election process. However, the funding provided by these projects (\$2 million) has made it possible to support the security of the elections in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, through support to the technical security group of the national police and to the operational civil protection offices in the three provinces.

Based on the CPD Results Framework, the programme aimed to contribute to improving electoral standards, specifically targeting an increase in the “Voter Turnout Rate (National, Provincial and Local)”.<sup>67</sup> However, by the time of this evaluation, UNDP support in this area had been limited to one-off logistical support to CENI in the deployment of voter registration kits. UNDP reports that it supported the capacity-building of CENI in the planning and evaluation of electoral cycles and of 350 political party cadres, including 250 women, on the new electoral law. UNDP was able to respond to the emerging demands of CENI, particularly in the area of communication, by

<sup>61</sup> UNDP DRC (2020) *L'assistance électorale en république démocratique du Congo, premiers enseignements (2003-2020)*.

<sup>62</sup> The political crisis, resulting from the postponement of elections initially scheduled for 2014, contributed to a climate of difficult partnership between the national authorities and international partners, which, following the postponement of the elections, have placed the DRC under a sanctions regime.

<sup>63</sup> UNDP DRC (2016) *Final country programme evaluation 2013-2017*. The pre-electoral context, including the electoral registration campaign between November 2022 and April 2023, was marked by various waves of protests by opposition parties and civil society, especially regarding CENI appointments. The quality and transparency of the electoral register was strongly questioned by opposition parties and a climate of mistrust and uncertainty crystallized during the post-election period. In this context, dialogue between national authorities, international partners, and United Nations entities has not enjoyed a conducive political context to support cooperation around the elections.

<sup>64</sup> A NAM mission to define the priorities and modalities of possible United Nations assistance to the 2023 elections was deployed in March 2022, following an official request from the CENI received in December 2021.

<sup>65</sup> Estimated in its PRODOC to have a necessary budget of \$21 million, in August 2023, the programme reported that it had been able to mobilize only 10 percent of this amount for the electoral assistance programme.

<sup>66</sup> In the provinces of Haut-Katanga, Lualaba and Kasai Central and in the conflict-affected eastern regions (North Kivu and Ituri).

<sup>67</sup> UNDP DRC (2020) *CPD 2020-2024, Cadre des résultats et des ressources*.



supporting the establishment and functioning of the election house in Kinshasa and the convening of several dialogues among political parties and the CENI. This allowed CENI and local actors to benefit from a space for meetings and dialogues, but the context was not conducive to efforts to increase voter registration and turnout.

Presidential elections were held on 20th December 2023, and CENI announced provisional results ten days later based on results from 85 percent of polling stations, reporting an estimated turnout of 43.2 percent.<sup>68</sup> The African Union election observation mission found that these elections had taken place in “a relatively calm atmosphere”, though marked by important logistical challenges.<sup>69</sup> Electoral observation reports noted the efforts by CENI to increase transparency during the process, and the publication of provisional results, while raising some irregularities with the electoral law of CENI decisions.<sup>70</sup> The fact that the elections took place, within constitutional deadlines and without significant support for electoral operations, is in itself important and to some extent attests to the capacity acquired by CENI over time. However, the various irregularities raised in election observation reports highlight the need to reconsider support for elections, outside of the context of the electoral support programme, to enable a more conducive environment for transparent and fair elections.

## 2.2 Inclusive growth and sustainable development

■ **Outcome 2:** Inclusive Economic Growth, Agricultural Development, Demographic Dividend Capture, Social Protection and Sustainable management of natural resources

**Output 2.1:** Solutions developed for sustainable management of natural resources, including sustainable commodities and green and inclusive value chains with access for women and youth

**Output 2.2:** Women and youth are enabled to access and engage in decent employment and livelihood schemes in the mining sectors.

**Output 2.3:** Marginalized and vulnerable groups, particularly, poor, women, youth and people with disabilities are empowered to gain access to financial services to build sustainable productive capacities.

**Output 2.4:** Solution adopted to improve access to clean affordable and sustainable energy.

**Output 2.5:** National and local institutions including civil society and the private sector have strengthened technical and operational capacities to drive inclusive and sustainable management of the natural resources (water, forests, land, minerals, etc.) and climate change mitigation and adaptation actions stated in the nationally determined contribution.

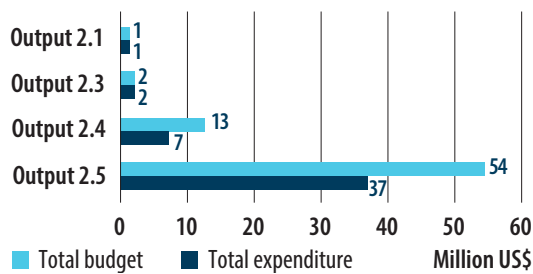


<sup>68</sup> The Carter Center (Jan 2024) International Election Observation Mission DRC Interim Report.

<sup>69</sup> African Union (2022) Preliminary Statement of the Election Observation Mission of the African Union. Notable challenges reported included the delayed opening of polling stations in some localities, which required CENI to extend voting operations, and other allegations of irregularities including the availability and publication of voter lists, the illegibility of voter cards, security arrangements for presidential candidates, the extension of voting days, and notably the possession of electronic voting devices by unauthorized individuals. Despite the numerous calls by political parties to cancel the elections, the Constitutional Court received only two appeal applications, which were finally dismissed by the Court who announced the re-election of the incumbent President on 9 January.

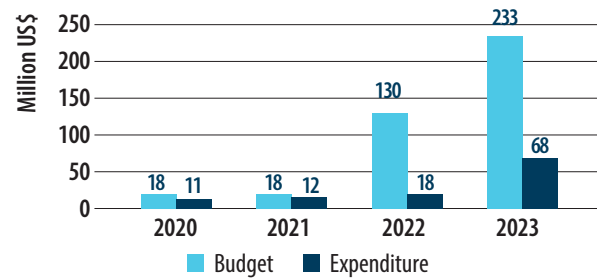
<sup>70</sup> The Carter Center (2024) International Election Observation Mission DRC Interim Report.

**FIGURE 8. Outcome 2 budget and expenditure by CPD output (2020-23) (excl. PDL)**

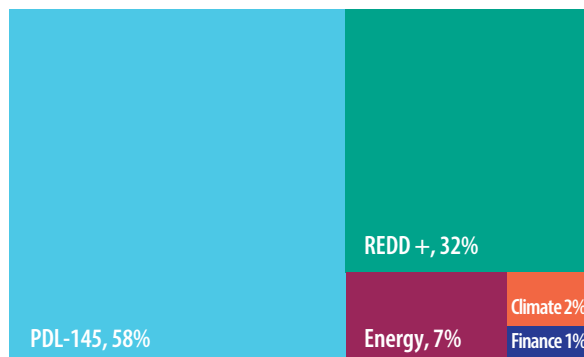


Source: UNDP/ATLAS/Quantum.

**FIGURE 9. Outcome 2 budget and expenditure by year (2020-2023)**



**FIGURE 10. Outcome 2 expenditure by thematic area (2020-23)**



Outcome 2 of the country programme consists of five outputs aimed at strengthening capacity for rural livelihood development and promoting youth and women’s entrepreneurship, while facilitating an enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable growth, namely through improved access to finance and energy, natural resource management and climate change adaptation. A total of 17 projects and initiation plans were implemented under this outcome, with a budget of \$416 million and expenditure of \$131.3 million (65 percent of total programme expenditure). Expenditure under this outcome was led by two flagship programmes - the National REDD+ Fund (FONAREDD, including

energy) and PDL-145 - that together represented close to 95 percent of expenditure under this outcome. PDL-145 constitutes 1.4 times the initial estimated budget of the entire CPD, with a financial envelope of \$610 million for the first phase from March 2022 to December 2023. A third significant programme under this outcome, Action, Change and Transformation for Financial Inclusion (ACTIF), part of UNDP long-term support for the development of the microfinance sector in DRC, was implemented in two phases: the first starting during the previous CPD, and the second launched in June 2023.

**Finding 6: UNDP played a key role in supporting the inception and execution of one of the Government’s two flagship local development programmes, PDL-145.** The operational complexity of large-scale infrastructure building has overshadowed the strategic potential and added value of UNDP participation in this programme. While the role played by UNDP is significant, given the scale and unprecedented nature of this national initiative, the overall ambition of the programme and structural constraints of the context have challenged its operational capabilities and exposed it to potential reputational risks.

PDL-145 is a \$1.6 billion rural development initiative of the Government of DRC, to empower the country’s 145 territories in 26 provinces, lift 25 million Congolese people out of poverty and accelerate social progress by increasing access to basic socioeconomic infrastructure.<sup>71</sup> Along with the Agenda for Agricultural

<sup>71</sup> The activities of PDL-145 are divided into four components: (i) development of low-level socioeconomic infrastructure; (ii) revitalization of the local and rural economy; (iii) strengthening local governance; and (iv) development of a geo-referenced information system for the monitoring of PDL-145 and other programmes in the country. While component (ii) is planned for the second phase and assigned to UNDP, elements (iii) and (iv) were to be implemented directly by the Government in phase 1.

Transformation, it is the largest government undertaking in the country's recent history to significantly reduce the urban-rural divide, transform living conditions and revitalize local economies in remote territories hitherto underserved by basic infrastructure and social services. The first phase, initiated in early 2022, saw the Government disburse \$511 million through three agencies, namely the Fragile States Financing Implementation Unit, the Central Coordination Office and UNDP. UNDP was entrusted with the implementation of PDL-145 in nine of the 26 provinces, including delivery of 761 buildings, 36 percent of the total infrastructure constructed under the programme.<sup>72</sup>

The selection of UNDP as implementing partner for the programme reaffirmed its role as a leading and trusted development partner in the country. Due to its support to development planning functions and CPVS, its past experience (see finding 2), and its track record in the management and implementation of large funds, UNDP was considered an important and strategic partner for the execution of PDL-145. However, there is a question as to whether UNDP's role as implementing partner of PDL-145 has enabled it to fully leverage its comparative and strategic advantages.

PDL-145 was adopted by the Congolese Council of Ministers in December 2021, and the Project Document between the Government and UNDP was signed in February 2022 to run until December 2023, coinciding with the presidential elections. In this regard, the alignment of the execution of this presidential priority programme with electoral deadlines emphasized a degree of political precedence over technical considerations, with important effects on overall execution. The programme adopted a "one size fits all" approach for the resources allocated to each territory, and the choice of infrastructures, without prioritizing the most vulnerable and/ or harder to reach territories. In this regard, the programme adopted a rather top-down approach which, while responding to relevant local needs, meant that local institutions, notably technical provincial services, had limited scope to provide adjustments and adapt the interventions to local realities. This approach was cemented in a government directive forbidding provincial and local authorities to modify infrastructure plans and sites.

Accessibility to the (often remote) targeted territories was a major constraint, due to poor road infrastructure and security concerns, which was underestimated in the design and planning phase. The six-month timeline for each construction site was unrealistic considering supply chains for construction materials, market saturation in the capital and large cities (Goma, Bukavu and Kisangani), and the variability of supply channels in the targeted territories. For instance, the provinces of Sankuru, Mongala or Tshuapa are mainly supplied by boat, with average transportation times from the provincial capital of two to three months, and additional road transportation of several weeks, whereas in Tshopo, the transport of materials by rail has been blocked for several months, and other sites are not accessible due to security concerns. Road infrastructure building is part of PDL-145 interventions, and respondents widely acknowledged that the programme should have started with this component, but reported that the funding made available by the Government for the first phase was strictly earmarked for social infrastructure. The issue of accessibility and increased cost of commodities bore important consequences for the programme, with an estimated \$100 million of additional costs for the completion of the first phase by the three implementing partners.

Overall, available data show that the execution rates for the 563 contracted constructions were 30-40 percent on average, with fewer than 10 percent of sites reaching agreed delivery status, and some sites in each province yet to be initiated. Though this could not be fully verified by the evaluation team, senior officials interviewed highlighted important delays faced by UNDP in comparison with the two other implementing partners of the programme, which at that time were estimated to have executed about 60 percent of the planned constructions,

<sup>72</sup> These include 424 schools, 283 health centres and 54 administrative buildings in Bas Uele, Mongala, Tshopo, Tshuapa, Sankuru, Kasai, Maniema, Tanganyika and South Kivu.

and started delivery of some infrastructures to local authorities. Given this direct comparison with the other two agencies, UNDP performance in the PDL-145 was increasingly called into question by authorities and communities alike. Indeed, at local level, the evaluation noted high expectations as well as frustration with the delivery of this programme, following the major communication efforts that accompanied its launch at national and local levels.

While there are contextual explanations to this performance by UNDP, certain limitations have been observed. Some of those are not unique to PDL-145, such as the delays and bottlenecks caused by the complexity and rigour of UNDP administrative, procurement and contracting procedures.<sup>73</sup> This was highlighted across most programme areas and had remained unresolved at the time of this evaluation. In particular, contractor procurement and quality control led to efficiency losses and technical gaps in delivery and quality, and ultimately risk undermining UNDP credibility. Interviews and documentary evidence show that the complexity of the procurement processes slowed UNDP down compared to the other two executing agencies, as the fast-track procedures reflected in the project document could not be implemented as planned. Thus, processes took an average of six to eight months from calls to awards.<sup>74</sup>

There were also difficulties for local companies to comply with the requirements of the bidding process, resulting in a limited number of contractors being awarded contracts.<sup>75</sup> While this can be seen as potentially reducing contract management burden, it also potentially presents higher risks. Private contractor interviewees shared the challenges faced, including accessibility, time pressure, and increased costs associated with the supply of construction sites in remote areas without road access, in addition to rampant inflation in the cost of goods and transport. Moreover, the same financial modality used with regular implementing partners was used, without adaptation to the assignment. This included a requirement for companies to pre-finance 20 percent of works and disbursement conditions, which was reportedly a significant hindering factor for contractors to deliver within the agreed terms. As a result, there is evidence of quality concerns related to modifications to initial designs, technical negligence, and the quality of supervision. The evaluation also noted that the use of local workers has not been systematically respected by private contractors due to reported gaps in local skilled labour, limiting the local income generation initially planned by the programme, and exacerbating the mounting discontent in some communities due to the significant construction delays. Thus, some of expected positive effects of PDL-145 in supporting additional income generation while ensuring local empowerment and ownership of the processes have been largely undermined.

The implementation of the programme included support from local coordinators in all the provinces covered by UNDP to ensure effective execution and avoid overburdening country offices operations. However, their capacity to influence and inform course corrections was limited. At the time of this evaluation, while only 30 percent of construction sites had been started, provincial teams had visited on average fewer than 50 percent of the territories and sites due to resources constraints. Progress monitoring has therefore relied on contractors' reporting, and mission reports indicate concerns regarding lack of follow-up on quality, social and environmental impacts, as well as the degree of community involvement. The programme coordination structures lacked a clear division of roles and responsibilities, and local coordination had limited autonomy for provincial-level decision-making.

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<sup>73</sup> These affected recruitment of staff (with teams at the provincial level not yet fully recruited), setting up project offices and contracting various core services, such as baseline, social and environmental studies, construction companies, control cabinets and communication activities.

<sup>74</sup> The first contract was awarded in October 2022 to Caritas Congo for 12 constructions in Mongala and Tshupa. Five contracts were awarded in the first quarter of 2023 and the remainder at the end of the third quarter.

<sup>75</sup> As of August 2023, 19 contracts were signed with construction companies and Caritas Congo, ranging from 10 contracts with less than 10 infrastructures to 201 infrastructures and a financial volume of \$70,355,480 awarded to a single company.

Based on these observations, the evaluation found that the operational complexities to implement this vast programme had overshadowed its strategic potential to contribute to various programmatic objectives. Opportunities to leverage UNDP added value were not fully leveraged, particularly in terms of local presence, alignment, and synergy within and across portfolios. While the distribution of provinces appears to lower the potential for cross-fertilization (Kasai Central, North Kivu and Ituri are covered by another implementing partner), in those where UNDP is active, opportunities to build on existing engagement and develop synergy with other UNDP and PDL-145 programmes could not be leveraged.<sup>76</sup>

While UNDP was engaged as an implementing partner for PDL-145, two important cross cutting objectives of the programme, namely local governance and M&E of PDL-145, have remained under the responsibility of the Presidency, and were not yet implemented at the time of the evaluation. While outside of UNDP control, the evaluation notes a missed opportunity to leverage UNDP strategic positioning to advance these components on behalf of national authorities, particularly given the agency's ongoing engagement in these areas and its perceived convening role, including between national and local levels.

**Finding 7: The national and institutional framework for climate change mitigation and adaptation has been strengthened, improving the national enabling environment for the sustainable management of natural resources.**

To strengthen sustainable natural resource management and climate change mitigation in DRC, UNDP aimed to assist the Government in implementing relevant multilateral environmental agreements that it has signed and ratified. These include the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and an investment plan for REDD+, as well as the role of conservation, sustainable forest management, and increasing carbon stock in developing countries. The portfolio of projects under the environment and climate component contribute to national goals set out in the NDC and Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) priorities.

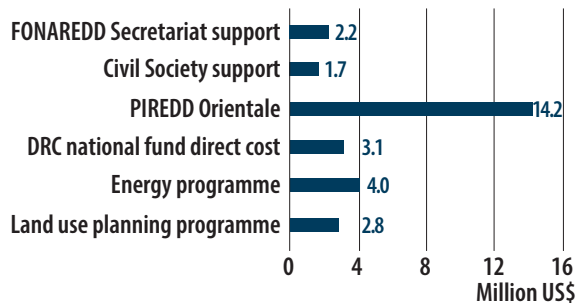
DRC established its national REDD+ framework strategy in 2012, with the objective of stabilizing forest cover at 63.5 percent by 2030, and maintaining it thereafter. The partnership between CAFI and the DRC commenced in 2015, coinciding with the Government's adoption of the National REDD+ Investment Plan. Based on this plan, a Letter of Intent was agreed upon for a period of five years (2016-2020), during which 18 programmes were progressively funded through capitalization of the DRC National REDD+ Fund (FONAREDD).

UNDP has been an important actor in enabling DRC to access REDD+ financing from as early as 2006. During this programmatic cycle, UNDP managed approximately \$28 million on behalf of FONAREDD, and implemented four different national-level projects (Support to FONAREDD Secretariat, Support to Civil Society, Energy, and Support for Land Reform) and the Integrated Programme for the Oriental Province (PIREDD Orientale). Compared to the six PIREDD programmes implemented by other development partners (FAO, Enable!, GIZ, World Bank) PIREDD Orientale stands out as the largest in terms of geographical coverage, covering three provinces (Ituri, Tshopo, and Bas Uele). In 2023, UNDP launched a second PIREDD programme in the province of Haut Uele.

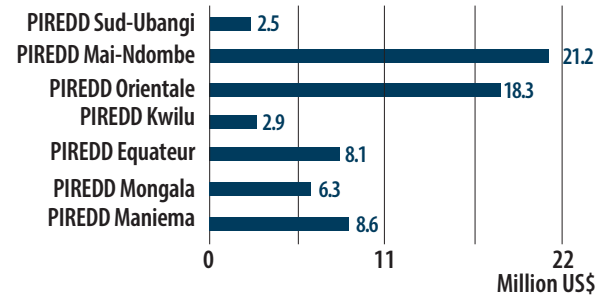
At national level, the programme successfully supported the development of sectoral policies and strategies and decision-making tools to strengthen environmental governance and the efficient and effective management of natural resources. These include, amongst others: the National Forest Monitoring System, which enables the country to meet several requirements of the United Nations Framework Convention on

<sup>76</sup> Notably the PIREDD Orientale programme, and the decentralization programme at the level of DTEs. In provinces where UNDP has supported development planning and DTE strengthening (e.g., Kasai, Tanganyika and Sud-Kivu), the alignment of processes and the level of participation of provincial and local stakeholders in implementation and monitoring appear to be as low as in other provinces. Likewise, the involvement of local development committees created and strengthened under the PIREDD Programme in Tshopo and Bas Uele could have supported monitoring activities of the PDL-145 sites.

**FIGURE 11. UNDP (FONAREDD) MPTF programmes in DRC (2020-2022)**



**FIGURE 12. PIREDD programmes in DRC by province (2017-2022)**



Climate Change (UNFCCC) and addresses the country’s needs for the monitoring, measurement, reporting and verification of REDD+ activities; the Forest Reference Emissions report submitted to UNFCCC; the third National Reference Emission Level; and the first Biannual Update report to UNFCCC, enabling DRC to meet its transparency obligations and targets under the Paris Climate Agreement.<sup>77</sup> UNDP also coordinated revisions to the NDC document, which was submitted to UNFCCC in November 2021.<sup>78</sup> The CAFI 2022 Report confirms that the national forest inventory was conducted, though other priority sectors such as energy, waste and transport were not yet included in the inventory. Support has also been initiated for the development of the carbon finance sector, leading to the launch at the end of 2023 of a support project implemented by the UNDP and financed by CAFI to support the operationalization of the Carbon Market Regulatory Authority, finalize the legal and policy framework on carbon markets, and support the sharing of experiences on carbon markets.

In the area of energy, UNDP supported modelling studies and impact analyses for the deployment of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), which showed overall economic benefits of increased LPG usage, and supported the development and validation of the National Energy Policy and a communication and social marketing strategy for behaviour change to encourage the adoption of clean cooking methods. UNDP also provided technical training and assistance for the production of improved stoves using local materials, to reduce the consumption of wood energy.<sup>79</sup> The programme also supported the development and validation of the National Energy policy in 2021, through a participatory process involving 26 provinces.

The midterm evaluation of the project praised the quality of the studies, and found the processes for developing the national policy and the master plan for liquified gas to be highly participatory. This was confirmed by respondents to this evaluation, including from companies supported to produce and market clean cooking stoves. The integration of the wood fuel energy sector into the Energy Policy is a significant milestone for the country. Similarly, the development of the master plan for LPG in Kinshasa and the accompanying resource mobilization plan helped to create the necessary institutional framework to promote national energy development goals. The Land Use Planning Policy document was also adopted in 2020 and disseminated across 14 provinces. These achievements demonstrated delivery of the 2023 political milestones agreed between the Government of the DRC and CAFI.

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.rdc-snsf.org/portal/>

<sup>78</sup> DRC Nationally Determined Contributions revised 2021 [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)

<sup>79</sup> Report on the independent midterm evaluation of a programme financed by the national REDD+ fund of the Democratic Republic of Congo, June 2023.



At institutional level, UNDP played a fiduciary role and capacity-building role in the FONAREDD programme, including the development of internal operational guidelines and documentation, regular steering committee meetings, and the supervision of projects. The programme supports the personnel, technical and operational costs of the Fund, including the national coordination unit and M&E experts assigned to report on the performance of individual projects. Regular performance notes are produced and maintained by the programme. The transparency of operations has been strengthened through regular publication of steering committee minutes and decisions.

In the area of civil society, the Support Civil Society Programme, funded by CAFI through UNDP, yielded results, most prominently the consolidation of the national coordination of the REDD Climate Working Group (GTCRR). Through the technical, administrative, and UNDP financial support, GTCRR successfully finalized an internal restructuring process, establishing provincial coordination units and committees. This facilitated the extension of GTCRR institutional reach to the grassroots level, enabling more inclusive and representative civil society engagement. GTCRR now has representation in 16 out of 26 provinces and plays a key role in the development and monitoring of national policies and process on environment and climate.<sup>80</sup> By restructuring civil society engagement with the GTCRR and various thematic working groups (aligned with CAFI milestones including forest governance, land use planning, indigenous peoples), the network is now more representative of civil society and is widely accepted and appreciated as an inclusive platform. Since 2019, the programme has also facilitated the representation of Congolese civil society voices in major international climate processes and other regional events such as forest governance forums and the Congo Basin Forest Partnerships. GTCRR management capacity has received praise from various financial and technical partners, highlighting its organizational improvement.<sup>81</sup>

**Finding 8: Results in strengthening capacity for local and decentralized natural resource governance, through the strengthening of land tenure, land use planning and community forestry, have been mixed and characterized by significant delays and limited stakeholder engagement and ownership.** The latter has notably jeopardized the validation of land use plans and community forestry applications supported by the programme, although measures to address this gap have since been taken.

To strengthen capacity for natural resource management at local and provincial levels, UNDP implementation partners carried out awareness raising activities, needs assessments, and establishing multistakeholder governance structures and land use management plans at different levels. PIREDD Oriental reporting estimates that nearly 3.5 million people were sensitized on the implementation and impact of the programme. Studies were produced on the drivers of deforestation in four provinces, and after four years of implementation additional analysis was conducted for two territories not included in the first phase.<sup>82</sup> At the local level, UNDP has contributed to the establishment and strengthening of 165 multistakeholder coordination frameworks.<sup>83</sup> The creation of local development committees as spaces for sectorial coordination, civil participation and exchange between authorities and communities is a relevant first step, however enabling them to play their role effectively will require long-term sustained capacity-building support given the lack of resources available to decentralized authorities and technical divisions.

<sup>80</sup> It is important to note that the creation of GTCRR was the consequence of many years of failed efforts to unify the voice of civil society and their contributions to policy and reform processes. Power struggles and leadership challenges meant that the Government did not have a trustworthy interlocutor representing the broad views of civil society.

<sup>81</sup> UNDP DRC (2021) Midterm Evaluation report of the Civil Society Support Programme.

<sup>82</sup> The original studies were conducted in Tshopo, Bas-Uélé, Ituri, and Haut-Uélé, with further analysis in Banalia (Tshopo) and Djugu (Ituri).

<sup>83</sup> There are 126 local development committees, 30 at the sector/headship level, six at the territorial level and three at the provincial level, aimed at supporting local development efforts and local ownership, in line with the national decentralization framework. This includes 1,182 members. Chieftaincies/sectors, as well as technical services, have been supported and reinforced in monitoring, controlling, and regulating activities for natural resource management.

The programme also supported physical assets in terms of office infrastructure to improve the working conditions of local authorities.<sup>84</sup> Cumulatively, these results represent a 54 percent achievement rate against targets. In addition, logistical support in the form of office equipment and field motorbikes were also provided to the divisions of environment, agriculture, land tenure and planning in these provinces. Local authority respondents noted delays in the delivery of these activities, and many project sites visited were incomplete or abandoned. Due to the pressing need for office space, many authorities had occupied the uncompleted buildings. Stakeholders also complained of a lack of transparency and communication regarding the reasons for the delays, and their lack of involvement in the selection or vetting of service providers selected by UNDP. Although this situation presented a real risk of non-completion of the works, UNDP reports that arrangements have been made to finalize the procurement processes and achieve the objectives by the end of the programme (end 2024), while strengthening the participation of local officials in the projects.

To support efforts to secure land tenure, UNDP conducted several awareness campaigns emphasizing the importance of land tenure security for smallholder farmers in various localities, by land division agents and through programmes aired on partner community radio stations. UNDP support resulted in the registration of 127 individual and 22 collective land titles, and two provincial edicts in were submitted to the Assemblies of Bas-Uélé and Tshopo. In Ituri, a province under a state of siege, a provincial decree was submitted for review by the National Coordination for Land Reform. The National Land Use Plan was developed and validated in 2020, and subsequently three Provincial Spatial Planning Plans, eight Local Spatial Planning Plans, and 91 Simple Spatial Planning Plans were developed, a positive step towards organized land management.

In the area of community forestry, PIREDD Orientale aimed to empower communities to establish community forests, as a step towards sustainable natural resource management. 16 communities in Tshopo and five in Bas Uele received support from implementing partners to map their territories and develop inventories of natural resources, and submit applications to the environmental coordination body for evaluation, publication and validation. The selection of communities was based on their applications, and context issues such as the pressure on community lands, potential impact on protected areas, or risk of land grabbing from industrial operations. As of July 2023, five applications for community forestry licences were under review in Bas-Uélé, and 16 were being processed in Tshopo.<sup>85</sup>

Local authority respondents emphasized the relevance of the UNDP focus on management and oversight of land tenure, and the growing levels of land related conflicts in Tshopo province, which has large forest and artisanal mining areas, also highlights the significance of addressing land-related issues for the success of REDD+ investments in the region. By providing a clear delineation of land usage, the potential for disputes is minimized, promoting more harmonious co-existence of various stakeholders. Several land disputes were reportedly resolved with the support of land division agents and chiefs of sectors and chiefdoms in territories covered by the programme. Respondents were appreciative of the support provided by the programme in the form of transport and office equipment to enable them to deliver on their mandates.

However, it also emerged that officials from the local land tenure department were not always involved in the production and validation of land use planning documents and community forestry development processes. This has resulted in cases of contestation of land use claims, non-approval of land use plans and stalling of approvals of community forest licences by provincial administrations. Officials are concerned about validating the licences from the office, without visits to the targeted communities to confirm the

<sup>84</sup> 12 buildings have been constructed (eight in Bas-Uélé and four in Ituri), and 12 are under construction in Tshopo. Three buildings have been constructed for the land divisions of Bas-Uélé, Ituri, and Tshopo (not yet completed).

<sup>85</sup> Community licenses provide legal recognition for community forests providing the basis for community led governance of the natural resources in the area, secure tenure rights and thus decision making and benefit sharing on the exploitation of resources emerging from the community forests.



findings and evidence provided by implementing partners. Implementing partners often conducted field visits independently, leading to potentially unverifiable information and data collection. This has been, in part, due to a lack of funding for local officials to conduct their own missions. Involvement and engagement with local stakeholders therefore proved insufficient, leading to a lack of ownership and acceptance of the plans. This situation has been reportedly addressed by UNDP through the signing of an agreement allowing the financing of monitoring missions of local authorities in the context of awareness-raising and the issuance of land titles by implementing partners. Finally, with the validation of the National Land Use Plan in 2020, additional work is needed on all land use plans developed to ensure their alignment with the guidelines set out by the national Government.<sup>86</sup> At the time of the evaluation, there was no plan or agreement between UNDP, implementing partners and officials for the way forward.

**Finding 9: UNDP has been successful in promoting access to clean, affordable and sustainable energy in target provinces, driving up green entrepreneurship and popular attitude change regarding clean cooking stoves.** Market penetration of clean cooking stoves is increasing, though the contribution to overall national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation remains significantly limited due to low investment in planned reforestation and carbonization to reduce the inefficient production of charcoal.

UNDP has developed several initiatives at national and community levels to promote and improve access to clean, affordable and sustainable energy solutions and address significant gaps in access to the electricity grid and clean energy for cooking. The programme intended to promote the production of biomass for fuel production and carbonization, through partnerships with the private sector and financial institutions. Training sessions were conducted for key ministries and institutions in the clean cooking sector on technical aspects of improved stoves (energy efficiency, calculation of greenhouse gas emissions), policies and regulations. Furthermore, an institutional, organizational and operational assessment was carried out on the Clean Cooking Alliance, leading to an extraordinary general assembly where a new board of directors was elected. The project supported various study visits and the dissemination of best practices through the development of training modules and the organization of a Stove Camp Challenge Fund in Kenya, for eight companies from DRC to learn about the technical aspects of making, producing and marketing improved cooking stoves.

Through this support, a total of 30,177 improved stoves and 934.05 tonnes of LPG were sold in the first semester of 2022, representing a 94 percent increase compared to the same period in 2021. The programme resulted in 150,000 cooking stoves being produced and sold, with close to two-thirds attributed to the programme. Approximately 89 percent of the improved cookstoves are produced locally by subsidized companies, creating 1,000 jobs in Kinshasa (approximately 53 percent women). The CPD target of 10,500 households was far exceeded in Kinshasa, with the sale of 100,000 improved cookstoves and gas burners by companies supported by UNDP and UNCDF through the Challenge Fund.<sup>87</sup> In fact, companies supported by the Challenge Fund were not always able to meet the demand resulting from the marketing strategy supported, for various reasons including remoteness.

<sup>86</sup> At the time that the provincial and territorial plans were developed there was no established and agreed methodology, so UNDP and implementing partners developed their own methodology for the process. Unfortunately, this does not fully conform to the new standards and hence the need to revise the documentation and complete the relevant files. Since the validation of the National Land Use Plan, no officials in the provinces had been able to access the document and no process was in place to review the work done and ensure compliance.

<sup>87</sup> The catalytic approach used by UNCDF allowed for the mobilization of an estimated \$1.1 million from these companies in co-financing, as well as the mobilization of \$650,000 as concessional credit through the UNCDF “bridge” mechanism, \$500,000 from SIMA, and \$20,000 from the Virunga Foundation. \$650,000 credit granted to the companies led to a total mobilization of \$4.5 million.

The roll-out of LPG in Bukavu and Goma was less successful, with access provided to just over 10,000 households. Despite a similar marketing strategy and a microcredit scheme to incentivize potential consumers, some operational difficulties, such as the availability of LPG at points of sale, delays in deliveries, and low quality and reliability of the products of some companies, negatively affected market trust. Part of the strategy to develop the LPG market was to collaborate with financial institutions in order to facilitate access to credit, but the expected partnership with the BCDC Bank was significantly delayed.<sup>88</sup> However, prospects for pursuing linkages between the microfinance and cookstove/ LPG markets are good, with increased readiness of key actors.<sup>89</sup>

While positive results have been achieved, there was limited attention to efficient charcoal production methods as a parallel strategy, given the need to address the core interests and stakeholders related to charcoal production and sale. PIREDD-Orientale is off target to achieve its goals related to reforestation, regeneration and the planting of wood fuel plantations, and with only one year to go, these are unlikely to be achieved. For example, of the planned 6,000 ha. for fuel wood plantations, only 1,208 ha. has been planted. In line with the midterm review of the energy programme, it is recommended to reallocate funds to strengthen livelihood support to farmers or provide support to the costs of connection to the grid when construction ends. Linkages between UNDP project components have been limited and only recently has a joint effort been made to create more linkages between the PIREDD-O and Energy programmes. Other interventions aimed at strengthening access to energy through the development of micro-hydropower and solar power, included the rehabilitation of an existing power plant in Masisi, the establishment of a solar power plant in Mambasa in Ituri, and eight feasibility studies for the deployment of other power plants in the territories.

In light of the limited and slow progress in reforestation under UNDP programmes, and in the absence of monitoring data to measure recovery, regeneration or emission reductions, contributions are relevant but below expectations. There are opportunities for UNDP to explore work with charcoal network stakeholders, but no technical or financial strategy has been defined under the current CPD and portfolio.

**Finding 10: Support to the enabling environment of the microfinance sector and downstream access to finance interventions have stimulated income-generating activities at individual and community levels, and strengthened the livelihoods of vulnerable households.** Greater synergy with other areas of UNDP programming could have enabled the development of new financial products tailored to existing productive sectors.

Since 2006, UNDP and UNCDF have partnered to develop the microfinance sector in DRC. Two consecutive programmes between 2006 and 2015 helped to shape the institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks for the first microfinance policy and strategy in the country. During the past and current CPD cycles, this support was channelled through the ACTIF project. ACTIF aimed to improve the wellbeing of poor households and micro-entrepreneurs, increase economic efficiency and sustain growth, by increasing the percentage of adults, including women and youth, with access to formal financial products and services offered by a variety of service providers. It was envisaged to reach at least 300,000 low-income people (55 percent women) through direct support for the business plans of financial service providers (savings and

<sup>88</sup> The main reasons for the delay were the coinciding of project intervention with the merger of Equity Bank and BCDC, the retail division of BCDC which was not very interested in microcredit and, to a lesser extent, the disruption of LPG supplies. Following the bank merger, the microfinancing scheme for LPG was launched for only 12 households out of the 250 initially planned.

<sup>89</sup> For instance, while BCDC did not have a suitable product in the first phase of the pilot, the bank has now an Energy, Environment and Climate Change department and concrete steps have been taken to scale the microcredit offer. Companies involved in the production of clean stoves also piloted microcredit services to facilitate adoption, reported to be highly successful in driving demand, and raising the interest of companies in pursuing semi-industrial production.

loan cooperatives, microfinance institutions (MFIs and banks) and professional associations. Building on achievements from two consecutive microfinance sector support programmes (PASMIF I and II), a first phase of the programme ended in 2022 and the project document for a second phase was being finalized in 2023.

Monitoring and external evaluation reports highlight significant results, with financial inclusion targets and the volume of financial services largely exceeding targets. MFIs and savings and loan cooperatives were able to register 718,457 new customers (49.57 percent women) thanks to the technical and financial support provided, and savings and credit volumes increased by 164.23 percent and 189.9 percent respectively compared to 2018. Despite the impacts of COVID-19, positive trends were observed, with average savings of \$800 per customer and growing demand for new financial products tailored to rural and marginalized populations. Project stakeholders confirmed that, between 2020 and 2023, about 1.9 million people (50 percent women) were able to access the services of cooperatives and MFIs. Furthermore, 8,600 households joined Mutual Solidarities and Village Savings and Loan Associations .

The programme was able to support the development and marketing of four new financial products targeting vulnerable populations. Beneficiary respondents confirmed the benefits of the various financial products made available and supported by the programme, which included meeting social and household needs (education, healthcare, dowry) and was highly appreciated by beneficiaries. People who benefited from access to finance to develop income-generating activities reported some challenges due to the socioeconomic situation, and notably the fluctuation of exchange rates.

The capacities of the institutions involved, i.e. the Ministry of Finance and the central bank, have been strengthened. The BCC has been able to improve its efficiency through strengthened supervision of the microfinance sector and ensure the dissemination of the new law on microfinance among actors in the sector. The professional associations of savings and credit cooperatives and of microfinance, that were set up through previous programmes, have continued to benefit from support, and shown some degree of maturity and improved capacity notably illustrated in their relative autonomy in terms of management, structuring and contracts with other development partners. As mentioned in reports, and confirmed in interviews, despite UNDP continued support, constraints remained at the macro level in in the areas of coordination and alignment across relevant institutions, oversight and inspection functions and the market ecosystem to incentivize public-private partnerships. The number of underserved rural areas and provinces still excluded from formal financial services far exceeds the progress made to date.<sup>90</sup>

Evidence shows that opportunities to accelerate financial inclusion could have been leveraged by articulating the microfinance component more strongly in other initiatives and areas of work. Internally, the microfinance area was not strategically embedded in the portfolio, although some recent efforts should be recognized including emphasis on financial inclusion in an agricultural economic recovery project in South Kivu in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic (finding 11). There is also room to expand external synergies with other relevant institutions (i.e. energy, environment, climate change) and foster commitments through public-private partnerships to advance the 'making access to financial services possible' approach.

This is broadly in line with recommendations of the final evaluation of the PASMIF II programme, which highlighted the need to foster synergy with other sectors (notably agriculture and women's empowerment) to expand access to services and diversify the resource mobilization strategy. The final evaluations of both

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<sup>90</sup> The final evaluation of ACTIF 1 highlighted that efforts to promote digital finance and transfers, though initially planned, could not be implemented during this phase, despite the potential important outcome in terms of access, notably from vulnerable populations in rural areas that have limited access to services.

PASMIF II in 2015 and of ACTIF I in 2022 emphasize the absence of an exit strategy, and resource constraints for the continued support of UNDP in this area, and recommended the prioritization of the development of a roadmap and exit strategy for ACTIF II.

**Finding 11: While appreciated by final beneficiaries, so far, efforts for inclusive agricultural value chain development have been too fragmented across initiatives.** Where more extensive engagement has been established in agricultural value chain, non-adherence to best practices, procurement delays, and the absence of market linkages have resulted in missed opportunities. The results are unlikely to be sustainable, unless they are embedded in long-term engagement and local ownership is fostered.

Interventions to support local markets and value chains through improved accessibility, agricultural diversification and productivity have been carried out through various UNDP projects in territories in North Kivu, South Kivu, Kasai Central, and Kinshasa. Interventions in this area have been characterized by two different programme approaches, from *ad hoc* support as part of broader interventions (for instance in the area of peacebuilding, and justice) to more comprehensive interventions directly targeting value chain development for forest protection or crisis recovery. Of the latter, two areas of UNDP support stood out due to their scale and depth: the roll out of an agricultural support mechanism and adoption of climate smart practices under PIREDD Orientale in Tshopo; and the development of agricultural credits for value chain development and diversification in South Kivu. The rest of the initiatives and efforts linked to economic development, job creation and entrepreneurial activities were rather scattered and isolated.<sup>91</sup>

While these can generate positive individual and community-level outcomes, in light of the 3x6 approach promoted by UNDP for micro and small enterprise development, these economic activities are characterized by limited potential for transformation and integration into wider value chains.<sup>92</sup> They range from supporting small-scale agriculture and livestock farming to sales of agricultural products. A market analysis, alongside greater investment and technical assistance would be needed to identify and boost potential for joint ventures and linkages with sustainable value chains. Nevertheless, project reports and interviews suggest that these activities provided opportunities for youth and women to gain some economic autonomy, and there is evidence that demands by far exceeded project capacity and resources.

UNDP supported communities and farmers organizations in South Kivu to boost productivity and competitiveness through access to agricultural credits, non-financial assets and technical assistance.<sup>93</sup> These include agricultural production and transformation inputs and assets, such as machinery, processing and storage units, aimed at reducing post-harvest losses and improving economic returns. These activities reached 3,735 small-scale farmers (402 women) associated with 100 farmers organizations.<sup>94</sup> Field visits and interviews confirmed the relevance of the assistance to the needs of the smallholder farmers and associations, given the good agricultural potential in these territories, and the limited capacity of the under-resourced Ministry of Agriculture. Access to agricultural credits, in particular, addresses a significant

<sup>91</sup> Under the support to COVID-19 recovery in Kinshasa, temporary jobs were created to produce masks and 20 small businesses were supported to develop digital solutions for marketing, such as e-commerce platforms. The Ministry of Economy was supported to develop effective socioeconomic response actions to emergencies and a systemic resilience policy approach. UNDP supported the institutional strengthening of the Congo Business Federation, which acts as Chamber of Commerce and the main employers' organization. The results of these efforts have yet to materialize, and no clear links were found with other interventions of the portfolio.

<sup>92</sup> The approach consists of three organizational principles and six steps: 1. Inclusion: Engaging (Step 1) Generating Income (Step 2); 2. Ownership: Saving (Step 3) Joint Venture (Step 4); 3. Sustainability: Investing (Step 5) Accessing Markets (Step 6).

<sup>93</sup> Three MFIs were supported to implement an agricultural credit strategy, including the creation of a \$335,616 guarantee fund to incentivize the promotion of credit products and the organization of farmers into village and savings and credit associations. The various financial products are tailored to the needs of small farmers who have been excluded from formal financial services, as well as those without any previous financial education or access to savings and credit schemes, particularly women and displaced people. Initial credit amounts range from \$150 through solidarity credit unions to \$500 through MFIs. The latter, for up to six months, and are mainly used for production inputs (i.e. seeds, fertilizers, land rental etc.), operational costs and basic needs.

<sup>94</sup> SDC (2023) Progress Report Project 'Economic Recovery and Poverty Reduction in response to the effects of COVID-19 in Uvira, Walungu, Idjwi, Kalehe, Kabare territories'.

obstacle for smallholder farmers and farmers' associations to improve their production capacity, as corroborated by the project evaluation which recognized both the economic and social value, in terms of individual empowerment and collective responsibility and solidarity. Beneficiaries reported improvements to their livelihoods and ability to cover part of their production costs. In addition, support to MFIs and the introduction of new financial products in their portfolio, have nearly doubled their clients and turnover.

Despite initial positive results, limitations have been noted concerning the overall effectiveness and sustainability of these interventions. In the case of PIREDD Orientale, challenges for the timely delivery of necessary inputs and assets due to complex procurement processes and access issues in security-risk territories (Yahuma, Basoko, Banalia and Opala) with high deforestation rates, have limited programme performance. In addition, technical shortcomings related to the management and late distribution of seedstocks have led to losses in both effectiveness and efficiency, reducing the potential of the seed stock by a factor of 40, according to interviewees. This partly explains the low level of progress in terms of cultivated agroforestry areas, which are way below the targeted 82,000 ha.<sup>95</sup>

In the case of credit schemes, disruptions related to the timing of disbursements and credit periods in line with the agricultural calendar (e.g., credits being granted during off-season), as well as insufficient amounts compared to production and rental costs, and disadvantageous interest and exchange rates, have jeopardized effectiveness. In some cases, respondents claimed that payment modalities and schedules adversely affected beneficiaries, forcing them to incur additional debts, generate off-farm income or sell agricultural products below market prices to ensure timely repayments.

Finally, the viability of agricultural development models in the territories visited was affected by land tenure issues, intercommunity conflicts and security problems, which were not addressed by UNDP. In both programme interventions, beneficiaries expressed concerns about the continuity of activities and those who had invested in perennial crops were beginning to be concerned about the marketing of their products, highlighting gaps in market linkages or promotion of integration of the value chains. Given the lack of rural extension services and the involvement of technical services from the Ministry of Agriculture, approaches used by UNDP implementing partners are not harmonized and depend heavily on available technical and financial resources. Where agricultural advisory services have not been provided at all, the investments and benefits of accessing credits are likely to be seriously undermined, as well as the expected results.

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<sup>95</sup> This was reduced from 160 000ha following significant delays experienced by the PIREDD programme.

## 2.3 Stabilization and resilience

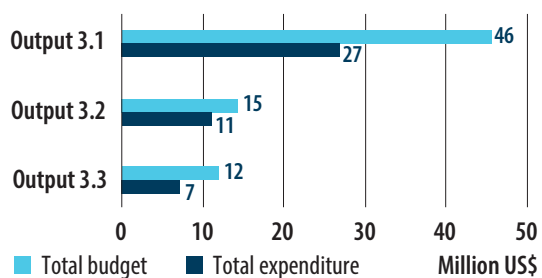
**Outcome 3:** Access to basic social services and humanitarian assistance.

**Output 3.1:** Local communities and institutions have strengthened technical capacities for prevention and, management of conflicts.

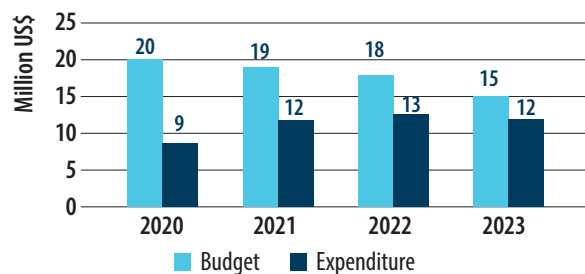
**Output 3.2:** Government institutions and communities at the local and central levels, are enabled to effectively promote gender equality and prevent and fight gender-based violence.

**Output 3.3:** The communities and institutions have strengthened technical capacities to cope with crises and natural and climate disasters.

**FIGURE 13.** Outcome 3 budget and expenditure by CPD output (2020-23)



**FIGURE 14.** Outcome 3 budget and expenditure by year (2020-2023)



Source: UNDP powerBI/ATLAS/Quantum.

**FIGURE 15.** Expenditure by thematic area - Outcome 3





Outcome 3 of the country programme consists of three outputs aimed at strengthening local and national capacity to support access to crisis-related services, including improved capacity for conflict prevention and management, response and prevention of gender-based violence, and resilience to natural and climate disasters. A total of 13 projects and plans were implemented under this outcome, with a budget of \$35.4 million and expenditure of \$22.6 million (10 percent of the total programme expenditure).

Programme expenditure is mainly led by Output 1.1 and programme expenditure related to stabilization, which accounted for 60 percent of programme expenditure between 2020-2023. During this period, UNDP acted as an administrative agent for the Stabilization Coherence Fund (SCF), a pooled fund hosted by the multi-partner trust fund (MPTF) to support stabilization efforts in DRC. Nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of programme expenditure was driven by two projects aimed at strengthening the response to gender-based violence, and recovery and resilience to nature and climate disasters, accounted for an estimated 17 percent of expenditure under this outcome.

**Finding 12: UNDP has been a significant player in enabling the financing and implementation of conflict resolution and prevention programming in DRC, as administrative agent of the Stabilization Coherence Fund.** This substantive support led to advances in key legislation related to conflict drivers, though overall this cycle was marked by delays due to notably to changes in the broader stabilization governance and architecture, which limited the direct contribution of UNDP in this area.

Through its role in the SSU, UNDP has been able to implement several key strategic objectives of the revised ISSSS. UNDP was able to gradually operationalize new functions between 2020 and 2022, notably for political engagement on issues of transhumance and land conflicts in South Kivu, access to land and major concessions in North Kivu, governance and local administration in areas of conflict and contestation of customary power, and land reform at the national level and in North Kivu.<sup>96</sup> Through UNDP technical support and facilitation of participatory consultation at provincial levels, this work has generated tangible institutional advances, notably through the validation in 2023 of the National Policy for the Prevention and Resolution of Community and Customary Conflicts, and action plans for the revitalization and operationalization of consultative commissions for the resolution of customary conflicts at provincial and DTE levels, notably in South and North Kivu. UNDP also supported consultation, drafting and validation workshops on the preliminary draft policy of the country's land law; and supported the process that led to the establishment of the provincial coordination of the National Land Reform Commission in North Kivu. In addition, UNDP supported advocacy and the development of a draft law addressing conflicts related to transhumance in South Kivu, which was transmitted to Parliament for approval.

An evaluation of SCF highlighted some of the key results, notably tangible results in the areas of democratic dialogue, restoration of State authority, and improving livelihoods of targeted communities, but noted that the numerous interventions funded appeared fragmented due to their short duration and the limited ability of partners to demonstrate the depth and impact of their interventions.<sup>97</sup> Though it recognized the positive

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<sup>96</sup> The political engagement strategy developed by the SSU is based on two pillars, which address the political and institutional dimensions of some of the priority stabilization objectives identified in the provinces, with the aim of building complementarities between projects implemented by the Fund; and enable linkages between community-level interventions with policy processes at provincial and national levels.

<sup>97</sup> MPTF (2022), External Evaluation of the Stabilization Coherence Fund.

strategic changes in SCF from the previous phase, departing from an emphasis on infrastructure building, its ability to drive coherence and stabilization efforts in the eastern regions appeared to have decreased.<sup>98</sup> The evaluation noted the persistence of conflicts in target areas, raising questions about SCF added value.

In addition, important changes in the national governance architecture and stabilization programming during the programme period somewhat paralyzed the Fund's governance architecture. In July 2021, national authorities integrated the national disarmament, demobilization and recovery (DDR) and stabilization programmes into a single programme, the Programme for Disarmament, Demobilization, Recovery, Community and Stabilization (P-DDRCS), placed under the Presidency. While the integration of these two national programmes is a positive development to revitalize DDR, which had stalled over the years, and to drive enhanced coherence and national ownership between the two intertwined objectives, this created a temporary vacuum in national representation within the governance of the SCF.<sup>99</sup> It also stalled the expected SSU support to build national capacity to prepare for the transfer of stabilization competencies. UNDP and MONUSCO had to readjust their focus of interventions to support national authorities in the consultation and drafting of the National P-DDRCS Strategy, which was adopted in September 2022 by the Presidency, and enabled the development of provincial level stabilization strategies and action planning to begin. Provincial-level strategies were developed and adopted in all provinces targeted by UNDP (South Kivu, Tanganyika, Ituri, Kasai Central, and North Kivu) and capacity development support was launched to assist designated provincial coordinators to take up their mandates.

In addition, an internal restructuring within MONUSCO in September 2022 resulted in a revision of the SSU structure, through the adoption of a new mandate refocused around support to the P-DDRCS, coordination and coherence; and a separation of accountability for support to stabilization between MONUSCO and UNDP, effectively ending the hybrid structure of the unit. In view of the ongoing transition, leadership on the United Nations joint programming for stabilization and peacebuilding was assigned to the Office of the Resident Coordinator, and the establishment of the joint programme did not materialize within the originally planned timeframe. Following these important changes in the overall stabilization architecture and governance, UNDP support for the resolution and prevention of conflict during this programming cycle faced significant delays. The UNDP Stabilization and Resilience team was only consolidated and established within the UNDP country office in 2023, when it was able to begin programme implementation. UNDP launched several short-term initiation projects in line with CPD outputs, which at the time of this evaluation formed the basis of new programme development and of ongoing mobilization efforts.

Overall, delays in redefining the stabilization governance architecture at national level and the decision to remove UNDP from the fund administration has significantly limited the ability of UNDP to develop its programmatic interventions in the targeted eastern provinces during this programming cycle. In addition, the electoral context has also contributed to limiting the progress of certain processes such as the vote on laws supported by the programme. At the same time, the experience of operating the fund as part of the MONUSCO/UNDP hybrid stabilization unit has provided important experience, networks and learning, that UNDP can integrate into its portfolio, in line with the expected MONUSCO transition called for by Congolese authorities and expressed in Security Council Resolution 2612. An important illustration of this is the monitoring system, which was deployed for the SCF project, which the M&E stabilization team was able to maintain and pilot for UNDP interventions in 2023.

<sup>98</sup> As noted in an evaluation of the SCF covering the period 2015 to 2022, resources mobilized by the fund during this phase of implementation only represented about one-sixth of resources mobilized in the first phases of pooled funding for stabilization (2008-2012) although for a shorter period. The evaluation thus noted the reduced scope and impact potential of projects funded in recent years, despite implementation of a revised approach to stabilization.

<sup>99</sup> The executive board of SCF was previously led by the STAREC programme under the Ministry of Planning.

**Finding 13: Through its SCF programme management role, UNDP was able to establish and implement a robust M&E system for stabilization adapted to local context and capacity, which has been adapted and piloted in the new Stabilization and Resilience pillar of the UNDP country programme. Past implementation and recent pilots show promising perspectives to inform strategic direction and promote the participation of local authorities.**

As part of its mandate within the SCF Secretariat, UNDP developed a robust verification and monitoring system, called the Change Monitoring System (CMS), to respond to increased demands from donors for better evidence of progress and achievements of funded projects. Launched in 2020, this revised M&E modality was rolled out to respond to limitations of the previous SCF M&E approach (captured in a review of the system in 2019) which relied primarily on the reporting and M&E activities of implementing partners.<sup>100</sup>

The CMS is a robust M&E framework that includes various layers of assessment to enable: (i) monitoring of implementing partner workplans; (ii) project and context monitoring; (iii) programme/ strategy-level monitoring; and (iv) data verification and accountability. All of these activities are jointly implemented with the local Division of Planning and National Institute for Statistics (INS), which form part of a joint Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) team together with UNDP, fostering important levels of ownership and participation in the design and implementation of the system.<sup>101</sup> Other positive features of the approach have included the standardization of data collection processes through the publication of comprehensive indicator guidelines, the independence of the team who are not engaged in programme implementation, and a focus on the validity and reliability of quantitative data to enhance confidence in reporting.

The data produced is stored on a public website, which contains data points for indicators of the ISSSS collected to date.<sup>102</sup> It is estimated that more than 32,000 people had been surveyed in SCF areas of intervention since 2020.<sup>103</sup> The adoption of a common approach has enabled analysis and comparison across the different implementation localities and projects, providing an additional opportunity for learning and adaptation of the overall programme strategy. The SCF final evaluation found that implementation of the CMS within the Fund significantly enhanced its M&E function.<sup>104</sup>

Following the consolidation of the CSF MEAL unit within the UNDP country office in 2023, the team was able to maintain its partnership with local authorities and expand it to additional provinces which were within the focus of UNDP interventions but not previously covered by the Fund (Tanganyika and Kasai Central). In 2023, the MEAL team was able to pursue its capacity-building efforts to national stakeholders and conduct mapping in new provinces, which enabled the mapping of armed groups and conflicts and of UNDP interventions in the Tanganyika province. The new strategy to internalize population polls was successfully piloted in 2023 in South Kivu without using external consultants, and building on a network of trained data collectors established in all territories by INS. The use of local capacity throughout the process is reportedly a source of important efficiency gains in terms of budget required. The data collection strategy adopted a reduced questionnaire (145 questions reduced from 300) but was able to expand data

<sup>100</sup> The development of the CMS built on UNDP past experience and collaboration between 2013 and 2022 with MONUSCO, the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, and local stakeholders to conduct population-based surveys on rule of law and peacebuilding in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. The initiative produced much needed data to appraise the relative progress of peacebuilding and state consolidation strategies through periodic polling, which informed strategies of development partners at large. The end of project evaluation recognized the significance of the initiative but recommended that it be internalized by UNDP and national stakeholders involved in the M&E function of SCF.

<sup>101</sup> The Division of Planning and INS focal points participating in the CMS have allocated time for joint work within the MEAL team, composed of 13 people, including eight UNDP staff and five from the Division of Planning.

<sup>102</sup> Website of the CMS is available here: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrljoiZmU0ODMzMtAtYmQ4NC00ZDA3LTgyYTYtOTE5NTE1YzB-kNjU3liwidCl6lmlzZTVkYjVlLTl5NDQtNDgzNy05OWY1LTc0ODhhY2U1NDMxOSlslmMiOjh9&disablecdnExpiration=1698159389>

<sup>103</sup> FCS (2022) rapport annuel 2022.

<sup>104</sup> External Evaluation of the SCF, June 2022.

collection to all territories in South Kivu, enabling the participation of an estimated 4,000 participants, 51 percent women. This provides additional (and in some cases new) data that can act as a baseline for future polling efforts.<sup>105</sup>

The evaluation noted the willingness of participating provincial authorities to expand the scope of the initiative to elevate the mechanism and enable localized monitoring of sectorial strategies, and more broadly of the PNSD. Respondents emphasized the great interest, participation and resulting sense of ownership of partners involved, who saw high value in the initiative. The partnerships also enabled the digitalization of local statistical units which has thus far been mainly manual. There is thus great potential to pursue and expand the initiative for the monitoring of sectoral policies and as a contribution to evidence-informed policy debate in DRC more broadly. The integration and adaptation of the CMS to UNDP programmes would present important benefits in responding to challenges, noted in this evaluation and others, in terms of data availability and project-level monitoring and oversight. Currently, the expansion of CMS has been limited to the outputs of Outcome 3, but the existence of such an approach could greatly enhance data availability and credibility across all areas of future CPDs.

**Finding 14: UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have developed and scaled a one-stop-shop service delivery model for medical centres, combining health, psychosocial, legal and economic support for victims of sexual violence.** This approach has gained prominence in the response to gender-based violence and reached a milestone achievement during this programming cycle through the approval of a decree to institutionalize the model. While this represents an important development towards sustainability, the absence of clarity over financing options remains an important challenge.

In line with its mandate, UNDP has been a strong and continuous partner in addressing the widespread gender-based violence related to conflict, and more generally prevalent in DRC. Gender-based violence has been an important entry point for UNDP to expand its support to the justice sector in DRC, through the gradual development of the broader justice reform programmes currently implemented under the joint justice programme with MONUSCO (Finding 1). For example, the emphasis on supporting the provision as well as demand for justice has remained a high priority for conflict-related gender-based violence.

During this programming period, UNDP continued the support initiated as far back as 2014, with the introduction of a one-stop-shop for gender-based violence victims and survivors.<sup>106</sup> The development of this approach responded to the challenges faced previously with the roll-out of legal clinics managed by CSOs, which were limited in their ability to deliver and facilitate access to the broad range of services needed by gender-based violence survivors, including access to health, psychosocial, legal, and economic reinsertion services.<sup>107</sup> It was also noted at the time that medical services should be the main entry point for support to victims of gender-based violence. In this regard, the roll-out of a one-stop-shop approach anchored in medical centres was an important step to increase access, while also encouraging victims to seek legal redress. Initiated in 2014 through the Tupung Ubakanji project jointly implemented with UNFPA, UNHRO and UNESCO, the approach was continued during this cycle with the implementation of the joint gender-based violence programme 2019-2023, with UNFPA and UNHRO.

<sup>105</sup> Themes covered by this pilot include perception on social cohesion, stabilization, gender, security, justice, elections and demobilization and reinsertion of ex combatants.

<sup>106</sup> Several projects to combat gender-based violence have followed one another for several programme cycles: Access to Justice, Security and Women's Empowerment in Eastern DRC, 2011-2013; Combating impunity on gender-based violence (Tupung Ubakanji), 2013-2018; gender-based violence Response and Women's Empowerment (ADD-Canada), 2019-2023; and Combating gender-based violence, KOICA, 2021-2026.

<sup>107</sup> UNDP DRC (2014) External final evaluation of project: Strengthening Women Access to Justice.

During this period of implementation, and capitalizing on past efforts, UNDP continued to implement key components of the holistic approach including awareness raising, legal and judicial assistance and economic reinsertion, and support for the installation of 12 Integrated Multisectoral Services Centres (CISMs), which benefitted an estimated 37,775 victims between 2018-2021. The approach initially focused on the eastern provinces of the country, and was extended to the western provinces of Kasai and Kinshasa during this cycle. Medical and psychological services continued to be the most solicited services, accounting for 76 percent of the total clients serviced by the CISMs.<sup>108</sup> Justice services reached 3,712 victims, for whom 1,268 court decisions were rendered. The final programme evaluation noted that this was only 63 percent of the target figure for court decisions, representing the lowest achievement among the service components of the programme, followed by the economic reinsertion services. While these initiatives had impact on requests to CISMs, or reduction in the prevalence of gender-based violence, the final evaluation of the programme estimated that awareness raising activities delivered by the programme reached an estimated 200,000 people.

The CISM visited for this evaluation showed signs of sustainability despite the end of direct support and financing from the joint programme in North Kivu. The final evaluation noted that the psychosocial and medical components remain available at the health centre and have remained the most sought-after services during implementation of the joint programme. The justice component, consisting of legal advice by a CSO and referral to lawyers from the local bar association was considered partly effective. CISM respondents recognized that the end of support had highly slowed the activities of the CISM which relied on the will of service providers. The joint programme included some measures to strengthen the sustainability of implementing partner interventions, but for the CISM visited, this support was inadequate to generate the intended results.<sup>109</sup>

Overall, the integration in health centres of holistic services for gender-based violence victims has been useful to facilitate and improve the delivery of services and care to victims as well as to seek remedial help, but the deterrent role of the legal component of the strategy has been hampered by the lack of access of victims to the civil interests allocated by court decisions, a limitation that may favour amicable settlements, maintaining a perception of impunity of perpetrators; an overall shortcoming of the judicial chain in targeted areas to make a dent in the overall impunity for gender-based violence.

To address challenges of sustainability, the joint programme, which ended in 2022, was extended to support CISM institutionalization. This supported the drafting of a policy, and related advocacy which led in February 2023 to the adoption by the Council of Ministers of a decree institutionalizing CISMs, intended to cement the role, functioning and composition of CISM and mainstream their role in the national response to gender-based violence. Following this development, the JAD programme has obtained an extension to accompany the process and support the effective implementation of the decree.

While the decree institutionalizing CISM can be viewed as an important step for mainstreaming and scaling up the response to gender-based violence, respondents expressed uncertainty on potential financing scenarios. The project is implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children, but requires the integration and delivery of services falling under the purview of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Interior, alongside the Police. As such, the decree establishes a National

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<sup>108</sup> UNDP DRC, Midterm evaluation of programme conjoint de lutte contre les violences basées sur le genre : justice, autonomisation et dignité des femmes et des filles en république démocratique du Congo.

<sup>109</sup> In this specific case, the project handed over motorbikes to a women-led organization to generate revenue to pursue its judicial advice to victims. The medical staff met by the evaluation proposed that investment in the capacity of the health centre to expand services and collect revenue as a potential source of revenue, but the programme was not able to support this type of initiative before closing.



Coordination Council with representation from 11 different ministries.<sup>110</sup> While the decree foresees that funding for the functioning and activities of CISM will be set in the national budget, respondents were not clear about the sources of financing and expect that this will require continued advocacy, highlighting the continued sustainability challenge faced by the intervention model.

**Finding 15: UNDP has implemented various interventions aimed at strengthening resilience to climate risks.** The level of resources mobilized for this area during this cycle has restricted the scope of work to build capacity for adaptation and mitigation, in favour of responding to the recovery needs of affected areas.

Between 2015 and 2020, UNDP supported the implementation of two projects in the area of resilience to climate change in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment in Kongo Central, with funding from the Global Environment Facility. The ‘Strengthening the Resilience and Adaptive Capacity of Women and Children to Climate Change in DRC’ project was implemented in four provinces (Kwilu, Kongo Central, Haut-Katanga and Lomami), and the ‘Strengthening the Resilience to Coastal Erosion of Muanda Communities (2015-2020)’ project was implemented in coastal localities of Kongo Central. The projects aimed to build community resilience by strengthening the availability of information on climate risks relevant for planning, budgeting and management of coastal protection, and the adoption of income diversification strategies and climate resilient approaches for livelihoods.

The projects supported the development of provincial development plans for Kongo Central, integrating climate risks, namely coastal erosion, and identified options for adaptation and the conservation of coastal areas. In addition, a retaining wall was constructed covering about 10 percent (four kilometres) of the country’s coastline, to mitigate coastal erosion and stabilize cliffs in the areas of Nsiamfumu-Muanda. Signalling buoys were also delivered, as the basis of an early warning system to facilitate information through community level radios.

The projects also implemented several adaptation measures aimed at strengthening community resilience, including income and livelihood diversification options such as the development of 132 fishponds and market gardens benefitting 27 community groups, both employing an estimated 200 women. Livestock (poultry and goats) and improved seeds were distributed to diversify sources of income and reduce the vulnerability of beneficiaries. In addition, the introduction of improved cook stoves benefited an estimated 1,500 people, reducing by 60 percent the need for charcoal, which, together with the prohibition of gravel extraction, reduced the pressure on mangroves and riverbanks.

The projects evaluations showed that the COVID-19 pandemic affected implementation, and many aspects could not be finalized or operationalized.<sup>111</sup> For example, the early warning system was only being tested during at final evaluation stage, signalling buoys had been delivered but additional training and equipment for their use had not. The construction of the retaining wall encountered some technical issues, not meeting technical standards, and the private operator undertaking construction did not take into account the recommendations of the local people, requiring further work. Evaluation recommendations to finalize progress and mobilize additional resources to enable the consolidation of programme achievements were not followed. The evaluation team noted that several achievements of the project had not been sustained, observing deterioration of the retaining wall, the non-functionality of the early warning system

<sup>110</sup> In addition to the ministries of gender, interior and security, public health and justice, the National Coordination Council is supposed to include the ministries of budget, education (primary, secondary, technical and higher), finance, social affairs, youth and vocational training.

<sup>111</sup> UNDP DRC/ GEF (2023) Evaluation finale du projet de renforcement de la résilience des communautés de Muanda à l'érosion côtière. <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/22216>; UNDP DRC/ GEF (2023) Final evaluation of the “project to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of women and children to climate change in the DRC”. <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/22686>



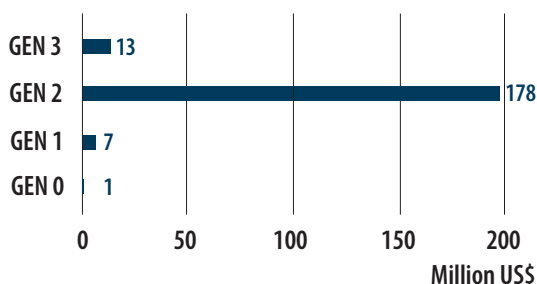
and some productive assets established by the projects (market, livestock feed manufacturing plants, fish drying and preservation). Furthermore, some assets delivered by the projects (fishermen’s landing stage, administrative building in the village of Nsiafumu) were not being used by the target communities, according to community respondents, because they had not been subject to an official handover to the communities.

More recently, UNDP has been supporting the coordination of provincial civil protection for disaster risk prevention and reduction (DRR) in the provinces of North and South Kivu. Progress has been limited in North Kivu due to the resurgence of conflict and state of emergency since 2022. More efforts could be deployed in South Kivu to address the significant DRR initiatives following severe flooding. UNDP has supported South Kivu to develop four strategic tools for disaster risk prevention, management and reduction: (i) the provincial DRR Strategy (2022-2027); (ii) a multi-hazard contingency plan; (iii) an action plan for disaster risk prevention and management (2022-2027); and (iv) a plan to revitalize the Provincial DRR and Management Platform. With the technical and financial support of UNDP, a flood risk analysis was conducted on the West Shore of the Ruzizi River and Lake Tanganyika, which now serves as a basis for any decision-making on measures to mitigate the risks and threats of natural and climate-related disasters. UNDP supported DRC to mobilize resources for, design and implement recovery efforts, which in 2022 enabled 509 households (out of 1,500 targeted) to benefit from measures to mitigate the risks and threats of natural and climatic disasters. To support mechanisms to alert the population to recurrent flood risks, UNDP procured equipment for eight meteorological stations installed in the province of South Kivu. In 2023, similar efforts were underway in North Kivu to launch a mapping of disaster risk and strengthen early warning systems.

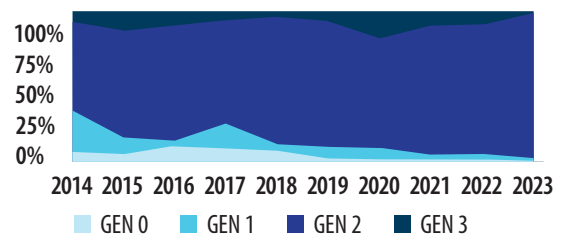
## 2.4 Cross-cutting findings

**Finding 16: With some exceptions, the contribution of UNDP is mainly characterized by targeted approaches.** Strategies reflecting the differentiated needs of women and other vulnerable populations, as well as changes in cultural norms and values aimed at the roots of inequalities and discrimination, have been limited. The lack of rigorous monitoring during and after projects has made it impossible to measure the specific contribution of UNDP to the long-term changes targeted.

**FIGURE 16. Expenditure by gender marker (2020-23)**



**FIGURE 17. Evolution of expenditure by gender marker (2014-23)**



Using the United Nations Gender Equality Marker system, most of the UNDP projects under the current programming period are classified as Gen 2, as they are considered to contribute significantly to gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE).<sup>112</sup> GEN 2 projects accounted for nearly 88 percent of programmatic expenditure between 2020 and 2023. Projects classified as Gen 1, characterized as having limited contribution to GEWE, mostly focused on statistical and data capacity-building, including strengthening the evidence base and data robustness around the SDGs, as well as improving planning, programming, and M&E and enhancing civil society participation in the REDD+ programme. However, these types of initiatives are essential to promote differentiated and responsive actions, with a focus on the necessary policies and evidence-based decision-making, and may thus reflect a missed opportunity to further advance the GEWE agenda.

Only a few projects in the UNDP DRC portfolio have GEWE as their primary objective, or GEN 3 according to the gender marker system. These projects have provided differentiated responses to the specific challenges and vulnerabilities of women, despite their different levels of sustainability and implementation. They include initiatives to strengthen the leadership of women and youth in the fight against gender-based violence, a project to strengthen the resilience and adaptation to climate change of women and children in the DRC, and one to strengthen access to solar energy targeting women’s groups in Mambasa (Ituri). Through the former, efforts have been put in place to address the social norms that govern the status of women through awareness of positive masculinity, to support empowerment measures in an environment conducive to sustainability. UNDP is committed to the fight against gender-based violence over the long term, with a succession of interventions in the field of justice, the prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence, and the care of victims over the last decade.

In general, projects deliver gender-targeted results that are achieved by ensuring adequate representation and consideration of women, youth and other marginalized groups among the beneficiaries of interventions. For example, for livelihood support activities and the use of the high-intensity workforce approach, the equal participation of different marginalized groups has been encouraged. In other cases, special attention has been paid to GEWE and leave no-one behind (LNOB), for example in the infrastructure works of the PDL-145 programme, where sex-segregated sanitation facilities and access ramps have been integrated into the design. Under the access to finance component, which is key to overcoming structural barriers, women and youth were specifically targeted, and an increase in the number of women accessing financial services was seen in the first year of implementation. The decentralization programme also emphasized the consideration of gender issues in planning and citizen participation at the level of DTEs.

However, the evaluation noted the lack of a differentiated strategy to address women’s specific vulnerabilities, including tailored technical support and monitoring that recognizes their specific vulnerabilities and limited consideration of the risks that could exacerbate them<sup>113</sup>. Gender norms and roles have not always been taken into account in implementation strategies, and field visits found that women’s participation has been mostly limited to traditional gender roles, with a few exceptions. Generally speaking, on the basis of the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale, we can denote that UNDP supports an approach and results that correspond to “gender-targeted” results.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup> GEN 0 corresponds to “the key activity is not expected to contribute to gender equality”; GEN 1 stands for “the core business contributes to GEWE to a limited extent”; GEN 2 stands for “Significant Objective of the Overall Intent of the Key Activity”; and GEN 3 stands for “GEWE is the main objective of the intervention.

<sup>113</sup> For example, these risks are related to the need to protect against gender-based violence arising from the mobility required to participate in training activities or obtain money at credit institutions, as well as changes in family dynamics resulting from women’s increased access to and control over financial resources.

<sup>114</sup> [https://erc.undp.org/pdf/GRES\\_English.pdf](https://erc.undp.org/pdf/GRES_English.pdf)

Despite concerted efforts to increase women's participation and roles in governance structures, challenges remain in achieving gender parity. For example, the targets for women's representation and leadership on the various committees of the revised climate working group in the context of the REDD+ programme have not been fully met, reaching between 23 and 33 percent. Similarly, in the PIREDD Oriental programme, cultural norms and a male-dominated governance structure have been significant obstacles to achieving a balance in the participation of women and indigenous peoples in decision-making processes for land and agricultural planning. While the evaluation recognizes the complexity of navigating deep-rooted societal structures, it found little evidence of context-responsive and adaptable strategies for gender-transformative actions focused on social norms, power dynamics, and structural determinants of inequality and discrimination. With a few exceptions, indigenous peoples have been partially targeted by interventions.

Beyond the strategic direction of interventions, the data to measure and determine UNDP contributions to GEWE are lacking. Although sex-disaggregated indicators and data are included in project design and reporting, M&E generates little evidence to concretely measure achievements in terms of empowerment. For example, the final evaluations of the three projects mentioned as having GEWE as their main objective (Gen 3) highlighted this challenge, particularly with regard to initiatives aimed at changing behaviours. Given the time required to instigate sustainable behaviour change, there is also a lack of monitoring and measurement of impacts after the end of projects. This would strengthen and confirm the hypotheses that support the logics of interventions, identify what has worked in the long term, and help promote the replication and/or scale up of successful experiments.

Overall, UNDP demonstrates a good consideration of gender issues, but has opportunities to enhance its contribution by more deeply addressing the norms and root causes of inequalities, and the transformative potential of its interventions. Greater attention is needed from the design phases, to allocate adequate resources, throughout implementation, and in a more robust monitoring system to measure progress and contributions to GEWE and LNOB. Beyond efforts to integrate and target specific marginalized groups, a more strategic reflection on structural gaps and barriers is needed to ensure tailored approaches and actions that respond to the needs and opportunities for empowerment of marginalized individuals and groups over time.

**Finding 17: The implementation of the country programme is characterized in some areas by longstanding partnerships that have yielded convincing results, with an almost total absence of external partnerships in other areas, notably inclusive growth and nature, climate and energy programmes. Internal synergy between UNDP portfolios remains limited, and opportunities to demonstrate UNDP comparative advantages in the development of integrated solutions are thus missed.**

UNDP is an important development partner in the DRC development context, building on its longstanding in-country presence and record of engagement with national stakeholders at national, provincial and municipal levels. In a context plagued by natural and man-made crises, UNDP stood out in ensuring national engagement and ownership of its support. UNDP has enjoyed a strong partnership with DRC authorities, who perceive it as a trusted development partner. This positioning is reflected in the role assigned to UNDP in advising the launch and execution of the PDL-145 programme, an unprecedented initiative from the DRC Government. UNDP positioning is further illustrated in its management of various pooled funds, such as the Humanitarian Fund and, more recently, the SCF. UNDP remained a key support to national authorities during sanctions imposed by key donors after the postponement of the 2014 elections, facilitating the resumption of relationships between the donor community and national authorities after the 2018 elections, in its role as a co-Chair of Donor Coordination Group.

During the current CPD, many UNDP flagship programmes have been anchored in key government processes, such as the MONUSCO transition, UNDP support for the renewed stabilization and DRR processes, the REDD+ programme, and strong alignment with national strategies including for gender-based violence. The dual positioning of UNDP in supporting national policy processes and downstream engagement enable it to ensure the external coherence and relevance of its interventions. UNDP has sustained longstanding partnerships, sometimes spanning more than a decade, particularly within the United Nations system, which are yielding positive results. In particular the partnerships with UNFPA to support CISM, with UNCDF to support microfinance, and with MONUSCO in the areas of rule of law and stabilization, have enabled the agencies to capitalize on their respective mandates and capabilities to deliver development solutions. Outside of the United Nations system, partnership and coordination are more limited.

The UNDP partnership approach has been uneven across programme areas of the CPD and, in some cases, the convening role of UNDP, linking local and national level processes, could be stronger. In particular, there was little strategic collaboration with development partners for the implementation of interventions on inclusive growth (with exception of the microfinance sector), energy, climate change adaptation and disaster management, or the value chain development. While outside of the direct control of UNDP and subject to significant time pressure, the execution of PDL-145 may have lent itself to participation from other United Nations agencies. Previous findings related to UNDP performance, particularly in strengthening value chains, and the lack of local technical leadership expertise, raise questions about the absence of strategic collaboration, which could have help build complementary expertise and enhance results.

Internally, synergy, joint initiatives and knowledge management between UNDP portfolios was limited or absent in design and implementation, missing opportunities to build integrated responses and develop synergy within and across programme areas. For example, a lack of synergy was noted between activities of the PIREDD Orientale and ACTIF programmes (see finding 14). While the targeting of different geographic areas can limit opportunities for collaboration between activities, there was little evidence of integrated intervention approaches at the time of the evaluation. Similarly, synergy across portfolios was not evident, despite opportunities for sharing of learning. Community committees (for local development, peace and security, etc) have been supported by all areas of the programme, but there was no sharing of best practices across these initiatives.

Overall, the country office operated a strict projectized programme environment with limited opportunities for synergy in the design and execution of interventions, or to leverage internal expertise outside of project boundaries. Furthermore, the fragmentation of human resources affects cross-cutting functions. Resource mobilization and programme development appeared to fall under the responsibility of team leaders, pillar coordinators and programme specialists. At the time of the evaluation, there were around 19 staff-members at various levels with M&E in their job title, all but three assigned to specific projects and reporting directly to their respective project leads. Operational quality assurance was covered by two different units in the office organigramme (PMSU, Business oversight and compliance). For the most part, the country office organigram has not changed the since the last IEO evaluation over ten years ago, despite past evaluations noting internal silos and similar challenges posed by current arrangements. While in some cases this has been dictated by funding opportunities, there have been missed opportunities to improve UNDP contributions and potentially reduce transaction costs.

**Finding 18: Implementation of the country programme is constrained by management challenges and delays, limiting the time available for implementation, opportunities for the participation of stakeholders in the design and execution of activities, and in some cases the quality and delivery of results, and posing a reputational risk for UNDP.**

UNDP has been an important facilitator and managers of various pooled fund mechanisms in DRC. For instance, between 2016 and 2022, UNDP acted as a pass-through agent for the DRC Humanitarian Fund, distributing \$260 million of humanitarian financing, including direct management of 69 percent of that, and previously played a similar role for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. During this cycle, UNDP played an enabling role to channel financing from CAFI for the National REDD+ programme, through SCF. Government trust in UNDP to implement a significant part of PDL-145 funding (\$643,556,211) attests to the credibility and guarantees provided by UNDP operation capacity and due diligence practices.

Beyond the restrictions caused by COVID-19, implementation of the programme faced significant constraints causing delays and additional transaction costs. This has derived from external constraints of the challenging context as well as the internal issues related in the operation and implementation modalities of the country programme. Recurrent challenges (security, health, sociopolitical), and the inaccessibility of sites due to the lack of road infrastructure and natural disasters, limited field activities and lead to delays in schedules and activities and loss of resources. At national and provincial levels, implementation of the current country programme has been marked by significant contextual changes causing delays and transaction costs, such as the resurgence of armed conflicts, natural disasters and the electoral and political context, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNDP partners and staff respondents noted a certain inertia at the operational level in terms of procurement and payments. Many respondents complain about payment delays, the lack of communication and transparency, and the inability of local partners to intervene in these processes. The rigidity and complexity of UNDP procedures has been raised as a cause of delays and complications, and, in some cases, concerns were raised as to whether UNDP was fit for purpose to carry out local interventions and see through its commitments. Among other risks, these recurring challenges pose a real reputational problem for UNDP.<sup>115</sup> Several respondents complained about significant delays in the payment of pre-financed activities and participation in field activities with local authorities or for field monitoring missions.

Operational challenges were evident in all portfolios, ranging from the timely initiation of projects, which causes significant delays from contract signing to execution, and are reflected in the high number of no-cost extensions. The complexity of administrative and operational processes limits UNDP capacity to implement according to established timelines, with significant delays in the contracting and procurement processes necessary for the implementation of activities. Delays in the launch of activities due to the annual validation of workplans by local authorities have been an important constraint, limiting the time available for programmatic engagement and activities.

Bottlenecks were also identified in the implementation approach with local partners, through small grants schemes. Respondents and field visits confirmed that processes to recruit local partners were excessively long, negatively impacting the relationships with authorities and targeted communities. As local NGOs conduct needs assessments and consultations in the process of submitting an implementation proposal to UNDP, expectations are raised, and delays can generate mistrust and frustration, as well as loss of credibility both towards local partners and UNDP by local communities and authorities. In addition, the delays shorten implementation periods, which can affect the quality of delivery and achievement of results. This has been particularly noticeable in the technical assistance to smallholder farmers and microfinance beneficiaries and, more broadly, in PDL-145, PIREDD and, to a lesser extent, the joint justice programme.

Evidence suggests that contractual terms and conditions have, to some extent, implied financial risks for local NGOs, who also expected more from UNDP as a partner in terms of capacity-building and transfer and institutional strengthening. Similar issues and bottlenecks were also raised by international NGOs and private sector partners

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<sup>115</sup> As reported by various external and internal interlocutors who indicate that many suppliers (companies and individuals) no longer want to work with UNDP. This has been a cause of concerns raised by partners and UNDP staff met during this evaluation.



engaged in CAFI-funded initiatives and PDL-145 (see findings 8 and 12) in relation to contractual terms and payment delays. In the case of CAFI-funded activities for REDD+ programming, these challenges are illustrated in the engagement with civil society through the GTCRR. The GTCRR global assessment highlighted the need for more responsive and flexible support mechanisms, highlighting broad agreement from all partners, including UNDP, that administrative and financial procedures had been cumbersome. Civil society work requires lean and flexible funding procedures to enable timely and rapid action. The heavy procedures and processes for approval of funding and activities through UNDP meant that the GTCRR was unable to respond to emerging issues.<sup>116</sup>

Overall, difficulties in delivering quality processes on time, and demonstrating results, undermined UNDP positioning and credibility. In the case of PIREDD Orientale, budget shortages resulted in tangible outcome gaps, raising questions about the efficiency of UNDP role in partner selection. Allegations of fund retention, coupled with delays in recruiting implementing partners, created disillusionment among stakeholders. This dissatisfaction permeates communities, eroding trust and impeding the progress of community-driven projects. The country office did not appear to have a clear plan to address operational challenges that have overburdened the structure and staff, and affected relations with partners and donors.

The UNDP country programme is fully executed under Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), heightening UNDP accountability for the management and execution of programmes and placing a higher burden on UNDP operations. While this modality is justified given the assessed high level of fiduciary risk in the country, this increases dependence on UNDP operations and stretches the capacity of the country office and its implementing partners to ensure quality delivery of activities. The preceding and current CPDs stated the intention to support introduction of National Implementation Modality (NIM) where possible, but this has not materialized. The evaluation found limited evidence of UNDP proactive support to sustainably build the capacity of partners, beyond compliance with procedures as part of project implementation. At the same time, several respondents expressed concerns that their institutions were assessed as high risk by UNDP, despite records of working under such modalities with other international development partners.

**Finding 19: A notable strength of UNDP is its physical presence in the country, built over time to respond to the evolving crises and development challenges of the country, and enabling it to build synergy between national and local levels.** Evolving needs and funding flows have stretched UNDP resources, limiting its ability to fully leverage and sustain its presence on the ground, leading to a high level of centralization in decision-making which limited these presential advantages.

UNDP has extensive field presence in DRC, which has evolved and grown over time to respond to the country's evolving needs and in line with its unique location. The 2012 IEO country programme evaluation emphasized that UNDP field presence had "amply contributed to creating an image of UNDP in the DRC as a decentralized and operational organization" and that "Thanks to these offices, UNDP was able to adapt its activities to local realities and priorities." While traditionally present and more active in eastern regions affected by conflict, the previous evaluation noted that the reach of the programme expanded to respond to crises in the western and central regions (Kasai, Kasai Central, Kongo Central), to changes in context (MONUSCO transition in Tanganyika), and to specific programme support needs.<sup>117</sup> At the time of the previous evaluation, UNDP was present in 17 areas outside of the capital, of various scale and authority, including one representative office in Goma, six project offices and 10 project outposts.<sup>118</sup> During the cycle under review, the UNDP footprint in DRC increased to seven new provinces under REDD+ and PDL-145.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Considering these multiple challenges, in 2023 the GTCRR General Assembly decided to terminate its partnership with UNDP.

<sup>117</sup> UNDP IEO (2012) ADR of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

<sup>118</sup> The outposts allow the minimal presence of UNDP staff through joint offices, for the execution of specific single projects.

<sup>119</sup> With the exception of four provinces (Tshopo, Haut Uele, Bas Uele, and Kasai), where the two programmes are both executed by UNDP, in other cases new presence is driven by execution of PDL-145. (Sud Ubangui, Equateur, Mongala, Tshuapa, Sankuru, Maniema, Bas Uele).

The previous CPD evaluation emphasized risks related to UNDP presence, including structural challenges for the country office, which still hold true over ten years later. The evaluation raised concerns about the potential of reduced delegation of authority and typology of presence in the different provinces, to affect perceptions of UNDP image and its ability to provide continued support and advice to decentralized authorities.<sup>120</sup> It also expressed concern about changes in the level of representation due to funding constraints in 2010, limiting the delegation of representation office authority to project offices.

During field visits for the present evaluation, a continuing trend could be seen in the limited margin and scope for UNDP field presence engagement beyond the implementation of specific projects. Some decentralized respondents noted a decrease in UNDP engagement and presence over time, particularly in places where UNDP had a longstanding presence. This was also expressed by UNDP staff in the provinces where programmatic authority was limited beyond the execution of planned project activities, liaison and reporting. Field units did not have budgetary autonomy to engage in programmatic activities and development, and the Heads did not have dedicated budgets, beyond office expenses, limiting their representation role and ability to convene local stakeholders and sustain local partnerships.

A high level of centralization of functions in Kinshasa, notably managerial and operational, was found to limit UNDP reactivity and create reputational risk for UNDP field units. Respondents noted that high centralization of decision-making and operational functions, particularly finance and procurement, affected the ability of UNDP to respond to implementation challenges in the complex settings in which it operates. In June 2023, about 55 percent of total staff were based in Kinshasa, including more than half (56 percent) of programmatic staff and 73 percent of operation support staff.<sup>121</sup>

Financial sustainability challenges related to the predictability of funds may justify, to some extent, the centralization of key functions which could have generated economies of scale, numerous respondents, including UNDP staff across provinces, emphasized the significant operational burden impacting interventions across all portfolios, notably the centralization of approval lines which was seen to cause important delays. The centralization of decision-making and approvals appeared to limit the ability of field staff to adapt to context, and generated some degree of disempowerment and frustration due to their inability to influence processes. Several national partners at decentralized levels flagged the limited flexibility of their local counterparts to intervene when administrative bottlenecks occurred, notably when payments were delayed.

At programmatic level, in the majority of projects, decision-making and strategic direction appear to have remained centralized, with most steering committees and programme leadership based in capital. This was highly noted by local authorities, notably provincial technical divisions, who remarked on their limited engagement or influence in final decisions guiding the strategies of UNDP programmes. The project-centred management and implementation approach currently prioritized by UNDP somewhat limited the UNDP positioning and convening role, and stakeholder engagement outside of active projects, which could ensure that core support services (finance, procurement, M&E) are delivered more efficiently and sustainably.

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<sup>120</sup> UNDP IEO (2012) ADR of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

<sup>121</sup> All staff includes country office and programme management, programme analysts, programme coordinators, thematic experts, advisors, Excluding United Nations Volunteers, drivers, staff with UNDP contracts supporting the Resident Coordinator Office, and M&E staff. Programme staff excluded UN Volunteers, drivers and UNDP staff supporting the Resident Coordinator Office. Operational staff includes management, administrative, finance, logistics, procurement, communication staff at all levels.



# CHAPTER 3

# CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



This chapter presents the evaluation conclusions on UNDP performance and contributions to development results in DRC, as well as the recommendations and management response.

## 3.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1: UNDP is recognized as an important partner of the Congolese authorities, and has earned an image of trust and credibility due to the relevance of its support to national priorities and its continuity through the protracted and multi-faceted crises facing the country.** The priorities and interventions of the country programme have responded to principles of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the evolving MONUSCO transition. The implementation of UNDP programmes faces significant contextual challenges, and despite several successes, downstream implementation has faced recurrent operational hurdles across all programme areas affecting the implementation of activities and limiting linkages between upstream and downstream support, which could cause reputational risks if unaddressed.

UNDP is recognized as a trusted and credible development partner due to its longstanding presence in the country, its convening role, operational and technical capabilities. The CPD for DRC 2019 -2023 builds on longstanding support to the country's transition to peace, stability and prosperity, and responds to the five pillars of the national development strategy and evolution in the context, such as the transition of MONUSCO. The priority areas of the programme are of particular importance to support the country capacity to manage its development trajectory and build ownership, placing institutions and locally driven development at the heart of interventions. At the same time, numerous and longstanding operational challenges have affected many UNDP downstream interventions affecting the efficiency and quality of its contribution and partner engagement. While all stakeholders recognized the strong convening role of UNDP, enabling it to advance upstream support and policy reform, operational challenges have affected interventions in provinces and raised questions about the comparative advantage and credibility of UNDP to deliver results on its commitments downstream.

**Conclusion 2: The role played by UNDP in the inception and execution of PDL-145 highlights the strong credibility and trust that UNDP enjoys with national authorities.** National authorities, with UNDP support, have rolled out the country's most significant rural development programme to date in the country, though with some delays and implementation challenges. The UNDP role is significant, given the scale and unprecedented nature of this national initiative, but the overall ambition of the programme, and structural constraints of the context, have challenged its operational capabilities.

UNDP played a key role in supporting and advising national authorities in the design and execution of PDL-145. The programme constitutes a significant undertaking, due to its size and unprecedented nature, and will enable remote communities to access improved basic services for the first time, notably in the areas of health and education. Financed through government cost sharing, it highlights the commitment of national authorities to support rural development and strengthen State presence outside of provincial capitals, while emphasizing the perceived trust and credibility UNDP holds as a partner of choice of the DRC Government. However, the ambition and operational challenges set by the programme have challenged UNDP and placed a significant burden on its capabilities, due in large part to accessibility issues and a tight timeframe for completion. These challenges, and pressure to deliver, have somewhat overshadowed a more strategic role that UNDP could have played to maximize its contribution by supporting the overall management of the programme and advising on integrated development. As the first phase of the PDL is ending, UNDP needs to prepare to deliver on the second phase of the programme (electrification, value chain, road infrastructure).

**Conclusion 3: UNDP has played an important role in strengthening institutional, organizational and individual capacity for the rule of law, development planning and decentralization.** The nature and sustainability of results achieved are affected by the difficult operating context and limited resources of targeted national, provincial and municipal stakeholders. In this context, UNDP support has often been oriented towards the operational needs of institutions, which while essential, does not foster sustainable change and risks the fragmentation of support.

Although projects generally enjoy a good level of national ownership and alignment with national policies and strategies, the absorption and scaling capacity of national counterparts has been limited. UNDP and other development partners supported institutions to finance day-to-day activities relevant to their mandates and, particularly in the area of rule of law, interventions rely on continued support to enable follow-up and sustainability. In the area of decentralization, no resources were provided to implement the provincial and local development plans developed, and support for aid coordination faced the same sustainability challenges. Capacity-building is not always anchored in a stable and coherent way, which would strengthen utilization, facilitate regular monitoring and enable sustainability. In addition, the diversity of areas of work and actors has the effect of fragmenting UNDP support to meet the needs of all actors, and results in *ad hoc* support.

**Conclusion 4: UNDP support during this cycle has shown some success in addressing key structural barriers affecting the economic participation and livelihoods of vulnerable groups, notably through expansion of the microfinance sector and access to basic services promoted through PDL-145. Efforts for inclusive value chain development and economic diversification have been less effective, small-scale and focused on production capacity, with limited follow-up to ensure marketability and sustained demand.**

UNDP has recorded some success during this cycle in expanding the number of people accessing financial assets, strengthening the management capacity of MFI partners, and diversifying the offer of financial products to support livelihoods in the wake of COVID-19. In addition, UNDP played an important role in PDL-145, itself an important response to the challenges of rural areas which aims to contribute to the development of human capital and lay the foundations for robust, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in target areas. UNDP provided important support in this area through the implementation of ACTIF and, more recently, PDL-145 programmes, but other livelihood initiatives have been fragmented and small-scale with limited signs of sustainability. Furthermore, linkages and support for value chain integration have been limited to the provision of productive assets, community infrastructure, and/ or livelihood diversification options, with less attention to market viability and commercialization, and therefore lower sustainability options.

**Conclusion 5: UNDP has played a pivotal role in strengthening national and decentralized technical and institutional frameworks, improving the enabling environment for the sustainable management of natural resources.** Downstream implementation and linkages with upstream support remained weak due to significant operational challenges and gaps in engagement with local stakeholders. The results achieved to date, and the overall performance of UNDP, fall short of the expectations of stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The current programme has delivered successes in institutional strengthening such as the National Energy Policy, Land Use Plan, Land Tenure Policy, Master Plan for LPG and many other local instruments. Support for the production and use of cookstoves has also shown positive results. However, overall, downstream engagement in the PIREDD Orientale programme was affected by operational challenges which significantly reduced the potential of its contribution. Gaps in communication and local stakeholder engagement have limited ownership over some processes, notably in provincial land use plans and community forest applications, which are yet to be validated due to an impasse between the administration, technical partners and UNDP.

**Conclusion 6: The intended UNDP contribution to stabilization and resilience-building saw limited progress during this CPD due to changes in the institutional context, and has been limited to UNDP co-management of SCF.** Other interventions implemented in this area during this cycle, while useful, have been *ad hoc* and lacked the necessary depth to bring about sustainable solutions. Building on the experiences of managing SCF, UNDP is in a good position to support the renewed national stabilization and DDR programmes, in line with the gradual transfer of responsibilities under the MONUSCO transition.

UNDP has played an important facilitation and substantive role through its fiduciary and management role in SCF, as part of the hybrid stabilization unit together with MONUSCO. This has enabled substantive functions of the SCF Secretariat to be operationalized, enhancing its contribution and linkage with national policy. Notably, management of the SCF M&E function demonstrated added value, improved data availability and reporting capacity, while leveraging existing national capacity for its implementation. While political context, including revisions in the national response to stabilization and DRR, have slowed the governance and operation of SCF, UNDP was able to adapt to circumstances and support efforts to consolidate the Government's renewed strategy. UNDP participation in SCF has been terminated, and the future of the Fund is uncertain, but the current cycle saw the consolidation of UNDP capacity in the stabilization and resilience area of the CPD, highlighting the readiness of UNDP to take leadership in this area of work, in light of the gradual transfer of responsibilities to United Nations country team members under the ongoing MONUSCO transition.

**Conclusion 7: UNDP programme interventions have remained highly fragmented both in design and local execution.** The lack of linkages between UNDP interventions, and in some cases with other partners, has limited the potential reach and depth of interventions. Implementation of the country programme is marked by a highly projectized structure that has not enabled integration and synergy within and across thematic programme areas. Over time, this arrangement has been exacerbated by the decreasing delegation of programmatic and operational authority to an expanding field presence, creating gaps in stakeholder engagement and the ability to meet expectations at provincial level.

Fragmentation of the country programme is a longstanding issue, which has been raised by several UNDP evaluations over the past decade. While donor requirements and the size of UNDP operations in DRC may have warranted such internal arrangements, the evaluation noted missed opportunities to further a development programme intervention model, for instance between microfinance initiatives and PIREDD Orientale, but also in enhancing contribution in areas where UNDP capacity appeared stretched. At the heart of the lack of synergy lies a highly projectized structure supporting implementation of the country programme, which limits the ability of UNDP to operate in a cohesive manner and engenders transaction costs. This is well reflected in the arrangements governing the extensive UNDP field presence, which despite constituting a distinct comparative advantage, has remained untapped from a strategic point of view due to limited delegation of operational and programmatic authority and the centralization of functions and staffing in the capital.

**Conclusion 8: UNDP has made concerted efforts to ensure that interventions mainstream gender, though this has mostly resulted in the targeting of women and youth in its interventions and falls short of delivering gender-responsive solutions to address social norms and barriers to empowerment.** There remains scope to strengthen the mainstreaming of LNOB principles and consider intersectionality between and within vulnerable groups.

UNDP has ensured that GEWE is included in the design of its projects, but implementation has proven inconsistent across portfolios. The levels of participation of women and youth have remained below most stated project targets, highlighting the contextual challenges of reaching parity in intervention beneficiaries. Efforts have been made to reach vulnerable groups, including women, through various projects, but less has been done to develop differentiated approaches responding to the specific vulnerabilities of targeted groups and addressing underlying drivers of inequality such as social norms and barriers. Moreover, considerations of the intersectionality of vulnerabilities in the targeting of beneficiaries have been absent from programme interventions, notably to develop solutions to the significant number of displaced persons affected by conflict and natural disasters.

## 3.2 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1: Engage national authorities in participatory assessments of key sectorial policies guiding UNDP institutional capacity development efforts to strengthen advocacy, stimulate policy and institutional changes, where necessary, while reinforcing national ownership.**

UNDP should engage national authorities in participatory evaluations of key sectorial policies guiding its institutional capacity-support efforts, with a view to strengthen advocacy and stimulate policy and institutional change, where necessary, while strengthening national ownership. This would help place greater emphasis on addressing the structural bottlenecks which have been assessed to limit progress and sustainability while guiding the next steps of support.

UNDP has been a key actor and support of central ministries and has extended continuous support to key dimensions of the national development process and key sectorial reforms in the sectors of justice, security, stabilization, aid coordination, natural resource management and energy. In doing so, UNDP has deployed a broad range of capacity-development efforts covering institutional, organizational and individual needs. There is a need to systematically take stock of progress in the implementation of these various areas of work to align understanding of progress, shortcomings and structural bottlenecks; with a view to strengthening the commitment, roles and responsibilities of national authorities and development partners, and build consensus on the conditions for success and sustainability. In this regard, evaluating progress in the implementation of the road map for justice sector reform, given it is approaching its term, should be prioritized to inform future directions.

**Recommendation 2: Anchor UNDP downstream interventions into area-based approaches with a view to strengthen synergy and maximize the contribution of UNDP, prioritizing provinces subject to MONUSCO withdrawal.**

UNDP should seek to anchor its downstream interventions across its country programme into area-based approaches, to strengthen synergy across its different programmes and maximize its contribution. Such an approach, subject to resource availability, should prioritize provinces under MONUSCO withdrawal to enable UNDP to play its full role in the ongoing transition.

UNDP has provided useful direct support for the livelihoods of vulnerable populations, access to justice, mediation and service delivery at provincial and municipal levels. Given limited resources, the scale of needs, and the multidimensional development challenges faced at local level, UNDP should further integrate its different areas of support. This would limit transaction costs and maximize its contribution to local development challenges, facilitate partnerships, and favour the emergence of integrated intervention models that could be scaled up or replicated by other development partners. In doing so, UNDP should build on its existing presence to mobilize resources to expand its programmatic footprint and localize all areas of the CPD. This will inevitably call for considering the viability of new UNDP presence in provinces where it implemented PDL-145.

**Recommendation 3: Capitalize on the initial success of the CMS developed under the SCF and expand its use to relevant areas of the next country programme and to national policies.**

UNDP should capitalize on the past successes and engagement of national stakeholders in the CMS developed under the SCF and now being adapted to the UNDP stabilization pillar of work. UNDP should seize this opportunity to scale up the system to relevant areas of the next country programme and national policies with a view to strengthening accountability, learning opportunities and in-country thought leadership.

The DRC operating environment is marked by the limited availability of data to inform strategic decision-making and ascertain progress towards the achievement of results, notably at local level. In this context, the participatory system established for the M&E function of SCF, and its adaptation and integration into UNDP Stabilization and Resilience pillar, is a very positive development for the enhanced availability of data for the monitoring, evaluation and learning of UNDP interventions. A more supported and extensive roll out of the CMS could complement and strengthen existing M&E capacity and reporting systems. Moreover, this constitutes an opportunity for UNDP to capitalize on its current positioning and strengthen its in-country thought leadership, to inform the policy debates and actions of development partners in DRC. The UNDP country office should take greater ownership of this initiative and establish greater synergy with, and contributions from, existing expertise within the office (M&E, communication, thematic) to provide greater external visibility for this work.

**Recommendation 4: Strengthen gender-responsiveness and the LNOB principle in interventions, to reflect differentiated approaches that respond to the vulnerabilities of target groups.**

UNDP should strengthen GEWE and LNOB responsiveness of the next country programme, by developing interventions that go beyond the targeting of vulnerable groups to reflect a more differentiated approach in programme interventions, and address the root causes of exclusion and marginalization.

Future programmes need to be more intentional in their contribution to GEWE and LNOB, going beyond the inclusion or targeting of women and vulnerable groups in interventions, by supporting concrete empowerment measures that address social norms and behaviours. The promotion of positive masculinity should take centre stage in GEN 2 interventions to ensure sustainability and reduce potential unintended consequences. In addition, opportunities should be sought to increase the proportion of interventions directly contributing to GEWE and to mainstream LNOB principles in all interventions, notably for indigenous and displaced populations, and other relevant vulnerable groups at risk.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen the linkage between programmatic partnerships and operational capacity-building efforts, with a view to proactively enabling gradual and performance-based shifts toward national implementation modalities, where possible.**

The country programme should seek to strengthen links between its programmatic partnerships and operational capacity-building efforts to proactively enable progressive shifts towards NIM. This transition, where possible, should be supported by a transparent capacity development strategy with pre-determined performance milestones. UNDP has supported institutional capacity-building at national and local levels for decades, and some of its past support has shown the ability to sustainably strengthen operational capacity. Transition to NIM has been highlighted as an objective in past two CPDs but it has not translated into concrete and visible engagement during the implementation of this country programme. While fiduciary risks may remain high, there has been little demonstrated efforts to actively enhance the core capacity of national partners to prepare them for such transition. Where possible, UNDP should develop and implement transparent capacity development strategies to complement its programmatic offer. Sustainably building the operational capacity of partners should be considered both an objective of UNDP programme implementation, and a measure to ensure ownership and the continued capacity of UNDP to respond to needs for support, given the significant burden of DIM on UNDP operations.

**Recommendation 6: Strengthen the alignment of operational, managerial and programmatic capabilities with UNDP geographical presence, with a view to strengthening local representation and fostering a more integrated working environment within and across portfolios.**

UNDP should seek to strengthen alignment of its operational, managerial and programmatic capability with its geographical presence so as to strengthen local representation and reduce the centralization of decision-making and execution in the capital. Revised arrangements should seek to foster a more integrated working environment, leveraging existing internal expertise and opportunities within and across portfolios, and introducing new areas of engagement in its programmes.

UNDP should seek to strengthen the role, operational capacity and autonomy of field offices, to more fully leverage their local presence for stakeholder engagement and synergy-building across projects, thematic portfolios, and between upstream and downstream interventions. Greater operational autonomy of field units should enable more streamlined operational execution and enable the heads of field units to consolidate area-based approaches and local development programming. This should also enable more flexible use of internal expertise across projects and thematic portfolios, to limit fragmentation and transaction costs. There are immediate opportunities to strengthen existing areas of work through greater synergy (for instance between PIREDD/ energy access and access to finance, or access to finance and agricultural development) and opportunities to work at the intersection of programme areas which have remained untapped (such as civil justice and environment, ADR and justice, voting rights and access to social protection, business and human rights for example).



### 3.3 Management response

#### RECOMMENDATION 1.

**UNDP should engage national authorities in participatory assessments of key sectoral policies guiding its institutional capacity-support efforts, to strengthen advocacy and stimulate policy and institutional changes, where necessary, while strengthening national ownership.** This would help to place greater emphasis on addressing the structural bottlenecks which have been assessed to limit progress and the sustainability of support while guiding the next steps of support.

#### Management response: Accepted

| Key action(s)  | Time frame     | Responsible unit(s)                         | Tracking* |        |
|--|----------------|---|-----------|--------|
|  |                |   | Comments  | Status |
| 1.1 Support the Office of the Premier in setting up a Delivery Unit.   | December 2024  | Policy and Strategy Unit                    |           |        |
| 1.2 Depending on the national priorities for essential reforms set out in the Government's Action Programme, agree with the national party concerned on the evaluation modality and process.               | June 2025      | Pillars<br>Programme quality assurance unit |           |        |
| 1.3 Strengthen national ownership by supporting national parties to share and implement the recommendations of the evaluation in order to improve the area for which the policy or strategy was developed. | September 2025 | Pillars<br>Programme quality assurance unit |           |        |
| 1.4 Strengthen the capacity of government M&E managers to evaluate public policies.  | December 2025  | Pillars<br>Programme quality assurance unit |           |        |

## RECOMMENDATION 2.



**UNDP should seek to anchor its downstream interventions across its country programme into area-based approaches, to strengthen synergy across its different programmes and maximize its contribution.** Such an approach, subject to resource availability, should prioritize provinces under MONUSCO withdrawal to enable UNDP to play its full role in the ongoing transition.

**Management response: Partially accepted**



| Key action(s)   | Time frame       | Responsible unit(s)                                      |
|---|------------------|--|
| 2.1 Adopt a regional approach that promotes the design of programmatic portfolios adapted to each context and added value to reduce operating costs and stimulate endogenous development and synergies of public interventions. | 4th quarter 2025 | Resident Representative / Deputy Resident Representative |
| 2.2 Strengthen the functions of local presence and deploy technical expertise on the ground in order to promote local support and the effectiveness of interventions in the provinces under the withdrawal of MONUSCO.          | June 2025        | Resident Representative                                  |
| 2.3 Design and implement regional programmes that promote the decompartmentalization of provinces, peace, community cohesion, youth entrepreneurship development and cross-border trade.  | 2025             | Pillars  |

## RECOMMENDATION 3.



**UNDP should capitalize on past successes and the engagement of national stakeholders in the CMS developed under SCF and now being adapted to the UNDP stabilization pillar.** UNDP should seize this opportunity to scale up the system to relevant areas of the next country programme and national policy, with a view to strengthening accountability and learning opportunities and in-country thought leadership.

**Management response: Partially Accepted**



As part of the next programmatic cycle (2025-2029), the country office plans to organize and aggregate the various digital data solutions that have been tested through its different projects. The achievements of the CMS will therefore be taken into account in the new data collection and management system that will be set up within the country office.

| Key action(s)  | Time frame    | Responsible unit(s)     |
|--|---------------|-------------------------|
| 3.1 Implement a digital data collection and management system within the country office. | June 2024     | Country Office M&E unit |
| 3.2 Integrate digital data management into the entire M&E system of the country office.  | December 2025 | Country Office M&E unit |

## RECOMMENDATION 4.



**UNDP should strengthen the GEWE and LNOB responsiveness of the next country programme, by developing interventions that go beyond the targeting of vulnerable groups to reflect a more differentiated approach in programme interventions, to address the root causes of exclusion and marginalization.**

**Management response: Accepted**



| Key action(s)   | Time frame    | Responsible unit(s)                  | Tracking* |        |
|---|---------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------|
|   |               |                                      | Comments  | Status |
| 4.1 Develop provincial poverty profiles based on the results of the Household Living Conditions Survey to better understand the causes of inequality and the responses that can be provided to apply the LNOB principles. | 2025          | Pillar 2                             |           |        |
| 4.2 Develop specific analyses or studies to establish the root causes of exclusion and marginalization in order to propose coherent programmes that promote social protection.  | 2025          | Pillar 2<br>Policy and Strategy Unit |           |        |
| 4.3 Mobilize resources to set up an inclusive and structured programme focused on vocational training and support for youth and women to promote their empowerment and the development of SMEs.                           | 2025          | Pillar 2                             |           |        |
| 4.4 Mobilize resources to strengthen component 2 of PDL-145T to progressively cover the development needs of agricultural value chains.   | 2025          | PDL-145T<br>Pillar 2                 |           |        |
| 4.5 In partnership with banks and specialized national structures, promote innovative financial products to increase the incomes of households, internally displaced persons, refugees, marginalized people, etc.         | 2025          | Pillar 2<br>AccLab                   |           |        |
| 4.6 Support the implementation of the recruitment policy of the Congolese National Police promoting the recruitment of women as part of the joint United Nations programme to support police reform.                      | December 2026 | Pillar 1                             |           |        |

**RECOMMENDATION 5.**

**The country programme should seek to strengthen links between its programmatic partnerships and operational capacity-building efforts to proactively enable progressive shifts towards NIM.**

This transition, where possible, should be supported by a transparent capacity development strategy with pre-determined performance milestones.

**Management response: Accepted**



| Key action(s)  | Time frame    | Responsible unit(s)  | Tracking* |        |
|--|---------------|--|-----------|--------|
|  |               |  | Comments  | Status |
| 5.1 Establish a sustained and tailored capacity-building programme for implementing partners based on the recommendations of micro-assessments.                          | June 2025     | Pillars<br>Programme quality assurance unit<br>Oversight and Business Process Improvement unit |           |        |
| 5.2 Strengthen the capacities of public administration services in Planning-Programming-Budgeting-Monitoring-Evaluation (PPBSE) in the context of Public Finance Reform. | December 2025 | Pillars  |           |        |

## RECOMMENDATION 6.



**UNDP should seek to strengthen alignment of its operational, managerial and programmatic capability with its geographical presence so as to strengthen local representation and reduce the centralization of decision-making and execution in the capital.** Revised arrangements should seek to foster a more integrated working environment, leveraging existing internal expertise and opportunities within and across portfolios, and introducing new areas of engagement in its programmes.

### Management response: Accepted



| Key action(s)  | Time frame    | Responsible unit(s)  | Tracking* |        |
|--|---------------|--|-----------|--------|
|  |               |  | Comments  | Status |
| 6.1 Rationalize local presence, put in place a strategy to mobilize resources to ensure programmatic and operational functioning to meet needs at the local level. | June 2025     | Pillars<br>Programme quality assurance unit<br>Oversight and Business Process Improvement unit<br>Policy and Strategy Unit |           |        |
| 6.2 Through the portfolio approach, mobilize resources for the implementation of programmes aimed at strengthening the resilience of populations and institutions. | March 2025    | Pillars<br>Programme quality assurance unit<br>Oversight and Business Process Improvement unit<br>Policy and Strategy Unit |           |        |
| 6.3 Implement joint programmes to cover local needs based on UNDP value-added and targeted areas of intervention.  | December 2025 | Pillars<br>Programme quality assurance unit<br>Oversight and Business Process Improvement unit<br>Policy and Strategy Unit |           |        |

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

# ANNEXES

Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/23898>

**Annex 1.** Evaluation Terms of Reference

**Annex 2.** Evaluation Framework

**Annex 3.** Project List

**Annex 4.** Status of country programme outcome and output indicators

**Annex 5.** Country programme performance rating



Independent  
Evaluation  
Office

United Nations Development Programme

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

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