Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION
BELARUS

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

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INDEPENDENT UNDP PROGRAMME EVALUATION: BELARUS
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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS i

ACRONYMS iv

EVALUATION BRIEF 1

CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION 3

1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation 4

1.2 Evaluation methodology 4

1.3 Challenges and limitations 6

1.4 Country context 7

1.5 UNDP in Belarus 10

CHAPTER 2. FINDINGS 12

2.1 UNDP positioning and programmatic response 13

2.2 Economic development based on the principles of green and inclusive growth 15

2.3 Implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures 19

2.4 Development of an effective digital ecosystem 24

2.5 Fuller participation of vulnerable groups in socioeconomic life 32

CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE 35

3.1 Conclusions 36

3.2 Recommendations and management response 38

ANNEXES 44

TABLE

Table 1. Coverage of key populations with main HIV-related services 2023-2024 30

BOX

Box 1. Evaluation questions 5

FIGURES

Figure 1. S-curve transformation model: three stages of transformation 5
Figure 2. Key events that affected implementation of the UNDP country programme (2020-2025) 9
Figure 3. Evolution of country programme budget and expenditure by year (2016-2024) 11
Figure 4. Expenditure by fund category, 2021-2024 11
Figure 5. Outcome 1: Evolution of budget, expenditure and execution rate by year (2021-2024) 16
Figure 6. Outcome 1: Expenditure by donor 16
Figure 7. Outcome 2: Budget and expenditure by year 20
Figure 8. Outcome 2: Expenditure by donor 20
Figure 9. Outcome 3: Budget and expenditure by year 25
Figure 10. Outcome 3: Expenditure by donor 25
Figure 11. Outcome 4: Budget and expenditure by year 28
Figure 12. Outcome 4: Expenditure by donor 28
Figure 13. Gender distribution of project funds 33

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India and China
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CCM	Country Coordination Mechanism
CPD	Country programme document
CSD	Council for Sustainable Development
CSO	Civil society organization
DIM	Direct implementation modality
DRA	Digital and Artificial Intelligence Readiness Assessment
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EPI	Environmental Performance Index
ESG	Environment Social Governance
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
Global Fund	Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GRES	Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
ICT	Information and communication technology
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
LED	Local Economic Development project
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MAPS	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MES	Ministry of Emergency Situations
MoC	Ministry of Communications and Informatization
MoNREP	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
MRV	Monitoring, reporting, verification
NAP	National Action Plan

NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIM	National implementation modality
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
ODA	Official development assistance
PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyls
PECC	Public Environmental Coordinating Council
POPs	Persistent organic pollutants
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
RBM	Results-based management
ROAR	Results-Oriented Annual Report
RSDS	Regional Sustainable Development Strategy
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SPNA	Specially Protected Natural Area
TB	Tuberculosis
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Evaluation Brief: Belarus

Country Profile

Belarus, an upper middle-income European country with a population of 9.11 million, is notable for its Human Development Index of 0.801, placing it among countries with very high human development. Since gaining independence in 1991, Belarus has experienced steady economic growth, with a significant reduction in poverty; only 3.5 percent of its population lived below the poverty line in 2024. The country has made significant strides in promoting gender equality through concerted government policies such as the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2021–2025). Additionally, Belarus has demonstrated strong commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), establishing a robust infrastructure to monitor and accelerate progress toward them.

UNDP in Belarus

UNDP has operated in Belarus for over three decades, focusing on key economic, social and environmental challenges within the framework of the Government's strategic goals. The Country Programme Document (CPD) for 2021-2025 marked a departure from earlier frameworks, emphasizing interdisciplinary accelerator platforms across four priority areas: (1) green and inclusive economic development; (2) climate change mitigation and adaptation; (3) digital ecosystem development; and (4) inclusion of vulnerable groups in socioeconomic life. The programme set an ambitious funding target of US$ 52 million, and had successfully mobilized over $115 million by the time of this review.

Findings and conclusions

UNDP demonstrated remarkable adaptability and resilience in Belarus, successfully navigating a challenging geopolitical landscape marked by international sanctions and political complexities. Despite these obstacles, UNDP Belarus consistently maintained its role as a trusted, neutral and responsive partner to the Government, aligning its programming with the national priorities and evolving development needs of Belarus. It also secured significant new funding opportunities, emphasizing its ability to remain a key development actor in a constrained operational environment.

UNDP catalysed progress in key areas of socioeconomic and environmental development. It supported the Government in advancing the Green Economy National Action Plan and developing the National Strategy on Circular Economy, contributing to sustainable growth and improved environmental governance.

UNDP contributed significantly to advancing climate action in Belarus, supporting the development and implementation of key adaptation and mitigation measures, including updating the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and formulating a long-term Low-Emission Development Strategy. It also encouraged local citizen participation and helped build partnerships with non-state actors in environmental governance. UNDP provided enabling and catalytic contributions to strengthen protected area management, restore

degraded ecosystems, and promote sustainable natural resource use. Moreover, UNDP significantly advanced sustainable chemical waste management in Belarus through the safe disposal of hazardous persistent organic pollutants (POPs), building national capacity for chemical monitoring, and promoting compliance with the Stockholm Convention.

The UNDP made significant contributions to the healthcare system in Belarus as part of the national COVID-19 response. It facilitated the acquisition of essential medical equipment and ensured sustained access to international health financing for HIV and TB prevention.

Belarus has made significant progress in achieving the SDGs, supported by a comprehensive national architecture and the establishment of the CSD. UNDP played a crucial role in advancing the national SDGs framework, supporting regional sustainable development strategies (RSDSs), and improving the national SDGs data collection and dissemination system.

In the context of Belarus, as an upper middle-income country, UNDP played a vital catalyst role to introduce innovative approaches and models and unlock potential. The strength of UNDP lay in its targeted, high-leverage inputs such as technical assessments, pilot models and knowledge products, that empowered national partners to explore and institutionalize new approaches. Overall, UNDP efforts in Belarus closely aligned with international priorities, particularly in areas such as climate action and SDG initiatives, reinforcing its role as a key partner in the country's development journey.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. UNDP should further capitalize on the opportunity created by the development of RSDSs in Belarus, to further strengthen its cooperation with regional authorities and promote the initiation and implementation of regional voluntary reviews as a foundation for the next iteration of the regional strategies.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should leverage growing business interest in the ESG agenda and the Government's initial steps towards enabling public-private partnerships, to foster business engagement in implementation and funding of the SDGs as opportunities arise, in partnership with the Government. This can include exploring, where possible, different funding modalities for promoting social and green bonds, blended finance mechanisms, and results-based climate financing, while using platforms like the Belarus - United Nations Global Compact network to strengthen outreach.

Recommendation 3. UNDP should enhance its strategic approach to environmental sustainability and climate resilience by integrating climate considerations into national development planning to achieve transformative national impact.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should further strengthen its MEL system and processes to better capture contributions to CPD outcomes.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should strengthen its resource mobilization efforts by diversifying funding sources and further positioning itself as a trusted implementation partner of the Government. In light of international funding constraints, the country office should explore new opportunities, particularly with SCO and BRICS partners, to offset reductions in traditional financing streams.

Recommendation 6: UNDP should further assist the Government of Belarus in advancing digital transformation by promoting e-governance policies and expanding high-quality digital services for citizens and businesses.

CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation as well as the methodology applied. It lays out the development context, as well as the UNDP programme in Belarus.

1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP contributions to national development priorities, as well as the effectiveness of the UNDP strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts for achieving development results.

ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP evaluation policy.[1] The objectives of the ICPE, as set out in the Terms of Reference, are to:

- Assess UNDP performance in relation to the country programme outcome goals;
- Identify and document key lessons learned, good practices and innovations; and
- Provide a set of forward-looking and actionable recommendations to strengthen programmatic strategies in the design of the next country programme.

This ICPE was carried out between November 2024 and May 2025 and covers the period from 2021 to end of 2024, the first four years of the current country programme cycle (2021-2025). This is the second country programme evaluation conducted by the IEO in Belarus, after the 2019 ICPE. It covers all UNDP activities in the country and interventions from all funding sources, including UNDP own resources, donor and government funds. The ICPE also covers non-project activities, such as coordination and advocacy in support to the national sustainable development agenda (see Annex 5 for the full list of projects reviewed).

The primary audience of this ICPE is the UNDP country office, the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) and UNDP Hubs. Other intended users include relevant government partners, including line ministries and other relevant State bodies, national implementing partners, target populations and groups of the UNDP programme, United Nations agencies under the joint umbrella of the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector and other development partners.

1.2 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was guided by four key evaluation questions (Box 1). The evaluation methodology (Annex 2) adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards.[2] In line with the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, the evaluation examined the level of gender mainstreaming, and gender equality in the formulation of the country programme and its operations, as well as the results achieved. Gender marker data were used to analyse the level of expected contribution to gender equality. Gender-related results were assessed using the IEO Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES).[3]

[1] See http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml.
[2] See the United Nations Evaluation Group website: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914.
[3] The GRES classifies gender results into five categories: gender negative, gender blind , gender targeted, gender responsive, and gender transformative.

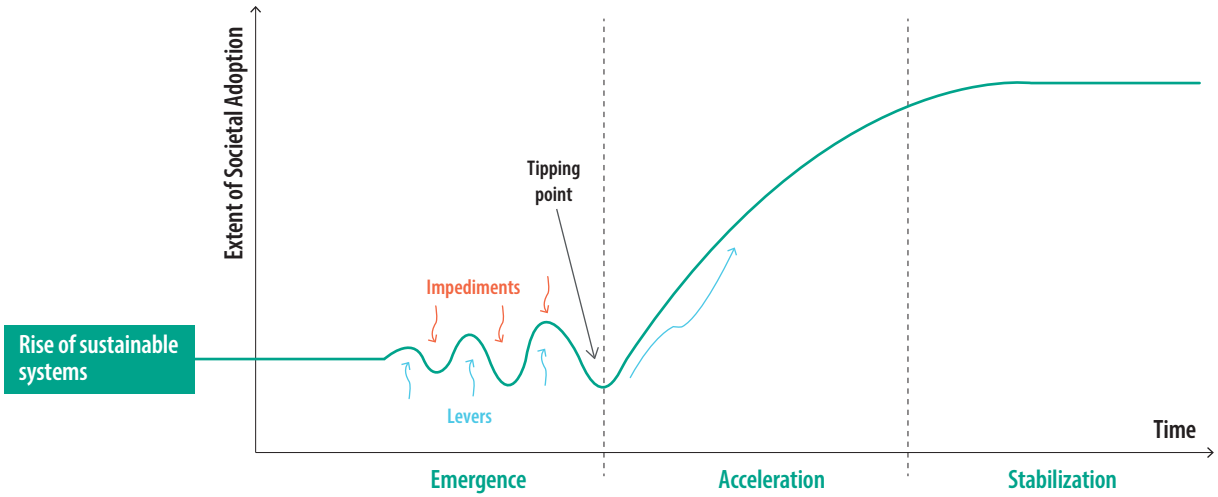
The evaluation was summative in nature, with formative and prospective components. It used a combination of a theory-based approach with contribution analysis. To better capture the nature of contributions, the evaluation differentiated between direct, enabling and catalytic contributions.[4] To better understand UNDP performance and the sustainability of results in the country, the ICPE analysed the specific factors that positively or negatively influenced implementation of the country programme. It also assessed the capacity of UNDP to adapt to changing circumstances and respond to national development needs and priorities.

The evaluation also employed the S-curve transformation model, introduced in the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, to track the progress of system transformation processes initiated and supported by UNDP (Figure 1).[5] The evaluation team examined the extent of adoption of the approaches introduced with UNDP support to determine their position along the S-curve of transformation, especially if they were already beyond the emergence phase.

BOX 1. Evaluation questions

1. To what extent has the UNDP country programme strategically addressed key national development priorities and the needs of its main stakeholders, including those at risk of being left behind?
2. To what extent was UNDP able to adapt its positioning and programmatic response to shifts in context and other changes in the challenging operating environment, leveraging comparative strengths?
3. To what extent were UNDP approaches and interventions successful in achieving the intended objectives of the country programme and contributing to broader, longer-term national development goals and the SDGs?
4. To what extent did internal and external factors influenced UNDP ability to deliver its programme efficiently and maximize contributions?

FIGURE 1. S-curve transformation model: three stages of transformation



Source: Global Sustainable Development Report (2023, p. 65)[6]

[4] Contribution taxonomy is based on Hans F, Woollands et al. (2022) Unpacking the COVID-19 rescue and recovery spending: an assessment of implications on greenhouse gas emissions towards 2030 for key emitters. In Climate Action, 2022/12/01, Vol. 1. Direct contributions are measures that immediately contribute to intended CP outcomes (e.g. provision of equipment and materials, training to project participants); Enabling contributions are measures that enable various stakeholders to make direct contributions to CP outcomes (e.g. development of new regulations and strategies by UNDP consultants); and Catalytic contributions are critical, usually small-scale contributions that enable and empower national stakeholders to make their own direct and enabling contributions towards intended CP outcomes (e.g. development of knowledge products, technical assessments).

[5] United Nations (2023) Global Sustainable Development Report 2023: Times of crisis, times of change: Science for accelerating transformations to sustainable development. Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General.

[6] Ibid. p 65.

To answer the evaluation questions, the evaluation team collected and triangulated data through the following methods:

- **Document review:** The evaluation team reviewed documents related to all projects implemented within the framework of the country programme, including project documents, reports, available decentralized evaluation reports and relevant knowledge products. The review also covered UNDP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data and institutional documents (Strategic Plan, Results-Oriented Annual Report [ROARs], etc.), data related to programme performance indicators (disaggregated by sex when available), relevant policies and programmes implemented by the Government of Belarus, and other publications available on the country. The main documents consulted are listed in Annex 4.

- **Semi-structured interviews:** Interviews were carried out with 124 key informants (56 percent female, 44 percent male) including 29 UNDP staff from headquarters, RBEC, country office and project staff (62 percent female, 38 percent male), 54 representatives of various government institutions at national and local levels (57 percent female, 43 percent male), 10 representatives of other United Nations agencies (40 percent female, 60 percent male), seven donors and development partners (57 percent female, 43 percent male), 24 representatives of civil society, academia and private sector (50 percent female, 50 percent male). The institutions were identified on the basis of desk review, supplemented by suggestions from the country office, and included the main partners of the UNDP country programme, and also the main development actors in the country. These interviews were used to collect data and obtain a comprehensive view of the perceptions of stakeholders on the scope, contributions, performance and impacts of UNDP interventions, constraints in programme implementation, as well as on the strengths and weaknesses of UNDP.

- **Site visits:** The evaluation team visited 14 sites of ongoing and completed UNDP projects to meet with community-level beneficiaries of the country programme and collect their perceptions on UNDP contributions and sustainability of results.[7]

The ICPE used the IEO rating system to assess the performance of the country programme against the criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.[8] Evidence was triangulated against a set of parameters for each of the criteria, and a four-point rating scale was used for the assessment (see Annex 7).

The ICPE underwent a rigorous quality assurance process, with IEO internal peer review and one external reviewer. Thereafter, the report was submitted to the country office and RBEC and, finally, to the Government and other partners in the country for review. An online workshop bringing together the main stakeholders of the programme offered an additional opportunity to discuss the results and recommendations contained in this report.

1.3 Challenges and limitations

The evaluation team was not able to meet representatives of the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education, who were important government counterparts of the UNDP country programme. This was mitigated by detailed discussions with representatives of state institutions subordinated to these ministries, that were directly involved in the implementation of the UNDP country programme.

Due to time constraints, during site visits the evaluation team met with representatives of state or public institutions, private entities and CSOs that directly benefitted from UNDP interventions, but not with the people using their services. This limitation was addressed through a thorough and systematic review of secondary data sources.

[7] Visited sites were located in Lida, Grodno, Mogilev, Bykhov, Streshin, Solonoe, as well as in Naliboksky, Ozery and Sporovsky SPNAs.
[8] The UNDP IEO rating system is available at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/ratingsystem.shtml.

Due to time limitations, the evaluation team was unable to meet directly with the beneficiaries of activities in the areas of HIV and tuberculosis (TB) - including people living with HIV and TB, as well as key populations most vulnerable to HIV. This was mitigated by conducting interviews with CSOs representing key populations and reviewing secondary data.

1.4 Country context

The Republic of Belarus is a land-locked European country that borders with Russia, Ukraine and European Union (EU) member States such as Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The population is 9.11 million people, with 7.18 million living in urban areas and 1.93 million in rural areas.[9]

The Republic of Belarus is an upper middle-income country with a very high level of human development, demonstrated in its 2022 Human Development Index value of 0.801.[10] Since independence in 1991, Belarus sustained a centralized and socially oriented government system.[11] Through redistributive policies and government regulation, the population benefited from economic growth over the entire period of sovereignty. By 2024 no one lived below the global $5.5 poverty line, and only 3.5 percent of the population lived below the national poverty line.[12] More than one-third of the economically active population of Belarus works in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which In 2024 contributed 31.4 percent to the national gross added value.[13] The Government supported the SME sector through the State SME Programme for 2021-2025.

Belarus is considered to have relatively high levels of gender equality, ranked 29th in the 2022 UNDP Gender Inequality Index.[14] In 2020, the Belarus Government adopted the National Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2021-2025.[15] According to the National Gender Statistics Portal, women slightly outnumber men in the workforce at 51.5 percent in 2024, but on average earn 26.8 percent less than men.[16] The share of female entrepreneurs grew from 30.6 percent in 2020, to 39.5 percent in 2024.[17]

Belarus ranks high on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) that compares the efforts of 180 countries to mitigate climate change, safeguard ecosystem vitality and promote environmental health. The country increased its EPI rank from 49 to 32 and sustained 1st in the Commonwealth of Independent States region.[18]

Belarus is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and made significant progress in achieving the SDGs, and ranked 30 of 167 countries in the 2024 Sustainable Development Report.[19] In 2017 the President established a comprehensive national architecture to support the achievement of the SDGs - the Council for Sustainable Development - chaired by a senior National SDG Coordinator and representatives of all line ministries and regional authorities, with secretarial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[20] State programmes are required to include information on how their tasks and indicators align with the SDG targets and indicators.[21]

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9 Belstat data as of January 1, 2025.
10 UNDP Human Development Index: https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/BLR.
11 BTI Transformation Index. Belarus Country Report 2024. https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/BLR#pos6.
12 Republic of Belarus National SDGs data portal. https://sdgplatform.belstat.gov.by/datasets/1.1.1.
13 Belstat data as of January 1 2025.
14 See UNDP HDR data for Belarus: https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/BLR.
15 Decree of the Council of Minister of the Republic of Belarus "On National Gender Equality Action Plan for 2021-2025" (О Национальном плане действий по обеспечению гендерного равенства в Республике Беларусь на 2021–2025 годы), No 793, adopted on December 30, 2020.
16 Republic of Belarus National Gender Statistics Portal. https://gender.belstat.gov.by/economics/64.
17 Republic of Belarus National Gender Statistics Portal. https://gender.belstat.gov.by/economics/220.
18 See https://epi.yale.edu/measure/2024/EPI.
19 See https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/rankings.
20 Order of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 181, May 25, 2017.
21 Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Belarus (2020). Requirements to the structure of a state programme and reports on the results of its implementation.

Belarus has a developed digital ecosystem that enables the widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT) services, and the Government is developing a system of e-services for citizens and businesses.[22] Since 2019, national infrastructure has allowed every residential apartment to connect to the Internet, and all educational institutions have access to the Internet.[23] Digital transformation is one of the priorities of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) 2035, operationalized through the State programme for Digital Development of Belarus 2021-2025. According to the 2023 United Nations Common Country Analysis (CCA), Belarus is one of a few countries across Europe and Central Asia where the gender digital divide was closed, both in terms of Internet usage and ICT device ownership. Women are more active than men in internet banking, online communication, trade and education, while men more actively use the Internet for employment and entertainment purposes. At the same time, women remain less confident and skilled ICT users than men, in general.

Since 2017, Belarus has been receiving support from the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria (Global Fund), enabling it to enhance its consistent efforts for the prevention and treatment of HIV and TB. The number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population decreased from 0.24 in 2015 to 0.13 in 2024, and TB incidence per 1,000 population declined from 32.8 in 2020 to 11.4 in 2024.[24] At the same time, barriers for access to formal HIV services remain for key populations, mainly because of stigma and discrimination.[25]

Belarus uses a five-year policy cycle and a highly integrated planning system. State planning starts with the development of a 15-year NSDS, that forms the basis for a five-year state programme for social and economic development, which in turn is the basis for development of five-year state programmes. In the 2021-2025 policy cycle the work of the Government was guided by the NSDS 2035, adopted in 2020. The next policy cycle will be informed by the NSDS 2040.

The strategic goal established in the NSSD 2035 is to achieve high living standards for the population, based on high quality growth of the economy on a digital basis, development of a robust competitive environment, creation of comfortable living conditions and the development of human potential with preservation of natural systems for present and future generations. NSDS 2035 also set five strategic priorities: 1) strengthening families and building quality human capital; 2) productive employment and decent income; 3) digital transformation and innovation; 4) development of the business environment and sustainable infrastructure; and 5) environmental security and transition to rational models of production and consumption (circular economy).

Public budget revenues remain the primary source of development financing in Belarus.[26] In 2020, the country received $325.9 million of Official Development Assistance (ODA), which constituted 2.9 percent of central government expenditure, and by 2022, net ODA constituted only 0.1 percent of central Government expenditure.[27] The central Government closely controls international development assistance: projects funded by international donors cannot be implemented without registration at the Ministry of Economy, and the Government designates specific public institutions as focal points for cooperation with international organizations, including United Nations agencies, on specific thematic issues. [28]

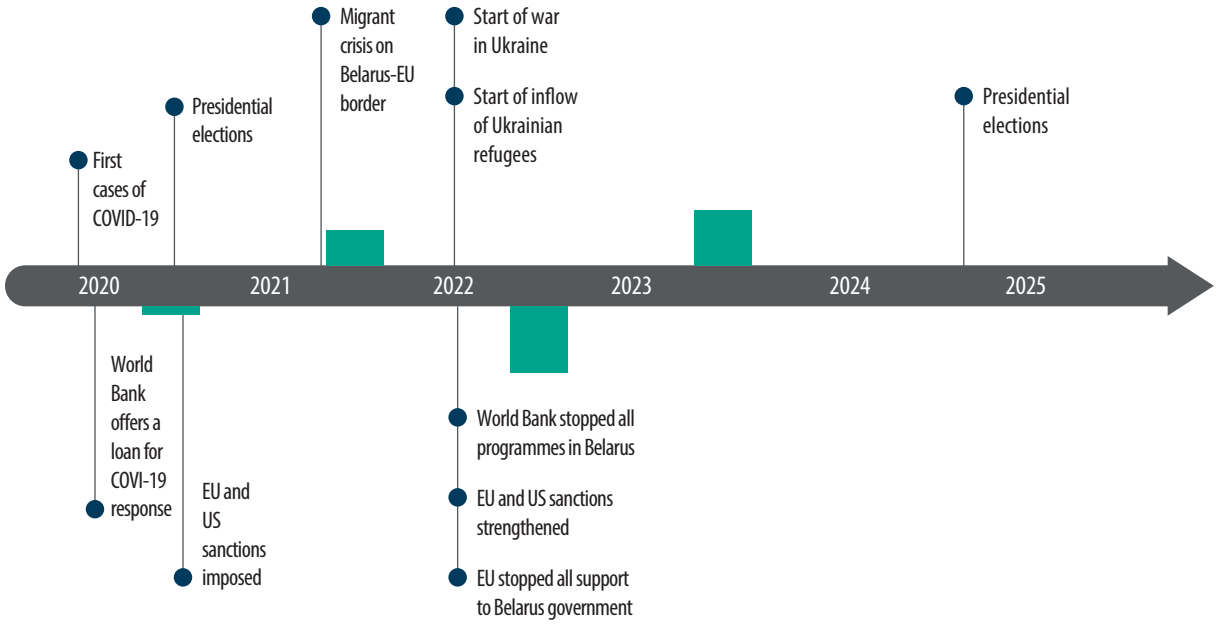
[22] Decree of the Council of Minister of the Republic of Belarus "State programme "Digital Development of Belarus" for 2021-2025 (Государственная программа «Цифровое развитие Беларуси» на 2021–2025 годы), No 66, adopted on February 2, 2021.
[23] Republic of Belarus MoC 2021; https://sdgplatform.belstat.gov.by/datasets/4.a.1.
[24] Republic of Belarus National Statistical Committee (2025) National SDG data.
[25] UNDP Belarus (2022) Project Document. HIV and TB systems strengthening.
[26] United Nations (2023) CCA – Republic of Belarus. Page 32.
[27] World Bank data 2024.
[28] As per the Order of the President of the Republic of Belarus "On international technical assistance to the Republic of Belarus" No. 460, October 23, 2003.

Key changes in the operational environment since 2020. Since 2020, the UNDP country office has operated in an environment of high uncertainty requiring ongoing adaptation and learning (Figure 2). Following the 2020presidential elections, the EU, United States and other Western countries imposed a progressively stricter set of sanctions on Belarus. By 2024, Belarus was one of five countries in the world with the highest number of sanctions imposed by foreign States.[29] In addition to sanctions, the number of open border crossing points between Belarus and EU countries progressively diminished. Many international companies either refused to supply goods to Belarus because of reputational risks or started to use lengthy compliance procedures to avoid sanction-related risks.

Belarus sustained economic growth despite the sanctions and geopolitical tensions. After a 4.7 percent decline in 2022, the economy resumed growth in 2023 with a 4 percent increase in gross domestic product (GDP) due to an accumulated safety margin, the administrative control of inflation, and the reorientation of trade flows in response to the sanctions, as well as domestic economic stimulation policies.[30]

In 2021 Belarus was affected by a migration crisis. Between August and December 2021 thousands of migrants came to Belarus with intent to cross the EU border, mainly from the Middle East and North Africa, and were stopped by Lithuanian and Polish authorities. By November several thousand migrants, including women and children, were stuck at the Belarus-Polish border without warm clothing or shelter. The Government authorities moved them to temporary shelters in a transport and logistics centre near the Bruzgi checkpoint.[31] Since February 2022, Belarus became a host country for Ukrainian refugees. United Nations agencies based in Belarus participated in the development and implementation of the Regional Refugee Response Plan to support Ukrainian refugees.

FIGURE 2. Key events that affected implementation of the UNDP country programme (2020-2025)



Source: Developed by the UNDP IEO evaluation team.

[29] Economic Newspaper (23 August 2024) Economists suggest responding to strengthening of sanctions.
[30] United Nations (2023) CCA – Republic of Belarus - Update: October 2023, Fifth Edition, page 7.
[31] ACAPS (2021) Briefing Note: Belarus/Poland: Migration crisis on the Belarus-Poland border.

1.5 UNDP in Belarus

UNDP has been present in Belarus for over three decades, supporting national efforts to tackle key economic challenges, promote social progress, and enhance living standards, within the framework of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement signed with the Government in 1992.

The UNDP Country Programme 2021-2025 shifted from the structure of the two previous country programmes that focused on governance, economic development, support to vulnerable groups and environment as separate areas of work.[32] This change was informed by the results of the joint United Nations-Belarus Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) advisory mission that took place over 2017 to 2018. The mission identified four 'accelerator' platforms to facilitate transformative benefits across multiple SDGs, including: (1) green transition for inclusive and sustainable growth; (2) Future generation orientation; (3) Digital transformation and social innovation; (4) Gender equitable society.[33]

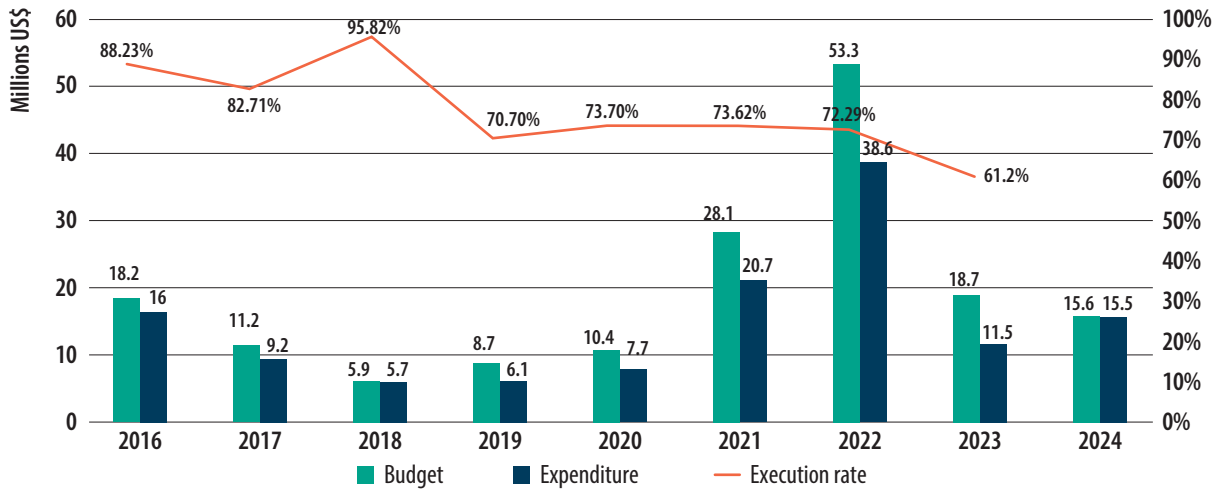
In the 2021-2025 programme cycle, the overarching UNDP goal was to support the effective development of Belarus as a country with a strong economy, developed human capital, and a high quality of life, through the widespread adoption of digital and green technology, support to the development of private initiatives, and the promotion of regional and local development, including in areas affected by the Chernobyl catastrophe.[34] The country programme focused on four priority outcome areas aligned with the SDG acceleration platforms mentioned above: (1) Economic development based on the principles of green and inclusive growth; (2) Implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures; (3) Development of an effective digital ecosystem; (4) Fuller participation of vulnerable groups in socioeconomic life.[35] The work on governance issues was retained but was integrated into all four outcome areas as an implementation strategy.

Under the country programme under review, UNDP carried out 35 projects of varying sizes, of which 13 started during the previous cycle. By the time of this ICPE there were 13 ongoing projects. 17 completed and closed, and three that had been terminated by donors as part of the sanctions.

UNDP estimated a funding requirement of $52 million for implementation of the 2021-2025 programme, including $1.6 million in UNDP regular resources, a decrease from $2.3 million in the previous cycle.[36] With regular resources making only 3 percent of the total estimated CPD 2021-2025 budget, implementation of the country programme was heavily dependent on the availability of donor funding. By the time of this evaluation, UNDP had mobilized $115.8 million, surpassing its target by over 220 percent. (Figure 3). The budget increase in 2022 was due to a World Bank loan for the procurement of medical supplies and equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Programme expenditure also increased, totalling $86.2 million in the current cycle, compared to $44.7 million over the 2016-2020 cycle. The execution rate in the previous CPD cycle was 82 percent and in the current cycle is 74 percent.

[32] This aligned with the ICPE 2019 recommendation.
[33] United Nations (2018) A Road Map to SDGs Implementation in the Republic of Belarus.
[34] UNDP Belarus (2021) CPD 2021-2025.
[35] Outcomes 1 and 2 are aligned with green transition platform, Outcome 3 is aligned with digital transformation platform, and Outcome 4 is aligned to a great extent with the gender equitable society platform.
[36] UNDP Belarus (2016) CPD 2016-2020 and (2021) 2021-2025.

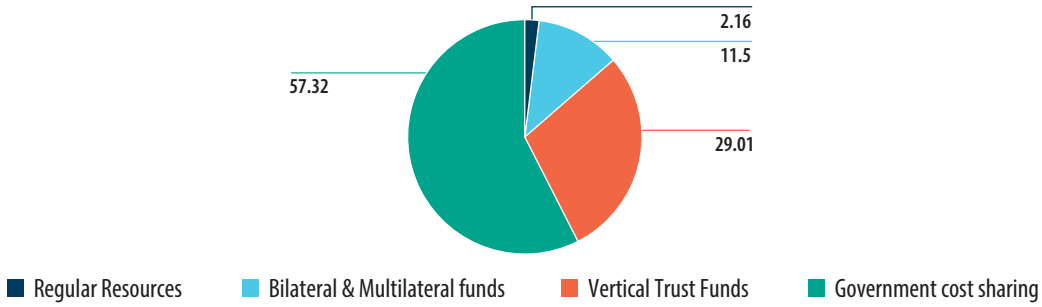
FIGURE 3. Evolution of country programme budget and expenditure by year (2016-2024)



Source: UNDP ATLAS and Quantum data March 2025

The majority of the funds came from government cost sharing[37] (57.32 percent), followed by vertical trust funds (29.01 percent), bilateral and multilateral funds (11.50 percent), and regular resources (2.16 percent), as illustrated in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4. Expenditure by fund category, 2021-2024



Source: UNDP ATLAS and Quantum data March 2025

At the time of this evaluation, the country office had 23 staff, one United Nations volunteer and six National Personnel Services Agreement holders. Women represented 66 percent of the staff and were present at all position levels. The programme team was structured into three units: (1) Energy, environment and climate; (2) Socioeconomic development and gender; and (3) Partnerships and SDG financing. UNDP also provided support to nationally implemented (NIM) projects by setting up project support units in charge of project management and procurement.

[37] In 2021 the Belarus Government entrusted UNDP to manage $56 million World Bank loan to procure medical equipment and supplies as part of the national COVID-19 response. This amount exceeded the total estimated budget of country programme ($52 million) and ranked as the fifth-largest government contribution among all countries where UNDP operates. UNDP (2022). Funding Compendium 2021.

CHAPTER 2
FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the outcome analysis and an assessment of cross-cutting issues of the UNDP country programme in Belarus. It also describes the main factors that have influenced UNDP performance and contribution to results. The assessment was based on analysis of the correlation between the results of the projects, and their contribution to the expected outputs under each outcome and, consequently, to the overall objectives of the programme.

2.1 UNDP positioning and programmatic response

Finding 1. Adaptation to the contextual changes and maintaining operations. In one of the most complex and restrictive contexts in the Europe and Central Asia region, strategic adaptation enabled the UNDP country office to sustain programme delivery, maintain its role as a trusted government partner, leverage procurement to build local capacity, and expand engagement with emerging donors. This fostered resilience in a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape.

The 2023 update to the United Nations CCA noted that Belarus offered one of the most complex environments for the United Nations system in the Europe and Central Asia region, posing serious reputational risks to United Nations because of the polarized information space.[38] The CCA also referenced issues for staff wellbeing in the country, and the UNDP country office faced high staff turnover between 2020 and 2022, only stabilizing after new recruitment efforts initiated in 2022 to rebuild the team.[39] The operational space for development in Belarus was further challenged because of reductions in the availability of donor resources and civil society implementing partners. At the same time, the Government of Belarus was keen to see United Nations stay and continue to deliver on cooperation. The SDGs remained relevant, and the Government wanted to showcase the degree of national progress on SDGs.

Sanctions had a significant impact on ongoing UNDP projects in Belarus, pushing the organization to adapt quickly to the evolving context and realities, while considerably limiting access to donor funding. Certain restrictions were imposed, such as on the transfer of asset titles directly to government authorities, or the simultaneous participation of representatives of donors and local authorities in project events. Impacts included the closure of the Combatting Illicit Trafficking of Weapons and Ammunition project, leading to its closure in May 2021, after the Government of Germany phased out its funding. The country office maintained operations for other projects, despite uncertainty or funding withdrawal, with necessary adaptations, for example the Local Economic Development (LED) project in Belarus, which had to limit engagement with local authorities, though able to continue supporting local businesses under EU agreement.

In 2022, the EU completely halted financial support to Belarus. The UNDP programme in the previous cycle received over $12.5 million of EU funding, which dropped by 50 percent in this cycle, to $6.2 million.[40] Funding from the Russian Federation increased from $1.3 million to $2.5 million, but this was not sufficient to compensate for the loss of EU funds. The country office adapted its resource mobilization strategy by reaching out to new donors and exploring new opportunities to provide development services to the Government.[41] In 2024, the country office explored potential areas for support with the governments of India (green jobs and digital public infrastructure development), China (sustainable forestry; public health), and Brazil (clean water; SDG implementation). At the point of writing the report, the country office had signed two projects with China. UNDP also promoted the idea of providing development services and

[38] Since 2021, the United Nations CCA has been updated annually.
[39] Interviews with the country office staff and document review.
[40] UNDP IEO (2019) ICPE Belarus, page 24.
[41] The importance of diversifying the donor pool beyond the EU and GEF was highlighted in the ICPE 2019. Since 2020, the context further underscored the urgency of this need.

government cost-sharing to the Government of Belarus, building on successful implementation of health equipment procurement and the experiences of the UNDP country offices in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. In 2024, the country office organized tours for government executives to these countries, to learn about cost-sharing with UNDP.

Sanctions also impacted the regular operations of the country office and project teams, significantly complicating operational procedures, including procurement and payments, which required solution-oriented strategies and constant adaptation. For example, the country office had difficulties with payments to Russian suppliers of goods and services. The EU prohibited payments to local suppliers for EU-funded interventions, even in local currency, if they had accounts in sanctioned banks. UNDP headquarters faced challenges with international transfers to replenish the UNDP country office account due to sanctions. To address this issue, UNDP adapted its approach by utilizing alternative non-sanctioned correspondent banks for the transfers, thereby ensuring continued cash flow. International courier services closed their offices in Belarus and stopped delivering to the country or entities based in Belarus.[42] Respondents from the country office considered that the office had proved highly agile in identifying solutions and alternative options to maintain operations.

Sanctions contributed to a reduced availability of suppliers as many international companies left the country. Local companies were often reluctant to follow UNDP tendering procedures and work without pre-payment, as required by UNDP procurement procedures. The introduction of the Quantum platform in 2022, where all potential suppliers had to register, also proved a barrier to local suppliers. UNDP strategically addressed these emerging challenges by identifying potential local suppliers and encouraging them to work with UNDP, and providing training to potential local suppliers in the use of Quantum and other UNDP procurement procedures. Procurement specialists from the country office supported those working in project support units to provide similar support to their potential suppliers. Finally, the country office started to research the Chinese markets to increase the pool of potential suppliers. These adaptations enabled the country office to continue procurement in compliance with UNDP standards.

After 2020, UNDP Belarus carefully adjusted its communication strategy to mitigate risks and adopted a measured approach with support from the UNDP Crisis Bureau. This included the development of Crisis Communication Standard Operating Procedures in 2021. The strategy prioritized human-centred storytelling, to showcase the added value of UNDP while maintaining constructive engagement with national and international partners. As tensions eased in 2023, UNDP shifted toward an intelligent communications approach, focusing on the sustainability of completed projects and strengthening its role as a facilitator of global knowledge exchange for Belarus.

Despite these multiple crises, UNDP Belarus successfully leveraged opportunities, including the expansion of its operational modalities to provide development services to the Government. As part of the COVID-19 response, the Government identified several areas for United Nations country team support, including assistance in purchasing medical products and pharmaceuticals funded by the World Bank loan.[43] Drawing on its advanced procurement architecture and capacity, UNDP successfully implemented the procurement of COVID-19 related medical equipment and supplies for the national health system. These services significantly increased the total budget of the current CPD, making government cost sharing the main source of funding for UNDP (Figure 4).

[42] This included the diplomatic pouch to United Nations system (by DHL), even when the recipient address was in neighbouring countries the couriers denied services if the addressee was United Nations/ UNDP in Belarus.

[43] United Nations Belarus (2020) From economic shocks to building back better: COVID-19 Socioeconomic Response Plan for Belarus. 'Emergency Response to COVID-19 in the Republic of Belarus' project implemented by the Ministry of Health, under the Loan Agreement between the Republic of Belarus and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

To mitigate the risk of Belarus losing access to Global Fund support due to sanctions, Global Fund requested UNDP to resume its role as the principal recipient responsible for grant management for the 2022-2024 grant cycle. This provided an additional $24 million to the country programme budget.[44] The country office also complemented the humanitarian response efforts of other United Nations agencies, by facilitating the access of Ukrainian refugees to employment and income-generation opportunities. 51 refugees were trained in entrepreneurship, and 16 business initiatives of Ukrainian refugees were provided financial support. UNDP also developed a comprehensive online information platform for refugees called *WeHelp.by*.

2.2 Economic development based on the principles of green and inclusive growth

Outcome 1: By 2025, all people, including adolescents, young men and women, men and women aged 65 and older, other vulnerable groups, benefit from green and inclusive economic development, realized through comprehensive regulatory frameworks, promotion of business activities, private sector partnerships, and increased participatory decision-making.

Corresponding outputs:

Output 1.1: Measures for the development of green, circular, low-carbon economy, considering the interests of vulnerable groups, developed and introduced.

Output 1.2: Financial and non-financial mechanisms enabling effective regional development, including in Chernobyl-affected areas and ensuring inclusion of vulnerable groups, introduced.

Output 1.3: Entrepreneurship, competition, innovation, decent jobs, and income diversification promoted.

Green and inclusive growth was one of the SDGs accelerator platforms recommended by the joint United Nations-Belarus MAPS advisory mission in 2017-2018. Under this outcome, UNDP implemented 11 projects with 14 project outputs. The outcome had a budget of $15.07 million (against an estimate of $20.06 million), and expenditure of $9.92 million (see Figure 5 for a breakdown by year), giving a 65.8 percent delivery rate over the first four years of the programme. Six projects (89.4 percent of expenditure) were NIM and five projects (10.64 percent of expenditure) were implemented by UNDP under direct implementation modality (DIM). Under Outcome 1, approximately 86.5 percent of programme expenditure ($8.58 million) was assigned to outputs with gender equality as a significant objective (GEN2) and 13.53 percent ($1.34 million) to outputs expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way (GEN1). The European Commission was the main source of funding for this outcome ($5.23 million with 52.7 percent of expenditure), followed by the Government of the Russian Federation (20.07 percent of expenditure), and UNDP (12.3 percent of expenditure) (see Figure 6).

[44] UNDP Belarus (2022) Project Document for the HIV and TB systems strengthening, incl COVID-19 response project.

FIGURE 5. Outcome 1: Evolution of budget, expenditure and execution rate by year (2021-2024)

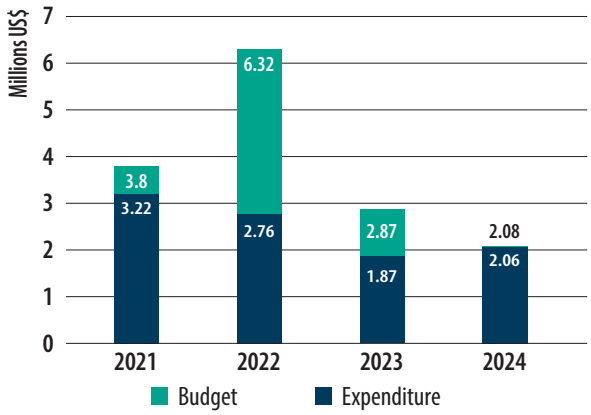
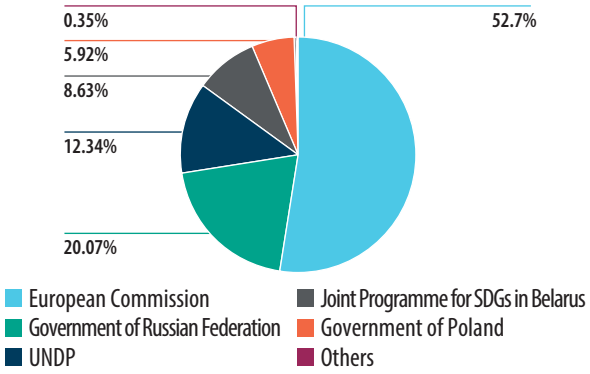


FIGURE 6. Outcome 1: Expenditure by donor



Source: UNDP ATLAS and Quantum data March 2025

Finding 2. Measures to develop green and inclusive economy: UNDP strategically supported the development of the Green Economy National Action Plan (NAP) (2021-2025) and the National Strategy on Circular Economy (to 2035), and promoted the Environment Social Governance (ESG) agenda.[45] UNDP successfully piloted the ecotourism cluster model and developed proposals for regulatory amendments to enable national scale-up.

Building on the results of the previous programme cycle, UNDP provided catalytic contributions to the development of policies in the area of green and circular economy.[46] For example, UNDP contributions to the development of the Green Economy NAP for 2021-2025 included an expert review of the previous NAP (2016-2020) and recommendations for the development of the current NAP based on relevant international experience and best practices. The updated NAP prioritizes: the development of ecotourism; conservation and the sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity; education, training and social engagement; the development of environmental certification and an eco-labelling system. UNDP also facilitated the development of the National Strategy on Circular Economy to 2035, adopted in May 2024. The Strategy established a national coordination mechanism in the form of an interministerial working group tasked with overseeing implementation and ensuring budgetary alignment.

To support the operationalization of NAP 2021–2025, UNDP provided expert guidance on circular economy approaches, innovative financial instruments, and social entrepreneurship.[47] In addition, UNDP made direct contributions to the development of ecotourism by providing technical assistance for the establishment of ecotourism clusters in four Specially Protected Natural Areas (SPNAs).[48] This support included the formulation of five-year ecotourism development strategies, staff training, assistance with promotional activities, and the procurement of essential equipment and goods. As a result, the SPNAs saw tangible results in terms of tourist numbers, which increased from 11,000 to over 16,000 between 2021 and 2023, and the related revenue, which increased from BYN60,000 ($23,000) to over BYN260,000 ($104,000) over

[45] The ESG framework is used to assess an organization's business practices and performance on various sustainability and ethical issues.

[46] Catalytic contributions are small critical contributions (e.g. knowledge products, technical assessments) that enable and empower national stakeholders to develop national policies and regulations (see footnote 4 for further description).

[47] Desk review and interviews.

[48] The technical assistance was provided within the framework of the Ecotourism Development to Promote Green Transition to Inclusive and Sustainable Growth project (00116399) funded by the Russian Federation. Two of the SPNAs already benefited from UNDP support to ecotourism development in the previous programme cycle.

the same period.[49] Participants of ecotourism clusters reported higher visitor engagement and revenue. Interviewees credited the UNDP project team with catalysing collaboration between diverse actors, critical in overcoming initial resistance and establishing the clusters. To promote ownership, a cost-sharing model was applied, with SPNAs investing their own resources and labour into infrastructure development. For example, Ozery SPNA built a visitor centre, and Naliboksky SPNA provided labour to reconstruct an eco-trail using materials procured by UNDP.[50] Additional contributions included launching an eco-certification at the State-funded research centre BelNIC Ecologia, and developing an interactive digital map of all Belarus SPNAs to attract prospective visitors , hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MoNREP).[51]

UNDP further advanced the scaling of the ecotourism cluster model by implementing two professional development programmes and organizing study tours for the staff of all 30 SPNAs designated for ecotourism cluster development. Lessons learned from the four pilot SPNAs were consolidated and shared with the MoNREP, with the intention of informing the next national strategy, particularly in terms of provisions for government funding to SPNAs for procurement of equipment for the development of ecotourism services, not feasible under existing legislation.[52] If these provisions were adopted, they could serve as a tipping point to propel the ecotourism cluster model into an accelerated phase of implementation. However, at the time of this evaluation, the model was still in emergence phase.[53]

UNDP also supported the promotion of the ESG agenda as an instrument for the development of a green and inclusive economy. At the request of the Ministry of Economy, UNDP commissioned research to assess perceptions of the ESG agenda among Belarusian companies. The findings informed the creation of the "Guidelines for the Application of Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance Standards for Business Entities in the Republic of Belarus." The Ministry of Economy leveraged these insights to promote the ESG agenda nationwide, which, according to national stakeholders, garnered significant media and business community attention. This heightened interest resulted in increased membership in the Belarus Chapter of the United Nations Global Compact, an association of businesses committed to advancing the SDGs, as well as a series of small conferences on ESG organized by local institutions.

Finding 3. Support to entrepreneurship: UNDP advanced inclusive entrepreneurship in Belarus by combining targeted support to local businesses—particularly in underserved areas—with some system-level interventions. These included promoting social enterprises, expanding access to finance and knowledge resources, and contributing to reforms in innovation policy, public-private dialogue, and vocational education to better align with future labour market need.

Belarus has a robust national system for supporting SMEs, comprising the Belarusian Fund for Financial Support of Entrepreneurs, local entrepreneurship development councils, business incubators and business support centres. The national goal for SME development focused on creating an enabling environment by simplifying regulatory procedures, providing targeted support to SMEs and fostering entrepreneurship, and under the 2021–2025 policy cycle, the Government allocated approximately $11 billion to advance this agenda.[54] UNDP support for SME development was strategically aligned with these national priorities, reinforcing ongoing efforts to strengthen the sector.

[49] Data provided by the team of the Ecotourism Development to Promote Green Transition to Inclusive and Sustainable Growth project.
[50] Data from interviews and site visits.
[51] Republic of Belarus Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection map https://minpriroda.gov.by/ru/svg_map-ru.
[52] Interview with the Ecotourism Development to Promote Green Transition to Inclusive and Sustainable Growth project staff.
[53] Emergence and acceleration phases are part of the transformation process described by the S-curve transformation model introduced in the Global Sustainable Development Report (2023) used by the evaluation team as one of analytical frameworks. See Section 1.2.
[54] State programme "Small and medium entrepreneurship" for 2021-2025.

A key value of UNDP work lay in its support for entrepreneurs outside of major urban centres, with limited access to business development resources.[55] UNDP supported 122 business initiatives with $5.4 million.[56] In 2021-2022, 168 SMEs accessed $400,000 through leasing agreements.[57] For comparison, in 2021-2023, the Belarusian Fund for Financial Support of Entrepreneurs financed 114 SME projects with around $7.6 million. Additionally, UNDP introduced and piloted the concept of social business, a new model for Belarus, creating new jobs and partnerships in rural areas, with 635 new jobs created by UNDP-supported businesses by the end of 2023.[58] UNDP played a facilitative role in the establishment and growth of social enterprises run by, or focused on the inclusion of, persons with disabilities.[59] According to interviewed entrepreneurs, the capacity-building and financial support they received from UNDP was critical to their results and helped to promote inclusive employment models and essential services for vulnerable groups.

The UNDP promotion of entrepreneurship was characterized by a strategic focus on catalytic knowledge-based interventions aimed at fostering an enabling environment for local business development. This included the creation of a diverse suite of practical tools, such as "box solutions" offering step-by-step guidance for aspiring entrepreneurs, manuals on business engagement with local authorities, and an introductory guide to entrepreneurship for high school students. Sector-specific support was provided through roadmaps for agro-business development in key value chains. These knowledge products were integrated into a digital entrepreneurship support infrastructure map, enhancing accessibility and outreach.

UNDP contributed to the development of mechanisms for public-private dialogue aimed at fostering a more conducive business environment. UNDP supported development of the Regulatory Impact Assessment procedure by reviewing existing practices and developing recommendations for improvement. A new area of support was the review, streamlining and digitalization of operation of Local Entrepreneurship Development Councils that served as a platform for dialogue between local authorities and business community. Through a strategic partnership with the State Committee on Science and Technology, UNDP informed the revision of regulations governing innovation competitions, resulting in expanded funding opportunities and new mechanisms to promote business uptake of innovative solutions. As such, UNDP played a catalytic role in advancing innovation policy reform in Belarus. UNDP also contributed to the design of national grant and subsidy frameworks aimed at fostering the adoption of innovation across sectors.[60]

During this programme cycle, in line with the recommendations of the previous ICPE, UNDP strategically initiated support for the transformation of Belarus's national vocational education and training system, positioning it to better align with emerging labour market demands. This included the introduction of innovative approaches for the identification of future needs of the labour market and necessary skills, to inform the development of professional and educational standards and prepare young people for labour market insertion in the context of the digital transformation of the Belarusian economy. UNDP piloted these approaches in three professional qualification areas (construction, agriculture and metrology), and

[55] The business initiatives supported by UNDP were highly diverse, encompassing a wide range of projects such as apple chip production, a honey packaging facility, a coffee roasting facility, a distance learning centre for school-age children, IT schools, a microgreens cultivation facility, and industrial facilities for the production of refractories and heating equipment.

[56] Cumulative number of fully or partially implemented business initiatives supported by the LED and Sustainable Tourism projects.

[57] UNDP Belarus (2023) Local Economic Development Project Report.

[58] Website for SDGs in Belarus (April 2024) Small and Medium sized Businesses are Supported in Belarus. https://sdgs.by/en/news/small-and-medium-sized-businesses-are-supported-in-belarus/.

[59] Initiatives included: the launch of an inclusive coffee shop in the Khoiniki district, creating employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities; the creation of social enterprises offering cleaning services and home care for non-mobile citizens in Lida and Khoiniki; and the development of an IT school for people with disabilities in Borisov.

[60] Interviews with national stakeholders, as well as https://pravo.by/novosti/obshchestvenno-politicheskie-i-v-oblasti-prava/2020/june/52092/.

system transformation was still in the emergence phase.[61] However, insights and lessons from the pilots provided a strong foundation for expanding the model across additional sectors to support comprehensive system-wide transformation.

2.3 Implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures

Outcome 2: A significant contribution to climate action is made by 2025 through the introduction of key measures of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Corresponding outputs:

Output 2.1: Climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and solutions developed and introduced.

Output 2.2: Solutions for promoting energy efficiency, development of the market for energy services, and expansion of the use of renewable energy sources developed and promoted.

Output 2.3: Measures enhancing biodiversity conservation, control of invasive species of animals and plants, sustainable water resources and land management implemented.

Output 2.4. National emergency preparedness for major hazards strengthened, in line with regional factors and international environmental conventions.

During this programme cycle, a total of 13 projects and 15 project outputs were implemented under Outcome 2, with a budget of $15.80 million (against the estimate of $19.86 million in the CPD), and expenditure of $12.05 million, reaching a 76.2 percent execution rate (see Figure 7 for a breakdown by year). Eight projects (91.6 percent of expenditure) were NIM, implemented by UNDP, and five (8.4 percent of expenditure) were DIM. 92.6 percent of the programme expenditure ($11.15 million) was allocated to outputs expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way (GEN1) and 7.4 percent ($0.89 million) to outputs designed to promote gender in a significant way (GEN2). This portfolio was funded mainly by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) ($10.14 million, 84.2 percent of expenditure) followed by the European Commission (8.3 percent of expenditure), and the Government of the Russian Federation (4.0 percent of expenditure) (see Figure 8).

[61] Emergence phase is one of the phases of the transformation process described by the S-curve transformation model (see Section 1.2).

FIGURE 7. Outcome 2: Budget and expenditure by year

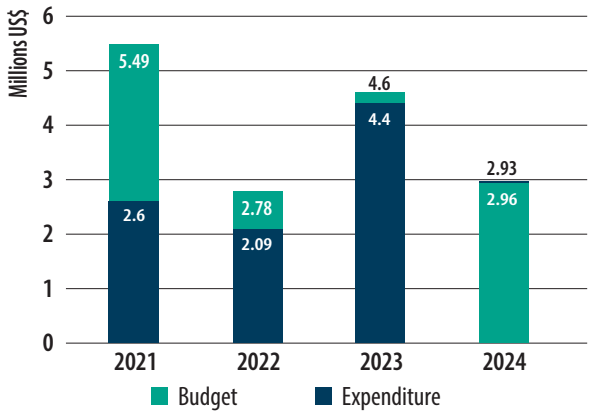
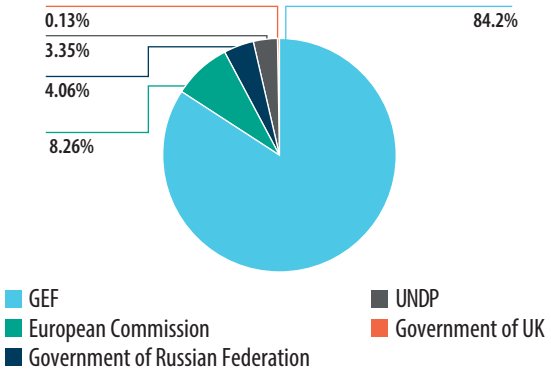


FIGURE 8. Outcome 2: Expenditure by donor



Source: UNDP ATLAS and Quantum data, March 2025

Finding 4. Climate change adaptation and mitigation measures: UNDP significantly contributed to advancing climate action in Belarus by supporting the development and implementation of key adaptation and mitigation measures. This included technical and strategic assistance in updating the NDC, formulating a long-term Low Emission Development Strategy, enhancing the national monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system, and strengthening alignment with international climate frameworks, contributing to the country's broader climate agenda and visibility in global climate processes.

UNDP made multiple catalytic contributions to national climate policy development, supporting Belarus to align with the Paris Agreement and strengthen its climate resilience. Through expert methodological and technical assistance, UNDP played a central role in the preparation of key policy documents, including the updated NDC and the Low Emission Development Strategy 2050, which aimed to achieve a net-zero future, balancing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and removal.[62] UNDP ensured the integration of international best practices and supported the alignment of the Belarus climate agenda with global frameworks, enhancing the country's visibility and participation in international GHG emissions markets.

To operationalize these ambitions, UNDP contributed to establishing a comprehensive GHG accounting framework and modernizing measurement and reporting components of the national MRV system. Customized MRV training programmes for various stakeholders from the Government, expert communities and enterprises contributed to strengthening national capacity to track and report emissions. Technical assistance extended to the development of mitigation scenarios, the drafting of a roadmap for cooperative approaches under Article 6 and registration of a demonstration project with the Global Carbon Council - an important step toward participation in the international carbon market.[63] In parallel, UNDP made important strides in raising awareness and encouraging low-carbon practices. Expanding outreach and communication with both public and private actors remained a key area of opportunity to support the long-term evolution and scaling of MRV-related initiatives across the sector. Work to strengthen MRV practices and stakeholder engagement continued in parallel, with further progress anticipated in line with evolving national priorities and climate commitments.

[62] UNDP Belarus (2022) ROAR 2021, p. 20; UNDP Belarus (2024) ROAR 2023, p. 5; UNDP Belarus (2022) Annual Report 2021, p. 15.
[63] UNDP Belarus (2024) Final Terminal Evaluation Report, MRV project, p.69.

Complementing these mitigation efforts, UNDP supported the coordinated development of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan which now covers six priority sectors: energy; transport; housing and municipal services; construction; forestry; and agriculture. These initiatives aimed to strengthen national resilience to climate-related risks.[64] As an interim outcome of these joint efforts, Belarus achieved a 40 percent reduction in CO_2 emissions by 2022.[65]

Finding 5. Institutionalizing environmental values: UNDP played an instrumental role in promoting environmental awareness in Belarus by integrating "green values" into the education system, impacting over 700 schools. It also encouraged local-level citizen participation and helped to build partnerships with non-state actors in environmental governance. These initiatives fostered social partnerships, facilitated the development of locally driven green solutions, and promoted environmentally responsible behaviour among different social groups.

Building on its long-term partnership with the Ministry of Education and MoNREP, in collaboration with the Republican Centre of Ecology and Local Studies, UNDP promoted environmental education and awareness-raising in Belarus, particularly through its support for the "green schools" initiative, reaching over 700 educational institutions (including pre-schools) as of December 2024.[66] This initiative applied a multi-faceted approach encompassing curriculum development, institutional strengthening, targeted training and community engagement.[67] UNDP also supported the development and dissemination of innovative educational resources on climate change and biodiversity for the Dnieprovsko-Sozhsky Zakaznik Reserve.[68] The Climate Box, an interactive learning toolkit designed for schoolchildren and teachers, reached a large audience across the regions of Belarus. These efforts contributed to institutionalizing environmental education within the Belarusian education system, fostering environmental literacy among a substantial number of students, and promoting environmentally conscious ("green") behaviours among young people and their families. UNDP, in cooperation with educational institutions and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs), equipped educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively integrate environmental education into the curricula of educational institutions, NGO training and outreach activities. The development of supplementary training materials and methodical guidance further strengthened these capacity-building efforts and supported the dissemination of best practices among educators.

UNDP support for civic engagement in environmental monitoring and improved environmental management led to the establishment and consistent functioning of seven Public Environmental Coordinating Councils (PECCs) and seven environmental monitoring clubs across Belarus, involving over 1,376 participants in discussing and addressing critical environmental issues.[69] Through the implementation of a multimedia public awareness campaign and training programmes by local CSOs involving 1,310 specialists and 700 children, as well as website updates and media engagement, UNDP and national and local partners contributed to strengthening community capacity for environmental action, shifting public attitudes toward responsibility, and increasing awareness of environmental issues, while promoting UNDP support for environmental sustainability in Belarus.[70]

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64 UNDP Belarus (2024) Annual Review.

65 UNFCCC (2024) MNREP: BTR1 Belarus, p.7.

66 Interviews with national partners, site visits.

67 UNDP provided resources and technical support for establishing and maintaining environmental monitoring clubs within schools, developing educational programmes integrating environmental themes, and conducting training workshops for teachers and students on incorporating these topics into their teaching.

68 The Dnieprovsko-Sozhsky Zakaznik Reserve guide provided detailed information about the unique biodiversity and ecosystems of this protected area, promoting ecotourism and environmental education for a wide range of users, combining traditional educational materials with modern digital solutions.

69 PECCs are established in each of six regions (oblasts) of Belarus and in Minsk. Together with local decision-makers from regional authorities they include representatives of universities, NGOs, expert community and private business.

70 UNDP Belarus (2021) EcoMonitoring Final Project Report, pp.21-28.

UNDP achieved localized successes in promoting energy efficiency. Its approach combined direct contributions to piloting green urban solutions in a few small and medium-sized towns (including LED street lighting, the use of biomass as a sustainable source of energy, and energy-efficient heating systems in multi-storey buildings), with catalytic contributions to policy development through generating knowledge products to inform national environmental and energy policies. While this approach yielded positive results, this evaluation revealed limitations in its ability to achieve broad, systemic change largely due to shifts in state energy policy priorities (decreased attention to the development of alternative energy sources) and a growing scarcity of international funding. The Government of Belarus planned to finance its energy-saving efforts in urban areas during the 2021-2025 policy cycle with a Euro 180 million loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development and European Investment Bank approved in 2019, but in 2020 both banks stopped their work in Belarus.[71] Despite the funding limitations, UNDP played a catalytic role in supporting the State Department on Energy Efficiency by integrating energy efficiency as a key dimension of energy security, socio-economic development, and housing and communal services. Interviewees noted that UNDP further enhanced national efforts by assisting in the development of methodological guidelines for calculating energy efficiency within the MRV system and by contributing expert inputs to the new edition of the State Energy Saving Programme for 2026–2030.

Finding 6. Biodiversity conservation: UNDP provided enabling and catalytic contributions to strengthening protected area management, restoring degraded ecosystems, and promoting sustainable natural resource use, which fostered biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.[72]

In partnership with the Belarus Government and various public and private stakeholders, UNDP strategically advanced efforts towards strengthened biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management in the country, aligning with national priorities articulated in the NSDS 2035 and the country's commitments under international environmental agreements. UNDP financial and technical assistance led to catalytic achievements in key areas, including improving the effective management of protected areas, conducting biodiversity assessments of ecologically significant forests, piloting innovative approaches to biomass harvesting, restoring vital forest and peatland ecosystems, and developing strategies for ecotourism.[73]

Pivotal UNDP interventions contributed to climate change mitigation by enhancing carbon sequestration and promoting renewable energy sources, and to national policy and planning frameworks related to management of protected areas. Due to direct UNDP contributions, over 12,000 hectares of degraded forest peatlands were restored, significantly improving their hydrological conditions, preventing further peat mineralization, and enhancing biodiversity in these critical ecosystems. Sustainable management practices were introduced in over 180,000 hectares of biodiversity significant forests, integrating conservation principles into forestry operations and safeguarding habitats for globally threatened species.[74]

Methodologies and best practices for sustainable biomass harvesting were disseminated to forestry enterprises and local communities, fostering wider adoption of these approaches and promoting the diversification of income sources for rural populations.[75] New methodologies and approaches for transformative biodiversity management, introduced with UNDP support, were successfully piloted in nine of the 121 SPNAs, marking an important initial phase in the broader adoption of innovative conservation practices.[76]

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71 Interfax (4 April 2022) EBRD management approved cessation of cooperation with Russia and Belarus.

72 See footnote 4 for a description of direct and enabling contributions and catalytic support.

73 Data from key Informant interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries, site visits.

74 UNDP Belarus (2022). Final Project Report, Forests and Wetlands project.

75 Sustainable biomass harvesting demands a delicate balance of environmental integrity, social wellbeing, and economic viability. For biofuel markets, where sustainable sourcing is paramount, it is not only crucial to understand the environmental impact of harvesting but also to have a system for integrating diverse factors and aligning with society's evolving goals. A framework based on existing scientific knowledge is essential, but it must also empower decision-makers to weigh competing values and arrive at sustainable solutions that reflect the priorities of the community. In Belarus best practices for sustainable biomass harvesting were aimed to build synergy between forestry enterprises and rural inhabitants in local communities.

76 National Cadastral Agency contains information on four national parks (Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Braslav Lakes, Pripyatsky, Narochansky); two nature reserves (Berezinsky Biosphere and Polesie State Radiation and Ecological); 101 nature reserves of republic-level significance and 14 nature reserves of regional significance.

Training programmes for forestry professionals in sustainable forest management practices and environmental education initiatives for local communities strengthened national ownership and fostered a sense of responsibility for environmental stewardship.[77] UNDP crucially supported national partners with modern means of data collection on globally threatened species and their habitats, as well as on rare and typical biotopes. This data was integrated into the forest management plan and created a catalytic effect by informing national biodiversity conservation strategies and reporting obligations under relevant international conventions.[78]

Finding 7. Sustainable chemical waste management: UNDP made substantial contribution to advancing sustainable chemical waste management in Belarus by facilitating the safe disposal of hazardous POPs, building national capacity for chemical monitoring and regulation, and promoting compliance with the Stockholm Convention.[79] Through targeted technical assistance, policy support, and stakeholder engagement, UNDP helped to institutionalize sound chemical management practices and reduce environmental and health risks.

Recognizing the immediate threat posed by stockpiles of obsolete pesticides and equipment containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB), UNDP effectively facilitated the removal and destruction of 1,184 tons of PCB equipment and 1,523 tons of obsolete pesticides. This direct action reduced the immediate risks associated with POPs in Belarus. The UNDP contribution and results in the removal and destruction of POPs were of particular value as they were achieved in the challenging context shaped by sanctions.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of POPs reduction, UNDP strategically supported building national capacity in chemical management. This included supporting the development of national methodologies for monitoring POPs, strengthening the Unified Database on POPs through automation of government data handling, and updating the Belarus National Implementation Plan in accordance with the Stockholm Convention. These efforts, complemented by ongoing technical assistance and training for stakeholders on safe handling and disposal practices, built national ownership and institutionalized best practices in chemical management, enhancing the capacity of Belarus for independent monitoring, management and regulation of POPs and other hazardous wastes.

UNDP fostered a participatory approach, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders and leveraging expertise to optimize its interventions (including the support of UNDP experts on dangerous chemicals and contacts with specialists and enterprises in the EU). Active collaboration with MoNREP, local expert NGOs and international organizations like the Food and Agriculture Organization and United Nations Industrial Development Organization, particularly in PCB management, ensured alignment with national priorities, promoted knowledge sharing, and enhanced local ownership of POPs reduction efforts. Furthermore, UNDP actively sought partnerships and collaborative opportunities with other actors, including the World Bank, to leverage synergy with existing GEF projects and minimize duplication of effort. With UNDP support, a POPs Consolidation Centre was established in the Chechersk Complex, and effective mechanisms and procedures were developed to help small business actors and owners of PCB equipment and dangerous chemicals to consolidate POPs for efficient transportation and final disposal. This collaborative multi-stakeholder approach contributed significantly to the successful elimination of a substantial portion of the country's obsolete pesticide and PCB stockpiles, further reducing the risks associated with POPs through enhanced national capacity and updated chemical management policies, plans and strategies.

[77] UNDP Belarus (2022). Final Project Report, Forests and Wetlands project.

[78] The Convention on Biological Diversity entered into force in December 1993 and has been ratified by almost 200 nations. It is a 'Rio Convention' – one of three Conventions adopted at the Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992. The other two were the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification.

[79] The Stockholm Convention on POPs is an international environmental treaty that entered into force in May 2004, to eliminate or restrict the production and use of POPs.

Finding 8. Emergency preparedness: The UNDP strategic partnership with the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) contributed to stronger national emergency preparedness by aligning closely with local priorities and responding swiftly to emerging challenges, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. This collaboration enhanced emergency response systems, public awareness and institutional resilience, laying the foundation for sustained capacity despite ongoing resource challenges.

The contribution of UNDP focused primarily on strengthening MES capacity to manage epidemiological emergencies, reflecting the immediate and pressing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. This collaboration marked a pioneering partnership between UNDP and the national partner (MES), focusing on the procurement of critical medical equipment, including mobile medical units and biosafety cabinets. UNDP also facilitated the training of medical personnel in emergency response protocols and enhanced the psychological counselling services provided by the MES to mitigate the psychosocial effects of the pandemic on first responders and the affected population. The national partner reported that, as a direct result of this collaboration, over 1,450 MES personnel were trained in first aid skills, thereby significantly enhancing their capacity to respond effectively to adverse epidemiological conditions and natural disasters.

With UNDP support, MES made a needs assessment and developed new communication and awareness-raising strategy for different social groups on health and safety skills in emergencies. UNDP capacity-building support was recognized as highly relevant to the MES mandate, enhancing national ownership and directly improving the MES emergency management capability. MES representatives highlighted the sustainability of several contributions, particularly the communication strategy, along with the equipment and training provided. MES partners confirmed the sustainability of certain initiatives but indicated a continued need for funding and support from UNDP to scale the results to other regions and sustain these advancements.

2.4 Development of an effective digital ecosystem[80]

Outcome 3: By 2025, foundations of an efficient digital ecosystem are formed, including, as part of smart sustainable cities, enabling interaction of the state, society, and business, with equal participation of women and men, adolescents, youth, and representatives of vulnerable groups.

Corresponding outputs:

Output 3.1: A system and infrastructure for electronic public services for individuals and businesses based on digitalization of public administration enhanced.

Output 3.2: Development of a national urban policy that integrates fully the 'smart city' ('smart district') concepts and piloting solutions supported.

Output 3.3: Development of additional education in the field of ICT and other skills in demand on the labour market enhanced with a focus on employability of vulnerable groups.

Output 3.4: A system of e-participation to improve public engagement in the life of the society and decision making developed and promoted.

[80] It is important to note that digitalization, as a key enabler in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, serves as a cross-cutting component within the CPD Belarus. Its significance is particularly emphasized in the analysis of other outcomes, notably in Finding 3.

Under this outcome, UNDP implemented five projects and five project outputs, with a budget of $990,000 over the first four years (against an estimate of $6.7 million at the start of the cycle).[81] Expenditure amounted to $690,000, resulting in a delivery rate of 70.08 percent (see Figure 9 for a breakdown by year). Four projects (80.6 percent of expenditure) were DIM, while one was NIM (19.4 percent of expenditure). Outcome 3 included the only GEN3 project, with gender equality as its principal objective, representing 0.48 percent of programme expenditure ($3,000). GEN1 outputs accounted for 89 percent of programme expenditure ($620,000) and GEN2 outputs constituted 10.52 percent of programme expenditure ($70,000). This portfolio was primarily funded by the Government of Germany (82.3 percent of expenditure), followed by UNDP (10.5 percent of expenditure), and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (0.7 percent of expenditure) (see Figure 10).

This area of the country programme was the most affected by geopolitical tensions. Funding stagnation across development and humanitarian projects, beyond UNDP control, limited opportunities to raise new donor funds. The country office made significant efforts to adapt to the challenges, though tangible results are yet to be seen. Two of the five projects linked to this outcome started in the previous programme cycle and were completed in 2021, another two were terminated by donors in 2021. The only project that operated during 2021-2024 was the Accelerator Lab engagement facility.

FIGURE 9. Outcome 3: Budget and expenditure by year

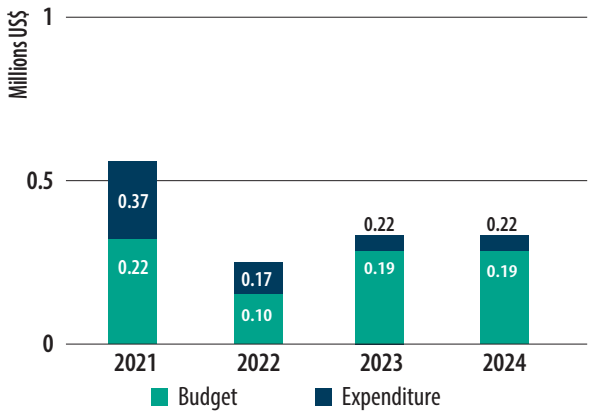
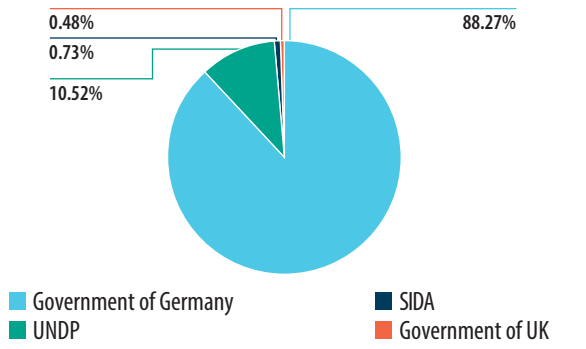


FIGURE 10. Outcome 3: Expenditure by donor



Source: UNDP ATLAS and Quantum data, March 2025

Finding 9. Policy contributions: During this programme cycle, UNDP positioned itself as a key partner and trusted source of digital expertise for the Government, providing catalytic contributions to the development of the forthcoming national Digital Development Strategy for 2026-2030.

Digital ecosystem development represented a new area of engagement for the country office, not addressed by the previous country programme. As a result, the Ministry of Communications (MoC), which lead the Belarus digital agenda, did not identify UNDP as a key partner in this domain prior to 2021.[82] This area of work was identified and included as an outcome in the country programme following the recommendation of the joint United Nations-Belarus MAPS advisory mission in 2017-2018 that identified digital transformation

[81] Project Social Environmental Standards (ID 00130580) is under Outcomes 3 and 4.
[82] Interviews with UNDP staff and national partners.

as one of the SDGs accelerator platforms for Belarus.[83] UNDP successfully shifted the Government's perception by making targeted strategic contributions, initially at the annual TIBO International IT Forum, and later through catalytic support in shaping the Belarus Digital Development Strategy for 2026-2030. These contributions included building the technical expertise of national stakeholders on the structure of international indices to measure digital development, conducting a study on potential priorities for Belarus international cooperation in digital development for 2026-2030 (still under consideration), and applying the UNDP combined Digital and Artificial Intelligence Readiness Assessment (DRA) tool. This DRA assessment, conducted with the UNDP Chief Digital Office and the MoC, engaged over 10,500 stakeholders from the Government, civil society, academia and the private sector, to inform the development of the Digital Development Strategy 2026-2030 and align national ambitions with global trends. UNDP conducted strategic partnership mapping to support implementation of the DRA recommendations, which identified opportunities for collaboration with international associations such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and BRICS, alongside international organizations and bilateral partnerships. National partners, especially the MoC and the Belarusian State Institute of Telecommunications JSV Giprosvjaz recognized these contributions as highly valuable, underscoring the growing role of UNDP in this sector.

It should be noted that Belarus has sufficient national financial resources to support its digital transition, exceeding the capacity of national facilities to absorb them. From 2021 to 2023, the budget for the Digital Development of Belarus state programme totalled $720 million, with an execution rate of 60 percent.[84] Belarus ranked 77th globally in the 2024 United Nations E-Government Survey, placing it among countries with a high level of e-government development. Among its strengths were the substantial efforts in digitalizing public services, robust telecommunications infrastructure which facilitated efficient digital communication and service delivery, as well as high human capital in a skilled workforce capable of supporting and advancing digital government initiatives. In this context, UNDP successfully positioned itself as a strategic partner in the digital transition of Belarus, to further contribute to the development of an enabling environment for a sustainable and inclusive digital ecosystem.[85]

[83] United Nations (2018). A Road Map to SDGs Implementation in the Republic of Belarus.

[84] Interviews and UNDP Belarus (2024) Consolidated Report on the Results of Implementation of State Programmers in 2021-2023.

[85] UNDP also supported digital transformation in Belarus by evaluating Smart City technologies across 10 clusters, piloting innovative solutions in four cities. With the Ministry of Education, UNDP bolstered youth skills in ICT and digital transformation through targeted initiatives, preparing young professionals for the evolving labour market. With the Ministry of Economy, UNDP developed a digital platform for entrepreneurship councils, set to launch in 2025, to streamline public-private dialogue, improve legislative feedback processes and enhance the business environment.

2.5 Fuller participation of vulnerable groups in socioeconomic life

Outcome 4: By 2025, improvements in data collection, gender equality policies, and child and elements of gender budgeting have created conditions for men and women of all ages, including those aged 65 years and older, as well as girls and boys, to better realize their rights and improve the quality of their lives, including through increased opportunities for employment and better protection from gender-based and domestic violence.

Corresponding outputs:

Output 4.1: National system of collection, monitoring, analysis, and use of disaggregated data strengthened in accordance with the human rights-based approach, gender equality and 'leaving no one behind' principles.

Output 4.2: Measures and solutions to reduce discriminatory practices, narrow the wage gap, and introduce gender aspects into state medium-term programmes developed.

Output 4.3: Measures to strengthen the healthcare system, especially at the primary care level, for the response to COVID-19 and prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, HIV and infectious diseases, developed and introduced.

Outcome 4 was the most significant in the portfolio, consisting of nine projects and 12 project outputs, with a budget of $83.91 million, surpassing the initial estimate of $5.99 million for the cycle (see Figure 11 for a breakdown by year).[86] During 2021-2024, the country office spent $63.55 million, achieving a delivery rate of 75.7 percent. Seven projects (99.4 percent of expenditure) were DIM, and two (0.57 percent) were NIM. Approximately 99.8 percent of programme expenditure ($63.42 million) was allocated to outputs with gender equality as a significant objective (GEN2). 0.15 percent ($100,000) went to outputs not expected to contribute to gender equality (GEN0), and 0.04 percent ($30,000) to outputs expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way (GEN1). The main source of funding for this outcome came from the Government of Belarus (75.5 percent of expenditure), followed by the Global Fund (23.4 percent of expenditure), and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Joint SDGs Fund (0.7 percent of expenditure) (see Figure 12).

[86] Project Social Environmental Standards (ID 00130580) is under Outcomes 3 and 4.

FIGURE 11. Outcome 4: Budget and expenditure by year

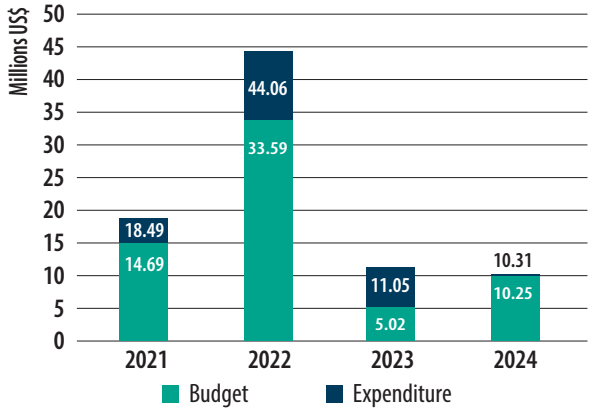
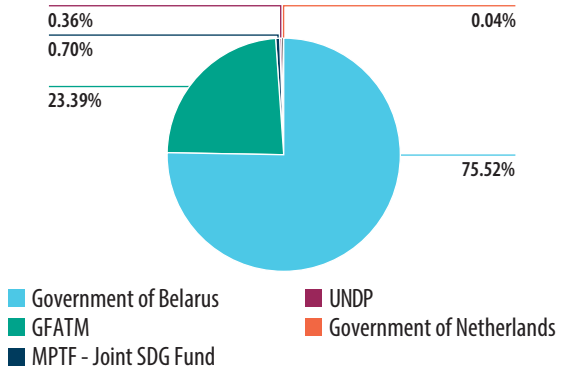


FIGURE 12. Outcome 4: Expenditure by donor



Source: UNDP ATLAS and Quantum data March 2025

Finding 10. Evidence-based SDGs governance: UNDP effectively leveraged its role as SDG integrator to drive the support of the United Nations country team, enhancing the national SDG framework and data collection system. UNDP played a key role in developing regional sustainable development strategies (RSDSs) for 2026-2030, aligning them with regional social and economic development programmes. This laid a solid foundation for a continued, focused integration of SDGs into the upcoming policy cycle at regional level.

During this programme cycle, UNDP continued to use its convening power and SDG integrator role to empower and enhance the operation of the national evidence-based SDG governance system.[87] UNDP facilitated partnership with other United Nations agencies that pooled their own regular resources to provide secretariat support to the national Council for Sustainable Development (CSD).[88] National stakeholders highlighted that the support provided by UNDP was instrumental for the effective functioning of the CSD. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs operated as the CSD Secretariat, but with limited allocated capacity. UNDP facilitated the establishment of a support unit to effectively address these capacity gaps, thereby improving the overall operational efficiency of the CSD.

In 2023, with the launch of the SDGs Nationalization and Localization joint project, UNDP expanded its support to the national SDGs architecture by directly working with regional executive authorities.[89] During 2023 and 2024, UNDP supported regional executive committees in five of the six Belarus regions to develop five-year RSDSs. UNDP support enabled a highly participatory development process facilitated by the Institute of Economics, under the Ministry of Economy. This approach enhanced presentation of the needs of diverse regional stakeholders in the Strategy, while ensuring alignment between regional sustainable development strategies and the forthcoming NSDS 2040. All regions presented their draft strategies at

87 ICPE 2019 noted that the SDGs represented an important opportunity for UNDP to continue to support the development of Belarus.

88 This included development of meeting agendas and draft protocols, covering the costs of premises, commissioning expert studies requested by the Council, for the participation of Belarus delegations in the meetings of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

89 Regional executive authorities have representatives in the CSD.

the CSD meeting at the end of 2024. Once formally adopted, these strategies are expected to serve as the foundational framework for regional social and economic development programmes for 2026–2030, positioning them as the key planning documents guiding regional priorities and investments.[90]

UNDP played a crucial role in advancing the national SDG data collection and dissemination system, Belstat, that accumulates and shares data on 94 percent of SDG indicators through dedicated data portals.[91] With UNDP assistance, Belstat developed an official statistical methodology for measuring the Multidimensional Poverty Index.[92] This allows for more nuanced data on how people experience poverty in key areas of wellbeing (health, education and living standards) and for the identification of affected population groups, potentially leading to more targeted social policies. With UNDP support, Belstat initiated the development of methodologies for calculating SDG indicators 8.4.1 (Material Footprint) and 8.4.2 (Domestic Material Consumption). Additionally, UNDP support was instrumental in launching the geospatial statistics portal,[93] which enhanced national capability for detailed spatial data analysis and the identification of areas for future intervention, to ensure that 'no one is left behind'.

Finding 11. Measures to strengthen the healthcare system: UNDP made significant strategic contributions to the healthcare system in Belarus, as part of the national COVID-19 response, by leveraging its advanced procurement capabilities to facilitate the acquisition of essential medical equipment and ensuring sustained access to international health financing for HIV and TB prevention.

As part of the national COVID-19 response, the Government secured a loan from the World Bank to procure essential medical equipment, including advanced technology for intensive care units, laboratory equipment, and personal protective equipment. Utilizing its sophisticated global procurement architecture, UNDP leveraged its procurement capabilities and established relationships with international suppliers to acquire equipment that met the technical specifications provided by the Ministry of Health. UNDP also managed the supply and installation of the equipment, which was distributed and installed in 25 percent of hospitals nationwide.[94]

Site visits confirmed that the equipment provided was actively in use. Hospital staff reported that the maintenance and procurement of necessary spare parts had been funded by the state budget, ensuring seamless maintenance. Furthermore, the newly procured equipment allowed hospitals to replace outdated equipment in intensive care units, thereby sustaining critical care provision to patients. Hospital staff confirmed that this upgrade to state-of-the-art equipment significantly enhanced the quality of treatment delivered in intensive care units.

According to national stakeholders, UNDP played a critical role in building national capacity in the areas of HIV and TB, which prepared the country to assume responsibility for the management of Global Fund grants in 2016.[95] In line with the Global Fund transition strategy, UNDP played a key role in strengthening national capacity, enabling Belarus to assume full grant management responsibilities from January 1, 2016, and ensuring a sustainable and accountable transition to national ownership. During the current programme

[90] Interviews and document review, including the Law on State forecasting and planning, # 157-3, as amended on 24-April-2024. In the past the regional social and economic programs were based directly on the NSDS.

[91] National SDG data portal https://sdgplatform.belstat.gov.by/, Regional SDG data portal https://sdgregions.belstat.gov.by/

[92] The task to develop the Multidimensional poverty index was articulated in the National Strategy for Statistics Development to 2025. Interviews and document review.

[93] https://gis.belstat.gov.by/

[94] UNDP Belarus (2023) Emergency Response to COVID-19 Project. Final Project Report.

[95] The Global Fund has supported national HIV and TB programmes in Belarus since 2004. Until 2015, UNDP served as the Principal Recipient, working closely with the national health system and civil society to stabilize the epidemiological situation and significantly reduce the spread of HIV and TB.

cycle, the UNDP role was initially limited to support to the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) for interaction with the Global Fund, and as a platform for exchange and coordination between all national stakeholders, including representatives of key populations.

To mitigate the potential risks of interruptions to Belarus access to Global Fund support due to sanctions, Global Fund requested UNDP to re-assume the role of Principal Recipient responsible for grant management for the 2022-2024 grant cycle – a move supported by the Government and the CCM.[96] UNDP fulfilled this critical role as Principal Recipient in a period of logistical and economic constraints, ensuring sustainability and continuity of Global Fund grant implementation and HIV and TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment and support measures for the period 2023-2024. This uninterrupted access to Global Fund support was critical for Belarus, covering about 30 percent of national expenditure for TB prevention and over 50 percent for HIV prevention. As such, this support was critical for the continued provision of HIV-related services to key populations, particularly children living with HIV, and uninterrupted access to necessary medicines, equipment and re-agents for testing and treatment of HIV and TB patients.[97] Table 1 presents data on the coverage of key populations by HIV-related services in 2023-2024 under the Global Fund grant when UNDP was the Principal Recipient.

TABLE 1. Coverage of key populations with main HIV-related services 2023-2024

Key population group	Minimum prevention packages		HIV-testing and counselling	
	2023	2024	2023	2024
Men having sex with men	15,883	15,891	11,835	12,012
Transgender people	331	332	294	433
Sex workers	13,792	13,857	8878	9445
People using injected drugs	64,302	64,756	33,846	36,378

Source: Global Fund grant subrecipients' reports for 2023 and 2024.

While no sanctions were imposed on the international trade of medication and medical re-agents, sanctions made international suppliers hesitant and overcautious in processing purchase orders and shipments to Belarus, which significantly complicated and slowed the procurement and delivery processes for UNDP. A new national requirement to register every lot of medical supplies with authorities before it could enter the country further complicated procurement and delivery processes. In combination these two factors caused serious delays in delivery that were especially critical for medical re-agents for TB testing with short periods of validity.[98]

[96] There were difficulties in procuring medicines, equipment, and consumables; disrupted logistics; financial transaction restrictions; and additional requirement imposed through the national legislation.

[97] The State Programme "Public health and demographic security" for 2021-2025.

[98] According to the country office, sanctions against Belarus, while not targeting medical products, made international suppliers hesitant, causing significant delays in procurement and delivery for UNDP. Exporting countries imposed lengthy export clearance procedures, while Belarus strict regulations required time-consuming registration processes for imported medical items. Border closures and logistical crises further complicated shipments with long queues, limited border crossings, and freight forwarder refusals. Warranty support and training were also disrupted, as many European and American manufacturers reduced or stopped cooperation with local partners.

UNDP played a pivotal strategic role in enhancing operations of the CCM by fostering the inclusive engagement of HIV and TB affected populations, as well as international, public, private and faith-based sectors, to enhance national HIV and TB responses and the effective implementation of Global Fund and other grants. Stakeholders recognized the importance of UNDP providing a platform for these groups to engage with government stakeholders, to articulate and advance their specific needs. In addition to secretarial support, UNDP provided catalytic contributions, commissioning studies and expert papers at the request of CCM, producing knowledge products that were instrumental in shaping national policies related to HIV and TB, and formulating grant proposals to the Global Fund. As the Government prepared to serve as Principal Recipient under the forthcoming grant, UNDP continued to provide crucial support in international procurement, ensuring sustained collaboration and effectiveness in addressing public health challenges.

Finding 12. National ownership and scale up: UNDP strategically collaborated with government partners to ensure national ownership and sustainability of development initiatives, exemplified by the successful scaling of innovative models across Belarus. Through targeted interventions and capacity-building efforts, UNDP effectively mobilized international donor funding to complement and enhance government development strategies, fostering a robust framework for sustainable progress.

UNDP development assistance projects were designed in close collaboration with government partners, fostering a high degree of national ownership. The UNDP country office offered a value proposition and efficient procedures on project implementation trusted by national partners. As a result, major donor-funded projects continued to be implemented through NIM modality with UNDP support, and the country office established dedicated management support teams to oversee project coordination and procurement. UNDP also implemented small interventions in response to government requests, contributing to the strong national ownership of results. Government partners often saw UNDP as a channel for bringing international donor funding to the country, to complement and scale-up government development efforts.

This evaluation also found evidence that UNDP consciously incorporated mechanisms for the scale-up of piloted models into its development assistance projects and interventions. These mechanisms included training and study tours for relevant individuals outside of pilot sites, the development of knowledge products, and presentations at national and regional forums. For example, UNDP piloted the ecotourism cluster model in four of the 30 designated SPNAs, conducting training on the model and study tours to pilot SPNAs for representatives of the other 26 designated SPNAs to support scale-up of the model. UNDP developed guidance based on the experiences of capacity-building of local small entrepreneurs in Chernobyl-affected districts to sell their goods through online marketplaces. These guides were made available on the online map of the national entrepreneurship support infrastructure. Similarly, UNDP consolidated lessons learned from piloting the women-to-women mentorship programme into methodological guidance for the implementation of such programmes. These examples illustrate that many of UNDP interventions successfully progressed from emergence to diffusion phase in the S-curve transformation model. Notably, the ecotourism cluster model and the women-to-women mentorship programme demonstrated signs of structured replication and policy interest, suggesting readiness for scale-up and transition toward systematization and consolidation.

2.5 Country programme implementation and other cross-cutting issues

Finding 13. M&E and knowledge management: The country office significantly improved its knowledge management practices and M&E capacity through setting up a dedicated Results, Resource Planning and Results-based Management (RBM) unit. While this marked an important step forward, the use of national-level indicators to measure progress at the output level presented challenges in clearly attributing results to UNDP contributions.

In 2022, UNDP Belarus established a Results, Resource Planning and RBM unit with a dedicated position of RBM/M&E Specialist.[99] The country office also significantly improved its knowledge management practices, including the adoption of the Knowledge Management Strategy 2023-2025 and the launch of the POCOMAS database offering structured access to all project-related documentation, and other knowledge products and resources.

Project documents developed during this project cycle referenced CPD outcome-level results - a significant improvement from the previous programme cycle.[100] To evaluate progress of the country programme at output level, the country office mostly used national level indicators. In some cases, these indicators were not sufficient or could not capture the work done by UNDP, and in others the targets set for indicators were not realistic.[101] While there was room for further clarity in connecting project outputs with outcome-level results, the foundation for stronger alignment was clearly established. National stakeholders echoed observations that the indicators did not adequately reflect UNDP progress and its impact on country programme outputs. The UNDP audit conducted in 2024 also found that the design of country programme indicators was inadequate, noting that 14 of the 29 indicators were not clearly related to their respective outputs and outcomes.[102] Nonetheless, UNDP projects generated substantial data on immediate results, providing a comprehensive view of UNDP contributions over time.

The country office made significant strides in its evaluation processes, with a total of nine evaluations completed as part of its current evaluation cycle from 2021 to 2025 (including six mandatory evaluations of GEF projects), a 100 percent completion rate.[103] The office maintained a strong management response rate, ensuring that recommendations were addressed, although there remained a need to enhance quality assessment outcomes, with mixed results across various evaluations. Overall, the structured approach to evaluations highlighted UNDP Belarus dedication to improving its programmes and ensuring accountability in its operations.

Finding 14. Gender: The country office significantly improved its performance on the Gender Equality Seal framework and reached bronze level certification. It contributed to implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025, especially in women's entrepreneurship. UNDP interventions were intentional in achieving gender equality and ensured balanced representation of male and female participants in capacity-building and as direct beneficiaries.

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99 UNDP Belarus country office organigrams for 2021 – 2024. Strengthening the country office M&E capacity and processes was one of the recommendations of the previous ICPE.

100 UNDP IEO (2019) ICPE Belarus noted that project templates focused only on outputs at the project level.

101 For example, progress on Output 1.1. Measures for the development of green, circular, low-carbon economy was measured by one indicator Sustainable consumption and production national action plans are in place, with a target value of one plan. The country office contributed to the Green Economy NAP for 2021-2025, but the document was developed by the Government, so registering it as a UNDP output is misleading. The indicator does not capture other measures implemented to advance the green economy, e.g. support to the adoption of an ecotourism cluster model and the launch of eco-certification. These were identified as specific "measures" in state programmes, so the country office could objectively use the number of measures as an output indicator. Progress on Output 1.3. Entrepreneurship, competition, innovation, decent jobs was measured by Percentage of workforce employed in SMEs, with the baseline of 33.9 percent (in 2018) and a target of 37.4 percent (2025), meaning an increase of 3.5 percent points, or roughly 140,000 new jobs. The actual number of jobs created as a result of UNDP support was 635.

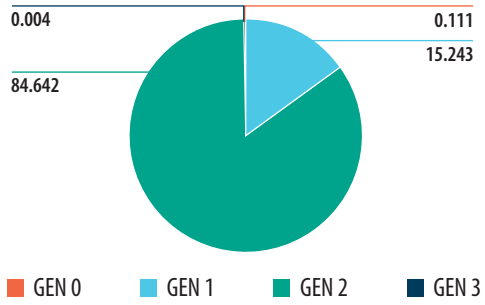
102 UNDP Office of Audits and Investigations (2024) Audit of UNDP Country Office in Belarus.

103 Three planned evaluations were cancelled, with justifications provided and the evaluation plan amended accordingly.

During this programme cycle, the country office used the Gender Equality Seal process to better integrate gender in all domains of its work. These efforts included the launch of the Gender Focal Team in 2021, hiring a gender specialist from 2022 to 2023, staff training on gender equality and women's empowerment issues, the development of a new country office Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2025, and a review of the country office programmatic portfolios from a gender perspective. As a result, the level of compliance with the Gender Equality Seal increased from 37 percent in 2021 to 67 percent in 2023, reaching bronze certification.[104]

The majority (84.6 percent) of funding for the country programme under review supported GEN2 projects, with the majority of remaining funds supporting GEN1 projects (see Figure 13). The structure of funding for gender equity outcomes did not change significantly compared to the previous programme cycle, where the majority of funds also went to GEN2 projects, suggesting that most of UNDP work remained gender targeted in nature.[105]

FIGURE 13. Gender distribution of project funds



Source: UNDP ATLAS and Quantum data March 2025

UNDP was instrumental in integrating gender considerations into policy and regulation development. For example, UNDP supported the piloting of integration of gender analysis into the regulatory impact assessment and NDC update processes. UNDP also made direct contributions to the implementation of aspects of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025 related to the development of women's entrepreneurship, including support to the establishment of 15 women-led businesses, and capacity-building of 30 women-led businesses through a business mentorship programme where female mentors were supporting female mentees. In 2024, Belarus had registered 128,900 SMEs and 237,300 individual entrepreneurs.[106] Overall, the direct effect of UNDP contributions to the development of women's entrepreneurship in Belarus was very small. At the same time, the implementation of the women-to-women business mentorship programme proved the effectiveness of this model, and the development of methodological guidelines for the programme made it ready for scale-up and replication.

UNDP interventions maintained an explicit focus on engaging women in all interventions to ensure their access to proper benefits. For example, as the majority of participating ecotourism service providers, women were able to increase their income and encouraged to expand their businesses and improve

[104] UNDP Belarus (2023) Gender Seal Final Assessment 2021-2023.
[105] UNDP IEO (2019) ICPE Belarus.
[106] Belstat data for 2023.

their knowledge and skills in business management and development.[107] The increased access of girls to green knowledge (70 percent of environmental education for youth participants were female) may have encouraged them to explore green job opportunities and apply the acquired knowledge and skills to address environmental challenges.

UNDP also supported equal opportunities for women within project teams, promoting gender balance in staffing and leadership positions and ensuring that women's voices were heard in decision-making processes. Examples include efforts to promote women's involvement in public consultations (PECCs and Environmental Monitoring Clubs), build women's capacity in environmental monitoring, data analysis and advocacy, and empower women to become active participants in local-level environmental governance.

[107] UNDP Belarus (2023) Terminal Evaluation Report for Conservation-oriented management of forests and wetlands to achieve multiple benefits project, p.66.

CHAPTER 3
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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

3.1 Conclusions

During this programme cycle, UNDP Belarus operated in the context of an upper middle-income country with a very high level of human development and a well-established integrated planning system that managed to sustain economic growth and progress towards the SDGs, even under sanctions. During the national 2021-2025 policy cycle, the Government was working towards five strategic priorities for Belarus, set out in the NSDS 2035 and closely aligned with SDGs Agenda 2030. These were: 1) strengthening families and building quality human capital; 2) productive employment and decent income; 3) digital transformation and spread of innovations; 4) development of business environment and sustainable infrastructure; and 5) environmental security and transition to rational models of production and consumption (circular economy). Efforts took place within a highly complex and restrictive operating environment, posing additional challenges for the UNDP country office.

Conclusion 1. Strategic positioning. UNDP maintained and strengthened its strategic positioning as a trusted, neutral and responsive partner of the Government under conditions of high uncertainty and political sensitivity.

Leveraging the support of the UNDP Crisis Bureau, the UNDP country office strategically managed its communications to mitigate reputational risks and maintain its position as a neutral development partner committed to the interests of the people of Belarus.

Through the effective use of regular resources and the broader capacity of the global UNDP system, UNDP Belarus remained agile in responding to the evolving needs of national institutions and citizens. This reinforced its role as a trusted governmental partner and enabled the delivery of catalytic contributions to address emerging challenges. These efforts shaped, or are expected to shape, national policies and programmes in the upcoming 2026–2030 cycle. In a policy environment where national strategies and regulations are developed by government entities, the ability of UNDP to provide specific catalytic contributions, such as assessments and knowledge products on specific issues, enhanced its access to national policy processes.

In parallel, UNDP effectively leveraged its global procurement expertise to support the Government's efforts to strengthen the health system and drug supply in response to COVID-19, HIV, TB and other epidemiological challenges and noncommunicable diseases. This included the delivery of essential medical equipment and support to community organizations with HIV prevention tools, rapid diagnostics and technical resources. UNDP also focused on improving the legal and institutional framework to address HIV-related stigma, discrimination and criminalization. This responsiveness to emerging government priorities enabled the establishment of new partnerships in areas such as innovation management and digital development, laying the groundwork for continued collaboration and impact in the next programme cycle.

Conclusion 2. UNDP added value. UNDP played a key role as a catalyst for strategic innovation for the Government.

UNDP played a vital role as a catalyst in introducing innovative approaches and models and unlocking the potential of Belarus as an upper middle-income country. The UNDP strength lay in its catalytic contributions—targeted, high-leverage inputs such as technical assessments, pilot models and knowledge products that empowered national partners to explore and institutionalize new approaches. During this programme cycle, UNDP contributions included the development and piloting of initiatives such

as the ecotourism cluster model, the budgetary grant mechanism to catalyse investments in the SDGs, public-private partnerships, gender analysis in regulatory impact assessments, the women-to-women mentorship model, and urban energy-efficiency solutions. These interventions, though often small in scale, had a multiplier effect, enabling government counterparts to initiate, test and consider adoption of reforms across systems.

Conclusion 3. Enhanced SDG nationalization. UNDP made significant progress in localizing the SDGs by supporting the National Strategy for Sustainable Development to 2040, strengthening the SDG monitoring system in line with global best practice, and guiding the development of regional strategies for sustainable development across all regions of Belarus.

Building on its strong partnership with the national SDG Coordination Council, which included representatives of both national and regional authorities, UNDP successfully facilitated the scale-up of RSDSs to all regions of Belarus. Combined with the availability of regional level data on SDG indicators, the development of these regional SDGs strategies laid the foundation for the introduction of an evidence-based SDG management cycle at regional level. To strengthen the Belarus SDG monitoring system, UNDP supported the enhancement of national statistical capacity by aligning methodologies with international standards and best practice across diverse areas, including multidimensional poverty, statistical data, geostatistics, metadata and SDG indicators.

Conclusion 4. Adaptive nature of the country programme and its results. The structure of the UNDP country programme evolved significantly in response to a rapidly shifting operational context, particularly changes in development financing**.**

Amid a volatile and unpredictable environment shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic and broader geopolitical tensions, the country office demonstrated strong adaptability, continuously aligning its efforts with emerging priorities and opportunities and maximizing its impact through catalytic actions. This involved providing technical knowledge, policy inputs and pilot demonstrations for scale, that supported systemic resilience and long-term readiness. While funding for green and inclusive economic development (Outcome 1) was lower than anticipated, and no project financing was secured for the newly introduced digital ecosystem development area (Outcome 3), resource mobilization for climate change mitigation and environmental outcomes (Outcome 2) remained largely on target.

UNDP exceeded its intended results in the health sector, where its support helped strengthen the Belarus intensive care capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensured continued HIV-related services for key populations despite international sanctions. The country office also advanced SDG-aligned governance, making notable progress in institutionalizing evidence-based planning at the regional level.

Immediate results were achieved in the area of green and inclusive economy, with evaluation data indicating that UNDP support helped to sustain and grow several businesses beyond the project lifecycle. Similarly, progress in climate mitigation and environmental protection met most immediate targets, contributing to system-level improvements, including in MRV practices.

Although not all intended results in the digital ecosystem development area were fully realized due to limited donor funding, UNDP successfully positioned itself as a credible partner and source of digital expertise. This foundation set the stage for expanded contributions in the next programme cycle.

3.2 Recommendations and management response

RECOMMENDATION 1.

UNDP should further capitalize on the opportunity created by the development of RSDSs in Belarus, to further strengthen its cooperation with regional authorities and promote the initiation and implementation of regional voluntary reviews as a foundation for the next iteration of the regional strategies.

The RSDSs developed with UNDP support during this programming cycle, along with the availability of regional-level data on SDG indicators, provide a solid foundation for the initiation of an evidence-based SDG governance cycle in the regions of Belarus. The next step in this cycle should be the development of regional voluntary reviews as an instrument to assess the implementation of the current RSDSs, and inform the development of the next iteration of regional strategies. As an SDG integrator, UNDP should take a leading role in introducing the concept and facilitating the development of regional voluntary reviews - to further raise awareness of the SDGs, create opportunities for participatory processes in all five regions, and identify the contribution of RSDSs into the National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2040.

Management response: Accepted.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Further support the national partners in finalizing six RSDSs.	December 2025	Partnership for SDG Financing and Socio-Medical Care unit		
1.2 Initiate the development process of the Regional Voluntary Review on implementation of the 2030 Agenda at regional level, and provide support for piloting on request from local authorities.	December 2030	Partnership for SDG Financing and Socio-Medical Care unit		
1.3 Support the Government in elaboration of the next cycle of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development.	December 2030	Partnership for SDG Financing and Socio-Medical Care unit		

RECOMMENDATION 2.

UNDP should leverage growing business interest in the ESG agenda and the Government's initial steps towards enabling public-private partnerships, to foster business engagement in the implementation and funding of the SDGs as opportunities arise, in partnership with the Government. This can include exploring, where possible, different funding modalities for promoting social and green bonds, blended finance mechanisms, and results-based climate financing, while using platforms like the Belarus - United Nations Global Compact network to strengthen outreach.

To operationalize this, UNDP should develop sector-specific engagement plans with clear partnership and resource mobilization targets. Consideration should be given to establishing a dedicated private sector engagement function and creating tailored value propositions for corporate partners, both domestic and international. Areas of focus can include fostering collaboration between public and private sectors, and leveraging innovative financial instruments and relevant funding modalities feasible to the country context, such as social and green bonds, blended finance mechanisms, and results-based climate financing. The experience of other country offices—such as Uzbekistan's work in promoting green financing through green bonds—could offer valuable insights. Support can also be extended to scaling success models from the current programme cycle, including business mentorship and the establishment of ecotourism clusters in SPNAs.

Management response: Partially accepted.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Provided there is a request from the Ministry of Economy and line ministries, UNDP will support at least two initiatives promoting ESG standards in the Belarusian private sector.	December 2030	Socioeconomic Development and Gender unit		
2.2 Study Uzbekistan's experience in innovative and green financing and share findings with the relevant ministries and institutions in Belarus.	December 2026	Socioeconomic Development and Gender unit		
2.3 In consultation with relevant national partners, integrate business mentorship, clustering, or other innovative approaches that foster sustainable economic growth into the design of at least two development projects under the 2026–2030 programme cycle.	December 2030	Socioeconomic Development and Gender unit		

2.4 Support the Government in enhancing innovative financial tools and instruments for SDG achievement (incl. promotion of Integrated National Financing Framework, Tax for SDGs, etc.).	December 2030	Partnership for SDG Financing and Socio-Medical Care		

RECOMMENDATION 3.

UNDP should enhance its strategic approach to environmental sustainability and climate resilience by integrating climate considerations into national development planning to achieve transformative national impact.

UNDP should support the Government of Belarus in integrating environment and climate finance into national planning such as national strategies and action plans. UNDP, with support from RBEC or in collaboration with national counterparts, should maintain dialogue with GEF at relevant levels to identify opportunities for collaboration that align with the country's environmental needs. At the same time, UNDP should focus on developing a strong pipeline of climate-related projects tailored to the specific vulnerabilities and mitigation potential of Belarus.

Management response: Partially accepted.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 UNDP will further support the Government of Belarus in integrating environment and climate finance into national strategies and action plans.	December 2030 (ongoing)	Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Disaster risk reduction (DRR) unit		
3.2 In collaboration with the national counterparts, UNDP will develop a solid pipeline of project concepts/ ideas eligible for GEF funding.	December 2030	Climate Change, Energy, Environment and DRR unit		

RECOMMENDATION 4.

UNDP should further strengthen its MEL system and processes to better capture contributions to CPD outcomes.

UNDP should enhance the tracking and reporting of output-level indicators that reflect results within the direct control of UNDP, such as the number of supported business initiatives, technical assessments conducted, policies influenced, or knowledge products developed. These indicators should be clearly linked to CPD outcomes and used to demonstrate the pathways through which project-level outputs contribute to broader development results and systemic change.

In parallel, the country office should develop fit-for-purpose mechanisms to trace the downstream effects of catalytic contributions, including studies, advisory services, or technical support provided in response to government requests. While these interventions are often small in scope, they may have outsized influence on policy formulation, planning and resource mobilization. Capturing how such contributions are utilized - whether adopted in national strategies, scaled through public financing, or replicated by other partners - will allow UNDP to more effectively demonstrate its added value, foster adaptive learning, and strengthen accountability for long-term impact.

Management response: Accepted.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Implement advanced monitoring methodologies, including application of Artificial Intelligence and comprehensive MEL frameworks, to enhance project effectiveness and long-term impact.	December 2030 (ongoing)	Results and Resources Planning unit (M&E)		
4.2 Pilot RBM Distinction Programme to strengthen the country office results culture.	January 2026	Results and Resources Planning unit (M&E)		
4.3 In the new CPD 2026-2030, identify output indicators that directly reflect the UNDP contribution to broader development results.	September 2025	Results and Resources Planning unit (M&E)		

RECOMMENDATION 5.

UNDP should strengthen its resource mobilization efforts by diversifying funding sources and further positioning itself as a trusted implementation partner of the Government. In light of international funding constraints, the country office should explore new opportunities, particularly with SCO and BRICS partners, to offset reductions in traditional financing streams.

Given the accession of Belarus to SCO and BRICS in 2024, targeted engagement with their members should be prioritized to unlock new funding channels. UNDP can also leverage its successful track record in managing development projects, such as the procurement of medical equipment during the COVID-19 response, to further establish its role as an effective implementation partner for government-led initiatives.

To enhance domestic financing, UNDP should develop a dedicated Government Engagement Strategy, with clear objectives to further explore opportunities for cost-sharing contributions, grounded in a compelling value proposition that aligns with national priorities.

Management response: Accepted.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Explore new partnerships with EAEU, SCO and BRICS member States to diversify traditional funding streams.	December 2030 (ongoing)	DRR and Programme units' heads		
5.2 Jointly with national partners explore legal and financial constraints and identify UNDP value proposition for closer engagement with the Government.	December 2030	DRR and Programme units' heads		

RECOMMENDATION 6.

UNDP should further assist the Government of Belarus in advancing digital transformation by promoting e-governance policies and expanding high-quality digital services for citizens and businesses.

Building on momentum, UNDP can continue to support the Government with implementation of its digital transformation agenda, expanding citizen- and business-centric digital public services, and promoting digital literacy and skills development.

To foster trust and unlock the potential of the digital economy, UNDP should also support the establishment of a forward-looking national framework for data management and protection. This may include assistance in modernizing legislation to reflect advances in digital technologies and strengthen consumer protections, ensuring legal clarity for online sales and purchases.

◀ Recommendation 6 (cont'd)

Management response: Accepted.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Include digital transformation as a priority in the CPD for Belarus 2026–2030.	September 2025	Programme section		
6.2 Provided there is a request from the MoC and relevant national institutions, support the development of data governance frameworks and assessment of the data economy in Belarus.	December 2030	Programme section		

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

ANNEXES

Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the Evaluation Resource Centre website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/24623.

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Evaluation framework

Annex 3. Country at a glance

Annex 4. Documents consulted

Annex 5. List of projects reviewed

Annex 6. Status of country programme document outcome & output indicators matrix

Annex 7. Country programme performance rating

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