Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION
MEXICO

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INDEPENDENT UNDP PROGRAMME EVALUATION: MEXICO

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IEO TEAM

Directorate: Isabelle Mercier (Director) and Richard Jones (Deputy Director)

Country Programme Evaluation Section Chief: Ana Rosa M. Soares

Lead Evaluator: Eduardo Gomez Rivero

Research analysts: Camila Matta, Abel Gelman and Claudia Villanueva

Internal quality reviewers: Angela Naletilic, Anna Guerraggio and Ben Murphy

Evaluation consultants: Gisela Ulloa Vargas and Elisa Gomez Martinez

External reviewers: Alejandra Faundez and Juan Murciano

Publication and dissemination: Flora Jimenez and Iben Hjorth

Administrative and logistical support: Sonam Choetsho, Sandra Ortega Perez

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STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

UNDP Mexico staff: Lorenzo Jimenez de Luis (Resident Representative), Sandra Sosa (Deputy Resident Representative), Virginia Leal (Monitoring and Evaluation Officer) and all staff of the Country Office in Mexico who contributed their time to conduct this evaluation.

Other stakeholders and partners: The Government of the United Mexican States, representatives of United Nations agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations, private sector and bilateral and multilateral development partners.

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ACRONYMS

AMEXCID	Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance Initiative
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CDMX	Mexico City
CO	Country Office
CONEVAL	National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy/Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social
CPD	Country programme document
CSO	Civil society organization
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	European Union
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HDI	Human Development Index
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
ICT	Information communication technology
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework
LNOB	Leave no-one behind
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
NEI	National Electoral Institute
RBLAC	Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SESNA	Executive Secretariat of the National Anti-Corruption System
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SSC	South-South Cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

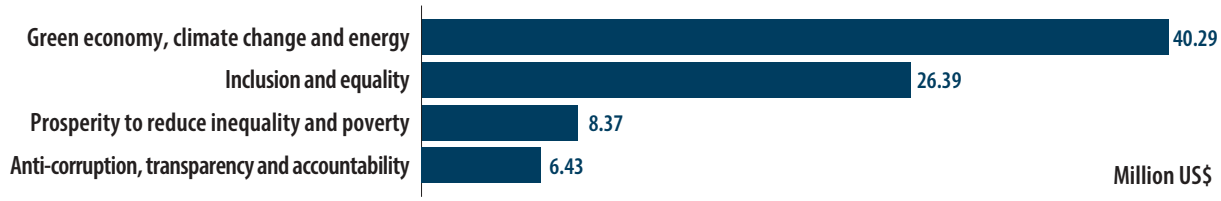
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USA	United States of America
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Evaluation Brief: Mexico

Mexico's development trajectory is marked by important advances and persistent challenges. As an upper-middle-income country, it has made significant achievements in human development, but deep social, economic and environmental inequalities persist. Disparity in access to quality public services, gender inequality and high levels of violence, including femicide, affect large sectors of the population. Growing environmental vulnerabilities, such as extreme weather events and deforestation, challenge the country's resilience.

UNDP's country programme for the period 2021-2025 was designed to address these challenges, in alignment with national priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The programme focused on four strategic areas, with varying degrees of scope among them: green economy, climate and energy; inclusive social development and poverty reduction; productive development; and anti-corruption and governance. In a cross-cutting manner and highly valued by partners, UNDP promoted gender equality and maintained adaptive management, responding to changing needs in the country.

FIGURE A. Programme expenditure by thematic area, 2021-2024



Source: UNDP IEO

Well positioned as a trusted partner, UNDP leveraged its extensive network of partnerships to support federal and local institutions, offering innovative solutions and strengthening capacities. It maintained a diversification of funding sources and boosted access to non-traditional sources linked to the private sector.

FIGURE B. Sources of funding for the country programme, 2021-2024

Source: UNDP IEO

Findings and conclusions

The evaluation highlighted UNDP's capacity to engage with key development actors in Mexico and its added value in ensuring that interventions address the country's inequality issues. UNDP was recognized for its strong partnerships, technical expertise and adaptability. UNDP contributed to advancing national priorities in social and productive development and the fight against poverty and inequality; however, challenges remained in results measurement, replicability and scaling up of pilot projects.

UNDP proved strategic and timely through integrated approaches to foster sustainable and resilient development. It strengthened the adaptive and response capacity of agricultural and cultural systems to adverse climate events, while protecting biodiversity. UNDP's neutrality enabled it to support Mexican authorities in addressing politically sensitive issues affecting the quality of governance, including anti-corruption efforts, the promotion of transparency, and citizen participation. It also strengthened systems to prevent and address violence against women, including measures against political violence. The evaluation noted persistent challenges such as socio-economic inequality and institutional capacity gaps at the subnational level, accelerating climate challenges, scarce funding sources or the need to strengthen results frameworks and impact measurement tools.

Recommendations

To strengthen UNDP's work in Mexico in support of national development priorities, the Independent Country Programme Evaluation made five recommendations:

Recommendation 1. UNDP should further solidify its strategic positioning as a leading agency for understanding and addressing inequality and inequity in Mexico. In addressing these disparities at the subnational level, UNDP efforts should be guided by the objective of facilitating and ensuring the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should explicitly integrate climate adaptation and resilience objectives into its next programme, ensuring a more structural approach to environmental sustainability. Additionally, it should improve and extend communication about its value proposition and the contribution that it makes to Mexico's international goals and commitments on biodiversity protection and climate change through its environmental initiatives.

Recommendation 3. Given the challenges of advancing work supporting anti-corruption efforts at the federal level, UNDP should refine its strategy, identify priority areas and the most effective entry points and leverage innovation and digital transformation to enhance transparency and accountability.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should renew and expand partnerships with academia, think tanks and autonomous public and private institutions to further strengthen them and further leverage their capacities to enhance national statistical and evaluation systems. In addition, it should reinforce the design of theories of change and indicators to facilitate the measurement of the effects of its initiatives' medium- and long-term effects, ensuring a more robust approach to impact measurement and evidence-based decision-making.

Recommendation 5. Without detracting from cross-cutting approaches to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment and leaving no one behind, UNDP should advocate, both at the level of the UN Cooperation Framework and by making it clear in its country programme, its commitment to promoting more gender-transformative policies and approaches to challenge and to change harmful norms, cultural values and power structures.

CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose, objective and scope of the evaluation

Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) are conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). They compile and analyse evaluative evidence to demonstrate United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) contributions to advancing national efforts and achieving development results in every country. ICPEs are carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.[1]

The objective of an ICPE is twofold: to strengthen UNDP accountability to national stakeholders and to its Executive Board and to promote evidence-based learning to feed into the new country programme.

This is the second country-level evaluation in the United Mexican States (hereinafter 'Mexico').[2] This ICPE covered UNDP work implemented under the 2021-2025 Country Programme Document (CPD) until June 2024. It included the UNDP programme in its entirety, from all funding sources: UNDP, donors and the government. The ICPE also considered interventions that started in the previous programme cycle and continued into the current one.

1.2 Evaluation methodology

The ICPE is guided by four main evaluation questions (see Box 1). It presents findings, conclusions and recommendations and will serve as input for developing the next UNDP CPD for Mexico. The primary audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP Mexico Country Office, the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC), the UNDP Executive Board and the Government of Mexico. The evaluation is also expected to be used by other United Nations agencies and development stakeholders in the country as input to their evaluation work.

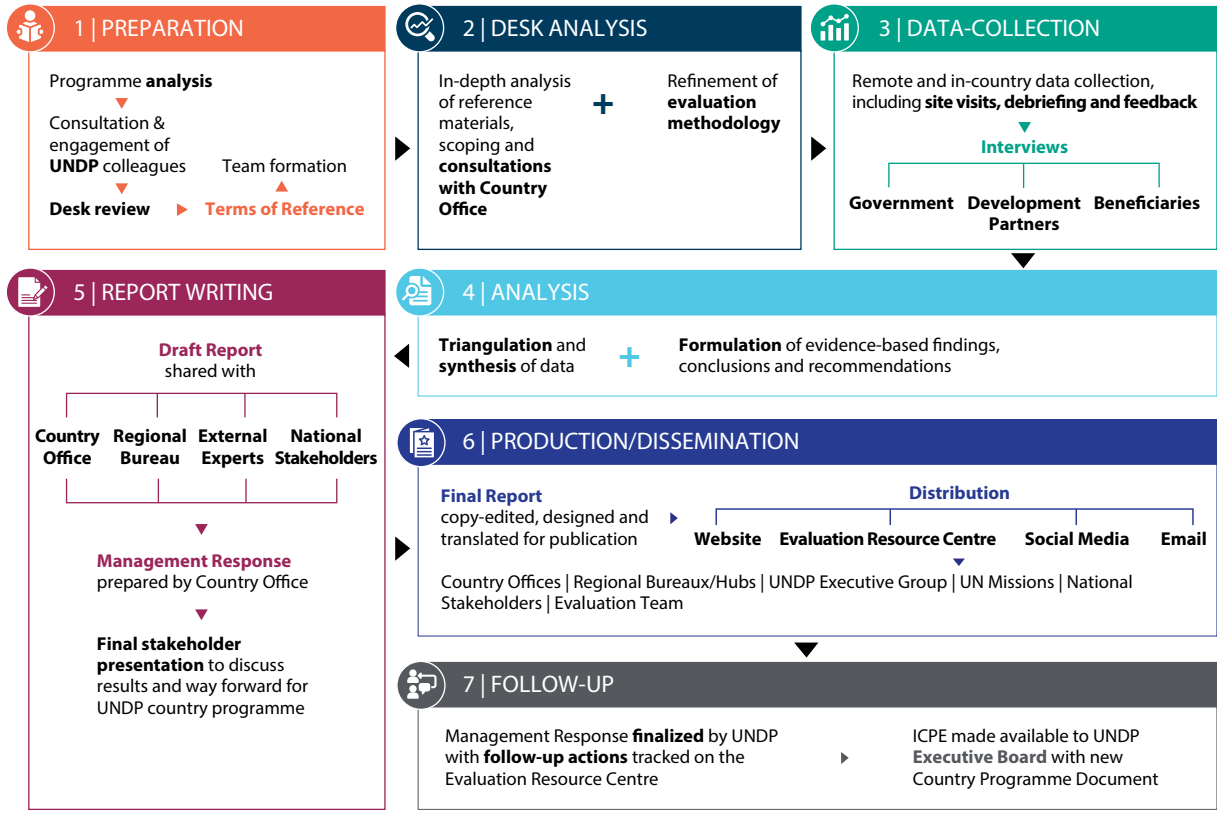
The ICPE was conducted according to the approved IEO process. It followed the methodology detailed in the evaluation terms of reference (see Annex 1) and its corresponding evaluation matrix (see Annex 2) and adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.[3] Methodologically, the evaluation adhered to the following outline.

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 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?
4. To what extent did internal and external factors influence UNDP's ability to deliver its programme efficiently and maximize contributions?

[1] See http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml
[2] The IEO conducted an Assessment of Development Results in 2016. The report can be found here: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/adr/mexico.shtml
[3] See the United Nations Evaluation Group website: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914

FIGURE 1. Methodological outline and key phases of the ICPE



Source: IEO

Key elements of the evaluation included the validation of the list of projects that formed the basis for the analysis (see Annex 3), the analysis of key data on the country context (see Annex 4), a document review (see Annex 5) and key stakeholder interviews (see Annex 6). The evaluation employed a rating system to assess programme performance based on the findings presented in this report, using five internationally agreed evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (see Annex 7).

The qualitative and quantitative data analysis and triangulation exercises took into consideration the following elements:

- An in-depth review of available secondary information: national context data, project documentation, audit reports and decentralized evaluations.[4]
- A comprehensive preliminary questionnaire, completed by the Country Office in April 2024, collecting results and evidence. Verified during the field mission in June 2024.
- Focus groups and semi-structured interviews with 90 stakeholders (60 of whom were women), including government authorities, private sector, academia, civil society and UN agencies.
- Direct observation in Mexico City (CDMX) and field missions in the states of Puebla and Yucatan, with visits to several projects in different thematic areas.

[4] Ten decentralized evaluations were conducted in the period under review. The quality assessment of them was: one report was satisfactory, eight were moderately satisfactory and one was not rated. Evaluation reports are available at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/plans/detail/1551

- An analysis of the programme's outcomes and outputs, the status of its indicators (see Annex 8) and a geographical analysis of budget execution (see Annex 9).
- A study of UNDP's gender markers and their gender mainstreaming throughout the programme and an analysis using the IEO Gender Results Effectiveness Scale.[5]

1.3 Evaluation challenges and limitations

The initial field mission was postponed, avoiding the presidential elections being held in the country in June 2024. This allowed for greater availability and access to key informants during the in-country mission. The team experienced a logistical limitation due to tropical storm 'Alberto' affecting one planned field visit to the municipality of Xicotepec. This limitation was mitigated by conducting the focus group planned virtually.

1.4 Country context

With a population of almost 130 million people, Mexico is the tenth most-populous country in the world and the second-largest economy in Latin America. In 2020, 23.2 million people self-identified as Indigenous and 68 Indigenous linguistic groupings were recognized, exemplifying the country diversity.[6] Despite the pandemic, it has remained in the group of countries with a high Human Development Index (HDI), ranking 77th out of 193 countries measured.[7]

Mexico's socio-economic landscape is complex and marked by inequality. While the country's economy qualifies as upper-middle-income, more than 37 percent of the population could not afford the basic food basket in 2023.[8] While the poorest 40 percent own only 14 percent of total income, the richest 1 percent control 26 percent.[9] National statistics reflect a positive trend in terms of reducing the number of people living in poverty; however, this has occurred in a context of worsening access to social services.

The inequality of Mexico's development landscape is also manifested in its gender dynamics. While Mexico's Gender Inequality Index improved significantly between the 1990s and 2022, it still ranked 84th out of 193 countries.[10] Gender gaps exist in the political and economic spheres. Violence against women and femicide remain a critical problem. National statistics indicate an average of 900 women murdered annually between 2020 and 2024.[11]

Existing inequalities are intensified by phenomena such as violence, citizen insecurity, organized crime or corruption that impact the performance of the Mexican public sector and undermine the country's governance and financial stability. The Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Mexico 140th out of 180 countries, the worst among the countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.[12]

Mexico's status as a country of origin, transit, destination and return of migrants generates further challenges as well as opportunities in the political, economic, social and environmental spheres. In 2023, it reached a record 144,000 asylum applications and, in 2024, almost one million asylum applications, a record number of migrants registered by the authorities.[13] Mexico is the largest recipient of remittances in the region.

5 The GRES classifies gender results into five categories: negative, blind, targeted, responsive and transformative.
6 National Population Council, 2020. https://www.gob.mx/conapo/documentos/poblacion-indigena-en-mexico-caracteristicas-sociodemograficas-2020
7 UNDP. 2024. Human Development Report 2023-24: Breaking the deadlock: Re-imagining cooperation in a polarised world. New York.
8 CONEVAL, 2023: https://www.coneval.org.mx/Medicion/Paginas/ITLP-IS_pobreza_laboral.aspx
9 UNDP (2024): Human Development Index 2023/2024
10 https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII
11 Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System. https://www.gob.mx/sesnsp
12 Transparency International, 2023. CPI. https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/index/mex
13 IOM. https://lac.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl2601/files/documents/2025-01/ibc-hm-july-sept-2024.pdf

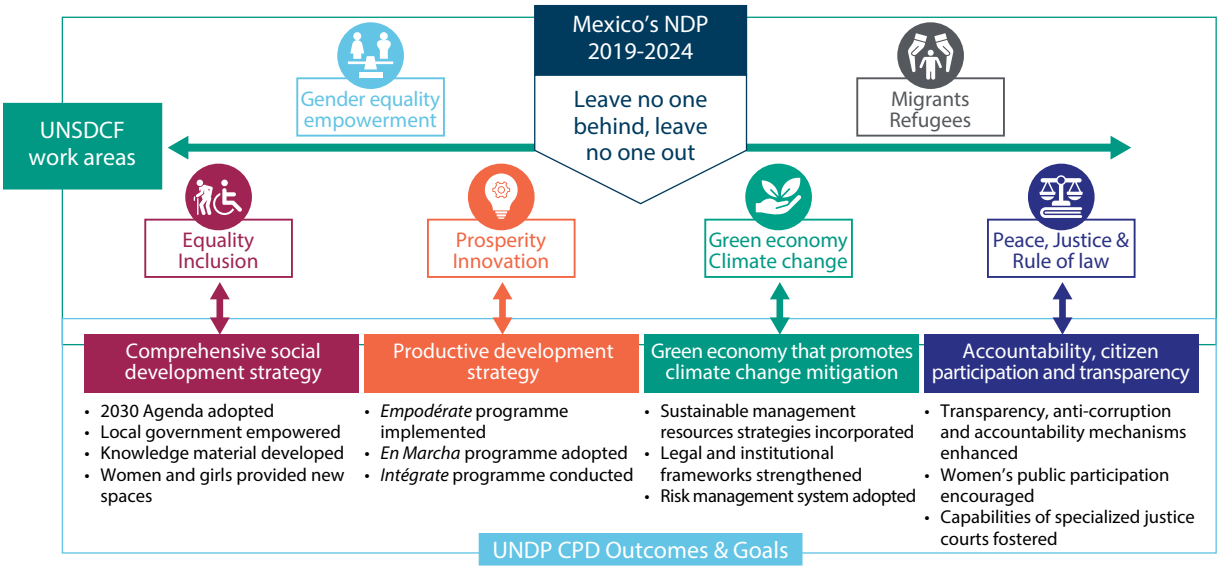
With about 12 percent of the world's biodiversity, Mexico is considered a 'megadiverse' country and simultaneously one most vulnerable to climate change. The country experienced Hurricane Ian in 2022 and Hurricane Otis in 2023 (both category 5). From 2001 to 2023, Mexico lost a total of 55,898 km^2 of tree cover.[14] Although Mexico was the first country to enact national legislation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2012, it still ranks as the 15th largest emitter of CO2 from fuel combustion worldwide.[15]

1.5 UNDP in Mexico

UNDP has been formally engaged with Mexico since 1961. Over the years, UNDP's support to the country has focused on a variety of development areas, including poverty, inequality, governance, competitiveness, gender equality and environmental sustainability. In designing the current country programme 2021-2025, UNDP was guided by the fundamental principle of Mexico's National Development Plan (NDP) 2019-2024: 'Leave no one behind, leave no one out'.

Aligned with the four areas of work of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in Mexico 2020-2025,[16] UNDP's programme focused on four of the 10 outcomes sought by the Cooperation Framework: Outcome number 1) on social development, number 4) on productive development, number 6) on green economy and climate change mitigation and number 9) on accountability, participation and transparency. Two cross-cutting themes were prioritized: a) empowerment of women and girls and b) migrants and refugees. See Figure 2 for the Programme's alignment and overview.

FIGURE 2. Alignment and overview of UNDP Country Programme outcomes and goals



Source: IEO

The programme's results framework was structured into four outcomes and eight outputs, with the highest financial volumes executed in the area of green economy, climate and energy (see Figure 3). The estimated CPD resource mobilization was US$90.1 million. By the close of 2024, its budget was US$106.8 million, exceeding the initially planned figure already more than a year before the end of the CPD period. Mobilized budgets averaged more

[14] UN Biodiversity Lab. https://unbiodiversitylab.org/en/
[15] Data from the International Energy Agency. See https://www.iea.org/countries/mexico
[16] Find the CPD 2021-2025 here: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/mex-cpd-2021-2025-eng.pdf

than US$25 million per year (see Figure 4), of which only 2 percent were UNDP own resources. The programme had an average annual expenditure execution of US$20 million, spread across the country, with an emphasis on the southern states (see Figure 5). These resource mobilization and implementation figures are particularly relevant and welcome in the context of an upper-middle-income country with a limited number of international donors.

FIGURE 3. Programme budget and expenditure by outcome, 2021-2024

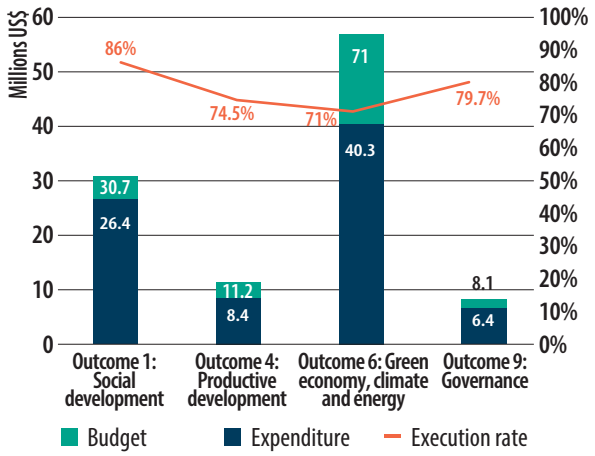
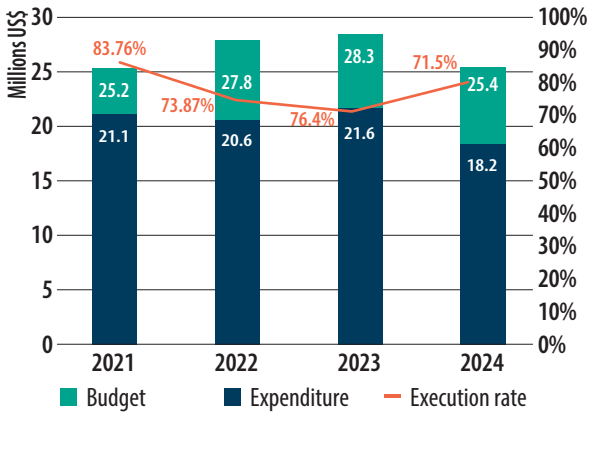
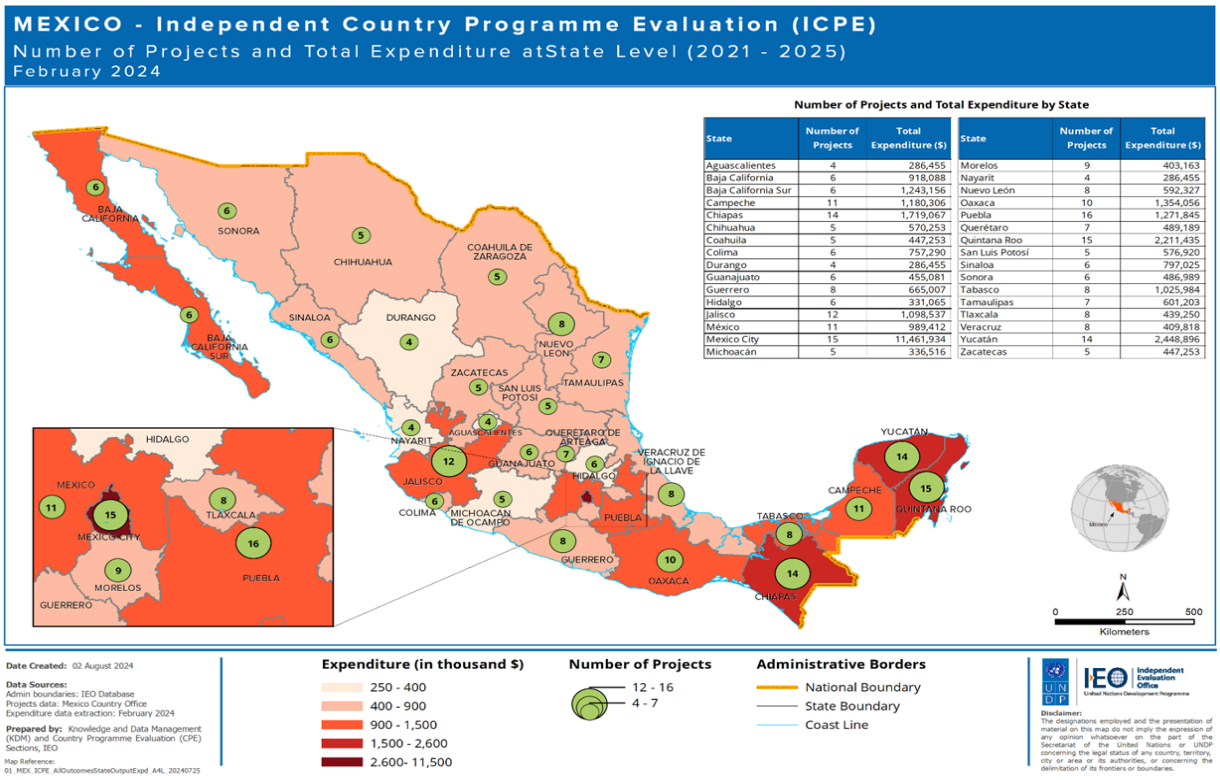


FIGURE 4. Programme budget and expenditure by year, 2021-2024



Source: UNDP ATLAS & Quantum. Data by the close of 2024

FIGURE 5. Geographical distribution of projects and expenditure, 2021-2024



CHAPTER 2
FINDINGS

2.1 Strategic positioning and partnerships

Finding 1. Strategic positioning. UNDP maintained high institutional recognition at the federal level and increased its visibility as a partner for development at the subnational level and with the private sector. It was recognized for its capacity to accompany the design and implementation of public policies, its promotion of the 2030 Agenda and its focus on addressing social inequalities and advancing gender equality.

UNDP adapted to profound changes in the approach to development policies at the federal level. Various actors interviewed pointed out the difficulties of working in a context of austerity in federal public investment and how UNDP was able to adapt to the changes that occurred in the post-pandemic context. On the one hand, it continued to accompany key federal institutions in programmes linked to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) and the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit/Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Publico (SHCP). On the other hand, UNDP significantly expanded its territorial presence, achieving greater presence in the northern states of the country.[17] Among UNDP's comparative advantages, repeatedly pointed out by partners, was its access to and capacity for dialogue with federal entities and its capacity for rapid response and work at the local level, in contrast to the limitations of other international agencies. This attracted non-traditional funds from private foundations and international non-governmental organizations. Collaborations such as that of the Banorte financial group[18] strengthened the capacity of civil servants at the subnational level for results-based budgeting with a focus on Agenda 2030[19] and a gender perspective[20] and allowed UNDP to access states, such as Sonora and Michoacán, where it had not been able to collaborate in these matters before.

Programmatically, UNDP's positioning was strengthened by its capacity to generate knowledge products and provide technical and operational support in areas of great relevance for the country. This was evidenced in the areas of sustainable and inclusive development and financing, state development planning in line with the 2030 Agenda, productive development with a multidimensional approach and the consolidation of Mexico's South-South Cooperation and feminist foreign policy. UNDP was recognized for its support to Mexico's Sustainable Finance Strategy, driving the success of the SDG-linked Sovereign Bond Programme and generating investor confidence by publicly issuing non-binding opinions on its results. Financially, the largest component of UNDP's portfolio focused on environment, green economy and climate change mitigation, reflecting donor confidence and UNDP's resource mobilization capacity in these areas. However, several stakeholders identified these same areas of work as having greater potential for UNDP to better communicate its achievements and raise its positioning and recognition.

Finding 2. Partnerships and integrator function. UNDP expanded its partnerships in response to the changing context, maintaining close relationships with long-standing institutional partners while exploring and piloting initiatives and projects with new private and non-governmental actors. However, some partners identified UNDP's global operational changes during this cycle as the main factor affecting negatively the existing partnerships. Despite this, at the United Nations country team level, there was positive recognition of UNDP's strategic role and contributions.

[17] As in Tamaulipas, Baja California Sur, Sinaloa, Sonora, Chihuahua or Coahuila.
[18] With reach in Jalisco, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Sinaloa, Sonora and Michoacán.
[19] https://www.undp.org/es/mexico/publicaciones/guia-practica-para-la-presupuestacion-basada-en-resultados-pbr-con-enfoque-en-la-agenda-2030
[20] https://www.undp.org/es/mexico/publicaciones/guia-practica-para-la-presupuestacion-participativa-con-perspectiva-de-genero

UNDP continued to cultivate long-standing partnerships with key federal entities, such as those mentioned in Finding 1, along with more extensive collaborations with state governments, autonomous institutions and a wide variety of smaller initiatives with private sector foundations and civil society organizations. The partnership results reflect a systematic effort in resource mobilization in the complex context of an upper-middle-income country with limited traditional donor presence. A characteristic and added value of UNDP was its capacity for multi-level work (from the federal to the municipal levels) and multi-actor work (articulating public, private and non-governmental entities) with an integral vision of sustainable development and a human approach with attention to situations of inequality and vulnerability.

UNDP maintained partnerships with multiple autonomous institutions with highly relevant mandates of in the country, including the Executive Secretariat of the National Anti-Corruption System (SESNA) or the National Electoral Institute (NEI). Through these alliances, UNDP promoted the culture of citizen participation in decision-making, transparency and the fight against corruption at state and municipal levels. However, according to consulted stakeholders, the increasingly weakened context of these types of entities minimized the potential impact and capacity for replication or scaling up of many of the pilots and initiatives.

With respect to the work with the private sector and non-governmental actors,[21] multiple alliances were articulated that made possible results in areas such as disaster response, income generation and local budgets with a gender perspective. For example, in the alliance with Citibanamex, UNDP's contributions in accompanying the projects and strengthening capacities for diagnosis and measurement of results, made possible greater efficiency and effectiveness in the interventions of cooperatives and productive groups in rural areas affected by natural disasters, reporting job creation and increases in average income of 17 percent. At the same time, UNDP's neutrality allowed it to work together with political parties, civil society organizations (CSOs) and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) on politically sensitive issues such as women's political participation, the protection and defence of women in the face of the violence they suffer in this area and the fight against corruption. The alliances with the private sector were not free of challenges, including expectations regarding the time it takes to generate results, the time it takes to carry out due diligence or the lack of resources to take on the models and pilots worked on and elevate them to the level of public policy, which limits the achievement of greater impact and sustainability of results.

The difficulties and delays generated by the transition in UNDP's global administrative processes generated dissatisfaction among some institutional and private sector stakeholders, affecting the perceived efficiency of the organization. Both the intensified global back-office clustering process from 2020[22] and the introduction in 2023 of the new corporate management tool, Quantum, had a negative impact on operational timelines at country office level. Particularly impacting was the lack of compatibility of Quantum with the particularities of the Mexican banking system. UNDP Mexico mitigated these effects mainly by setting up a special operations team and getting special approval from headquarters to issue cheques and enable payments. However, as an unintended result, among some stakeholders, the nascent narrative of UNDP as a partner for digital transformation as a vector for development was weakened.

With regard to UNDP's integrating function and its collaboration within the United Nations country team framework in Mexico, different agencies acknowledged UNDP's active role and contributions. They emphasized the inter-agency collaboration fostered by the figure of the resident representative and the support received to address contextual challenges and facilitate processes and projects in support of their mandates. They also

[21] Among other non-governmental actors, initiatives were funded by Z Zurich Foundation, Iberdrola, Grupo Financiero Banorte, Coca-Cola Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and Ayuda en Acción.

[22] As part of UNDP's Global Shared Services Centre role providing human resources, payroll administration, invoice and treasury management, supplier payment and asset and investment accounting services.

highlighted the value and usefulness of UNDP's shared analyses of the current situation. Together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and FAO, UNDP co-chaired working group three on Green Economy and Climate Change, bringing a more comprehensive vision to the group's approaches. It also participated in joint projects with other agencies, such as UN Women and UNFPA, and was part of the broad alliance of agencies involved in the *Spotlight Initiative*.[23] Despite this, there was a clear interest in strengthening coordination to avoid possible overlaps or inconsistencies in addressing issues worked on by multiple agencies, such as gender equality and violence against women. Another challenge identified was the need to open more spaces to generate projects on issues such as anti-corruption or security.

2.2 Outcome on social development, fight against poverty and inequality

Outcome 1 of the UNSDCF: As of 2025, the Mexican State has a comprehensive strategy for social development, combating multidimensional poverty and inequality, with an integrated approach to human rights, gender, inter-culturalism, life cycle and territory, which incorporates redistributive mechanisms, leaving no one behind.

Related outputs

Output 1. Strengthened institutional capacities to integrate 2030 Agenda into development plans, budgets and policies that combat inequalities and multidimensional poverty.

Output 2. Strengthened programmatic structures at all levels of government based on evidence for good planning and comprehensive regulations.

Under Outcome 1, UNDP implemented 17 projects, with a total budget of US$30.7 million for the first four years (see Figure 6 for the breakdown per year). Expenditure amounted to US$26.4 million, representing an 86 percent execution rate. In terms of funding sources, the leading donor was the Government of Mexico, which had US$21.5 million (see Figure 7). Three-quarters of both the available budget and the expenditure made in this Outcome corresponded to two projects supporting the AMEXCID.

FIGURE 6. Outcome 1: Budget and expenditure by year

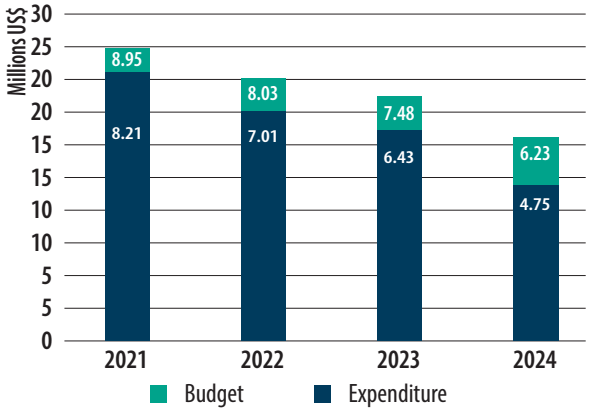
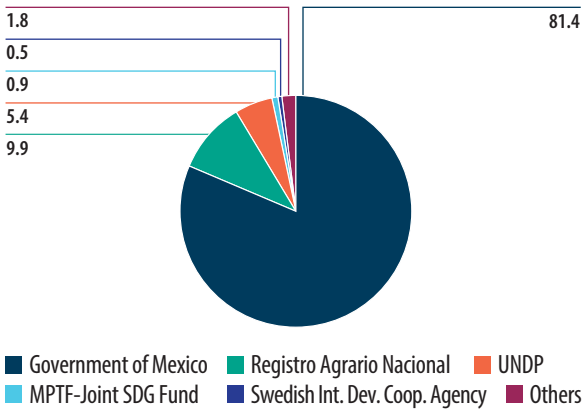


FIGURE 7. Outcome 1: Expenditure source by donor



Source: UNDP ATLAS & Quantum. Data by close of 2024

[23] UNDP together with UN Women, UNFPA, UNODC, OHCHR and UNICEF participated in the initiative.

Finding 3. Integrating the 2030 Agenda into subnational development programming. UNDP promoted the 2030 Agenda as a framework for integrative public policies across the country. At the state level, it facilitated training and developed methodologies and tools to align development planning with the SDGs while incorporating gender perspective. Challenges included institutional constraints at the local level and the need to strengthen synergies between UNDP programme areas to maximize impacts.

In line with the Mexican regulatory framework at the federal level, UNDP contributed to incorporating the 2030 Agenda into the programmatic instruments of the states, thereby strengthening public management and social policies at the state level. UNDP promoted the localization of the 2030 Agenda at the subnational level, resulting in 29 of the 32 Mexican states having state development plans aligned with the SDGs. In the cases of the states of Puebla and Querétaro, UNDP contributed to the preparation of their respective Voluntary Subnational Reports, thus strengthening the SDG monitoring cycle.

Part of the added value of UNDP recognized by different counterparts was in the instruments and technical knowledge products provided for these processes. The *Methodology of the development plan of the State of Mexico 2023-2029* and the *Results-based budgeting guides with a focus on the 2030 Agenda*[24] and with a gender perspective[25] stood out. Through these guides, five state governments[26] improved their results-based budgeting skills to achieve the SDGs, reduce inequalities, provide social benefits and promote sound financial practices for development. A good practice identified in knowledge management was the socialization of these experiences with the UNDP Country Offices in Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

External contextual and internal collaborative factors played a limiting role in achieving greater progress in this area. Some states and several municipalities in the country were unable to institutionalize the 2030 Agenda approach due to their scarce resources and the limitations that affect local public management: high staff turnover, limited times, limited access and generation of reliable information, and the need for greater political will and inter-institutional coordination. At UNDP's internal level, different actors interviewed pointed out a certain level of confusion and lack of coordination between initiatives that shared an offer of services and similar partners at the state level, such as projects like *Managerial Initiatives* and *The Subnational 2030 Agenda*. A potential for greater impact was identified through more complementary work with other Programme Units and other UNDP offices in the region.

Finding 4. Financing for development. UNDP contributed to consolidating Mexico's Sustainable Financing Strategy and positioning the country as leader in issuing SDGs-linked sovereign bonds. The credibility built up over two programme cycles of support in this area was partly undermined by the loss of agility caused by corporate operational changes, which led to a loss of momentum with some partners.

UNDP was key in advancing Mexico's Sustainable Financing Strategy and channelling financial flows towards the SDGs. UNDP continued its previous programme cycle support to link the Federal Budget to the SDGs by providing technical assistance to the SHCP (see Timeline in Figure 8). Since 2021, UNDP has issued an annual non-binding technical opinion on the allocation of funds and the results achieved by the programmes linked to the SDG Sovereign Bond Framework.[27] Partners have recognized this as a source of reassurance for investors and a source of evidence on the contribution of the Mexican Federal Budget to the 2030 Agenda.

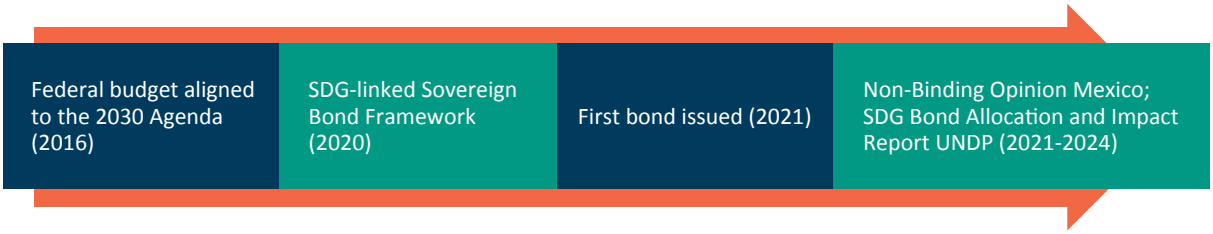
[24] https://www.undp.org/es/mexico/publicaciones/guia-practica-para-la-presupuestacion-basada-en-resultados-pbr-con-enfoque-en-la-agenda-2030

[25] https://www.undp.org/es/mexico/publicaciones/guia-practica-para-la-presupuestacion-participativa-con-perspectiva-de-genero

[26] Among these, Jalisco and Baja California stand out for their degree of progress.

[27] SDG-linked Sovereign Bond Framework. https://www.finanzaspublicas.hacienda.gob.mx/work/models/Finanzas_Publicas/docs/ori/Espanol/SDG/UMS_MarcoReferenciaBonosSoberanos_ODS.pdf
Report 2023 (latest report to date) https://www.finanzaspublicas.hacienda.gob.mx/work/models/Finanzas_Publicas/docs/ori/Espanol/SDG/UMS_SDG_BOND_REPORT_2023_ES.pdf
UNDP's non-binding opinion on the 2023 Report https://www.finanzaspublicas.hacienda.gob.mx/work/models/Finanzas_Publicas/docs/ori/Ingles/SDG/Opinion_no_Vinculante_PNUD_2023.pdf

FIGURE 8. Timeline Mexico's Sustainable Finance Strategy and UNDP's Support Milestones (2016-2024)



Source: IEO

Programmatic coherence across two programme cycles has helped Financing for Development and SDG Bonds become recognized and institutionalized mechanisms in the country to channel financial flows towards development gaps reflected at the budget level. The origin of this contribution lies in the budget's alignment with the SDGs that were institutionalized in 2017. While the contribution was very relevant, the maximization of its potential has been limited by a factor external to UNDP's work: changes in the latest National Development Plan have prevented measuring and reporting progress beyond the strictly budgetary level.

In this cycle, UNDP, together with UNODC and UNEP, developed a *Development Finance Assessment*, which allowed for generating two calculation methodologies and mapping relevant actors to address the identified financing gaps for achieving the SDGs. A roadmap was designed to guide the national planning and budgeting process of the government and its development partners.[28] However, the roadmap has yet to be implemented. The project evaluation identified delays in the administration of project funds as a factor that negatively influenced partner interest, together with the context of the end of the political six-year term. During this cycle, UNDP was affected by the expansion of centralized services at the Global Shared Services Centre and the transition to Quantum, resulting in a temporary loss of operational agility. In this context, UNDP may have missed an opportunity to position itself on the issues of green finance and sustainable bonds with partners from the private financial sector, with whom it collaborates on other initiatives and who are interested in the subject.

Finding 5. Fostering international cooperation for development. UNDP was a key partner of AMEXCID in its largest national investment in South-South Cooperation mechanisms. It accompanied the implementation of its Comprehensive Development Plan for northern Central America, enabling the deployment of initiatives abroad and helping to demonstrate concrete results in the beneficiary populations.

UNDP strengthened the government's role in implementing development cooperation projects by building AMEXCID's institutional capacity, integrating sustainable development approaches into its policies and collaborating in creating new strategic alliances for development. The work in this area was mainly articulated around two projects accounting for more than 50 percent of the total budget of the CPD result.[29]

UNDP has contributed to the institutional strengthening of AMEXCID since 2013 following the approval of the Cooperation Law in Mexico. Part of the strengthening process was reflected in the recurrent recruitment of staff from among the personnel recruited by UNDP for temporary support to the implementation of corporate functions and projects. The evaluation fieldwork reflected the trust placed in UNDP and identified

[28] Joint SDG Fund, Improving the allocation of risks and resources for sustainable development. https://www.undp.org/es/mexico/proyectos/evaluacion-de-financiamiento-para-el-desarrollo-en-el-marco-del-programa-conjunto-sobre-financiamiento-para-los-ods

[29] The 'AMEXCID-UNDP Cooperation Program (PROCAP)' and 'PDI Sembrando Vida/Jóvenes Construyendo Futuro' projects, the latter being the largest investment in cooperation by the Mexican government to date.

areas with an important future potential for collaboration, such as the application of Mexico's human mobility model in the south-southeast border or the Agency's openness to environmental issues or the extension of its cooperation to African countries.

The most outstanding results of the support given by UNDP to AMEXCID are those derived from the implementation of the *Sembrando Vida* and *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* projects in northern Central America. The relevance of these projects stands out because they are part of the Comprehensive Development Plan prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for the region and because of their strategic nature in AMEXCID's portfolio of initiatives to reduce poverty and promote social integration. An external diagnostic of results commissioned by UNDP indicated that 40,000 people experienced a better quality of life, from crop diversification, increased agricultural production and food improvement to increased income and access to the labour market.[30] From the perspective of horizontal cooperation, through these special programmes, Mexico offered a clear, feasible and successful proposal to neighbouring countries on how to generate employment and livelihoods. Although this has opened up the possibility of replicating and adopting the model within the framework of their domestic social policies, this was not yet evident.

Thanks to UNDP's operational support, AMEXCID overcame the limitation of directly managing its own funds in third countries. This support consisted mainly of managing the hiring and payment of the multidisciplinary teams that supported the implementation of the programmes in El Salvador and Honduras. In addition, the first diagnosis of the results achieved by AMEXCID's special South-South Cooperation programmes, *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* and *Sembrando Vida*, showed concrete achievements from a technical point of view and facilitated the expansion of implementation to Guatemala.

The evaluation identified three areas for improvement to strengthen UNDP's contributions in incorporating sustainable development approaches: 1) by finding linking synergies between these projects and those that UNDP has in the recipient countries; 2) by strengthening the business economic diplomacy component to reinforce development partnerships with the private sector, something that was initially planned but was finally deprogrammed; and 3) by strengthening the administrative capacity of UNDP offices involved to respond more agilely and homogeneously in all recipient countries.

Finding 6. Evidence-based policies. UNDP contributed to strengthening evidence-based policy planning and design through methodological developments and technical assistance with an emphasis on the subnational level. It facilitated diagnostics on innovative issues and focused on the most vulnerable, such as inclusive insurance, and promoted a culture of evaluation in its interventions. There was scope to expand policy implementation support and strengthen the engagement of CSOs and academia to maximize the usefulness and sustainability of contributions.

In a context of strong federal budget adjustments that have affected central institutions for poverty measurement and development policy evaluation, such as the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy/Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL), UNDP contributed to the country by creating tools and methodologies that facilitate evidence-based decision-making. With an emphasis on the local level, UNDP has been developing the municipal Human Development Index (HDI) since 2014, improving the identification of gaps and needs between populations and regions. While institutions recognized the Index as instrumental and highly relevant for policy improvement, the evaluation did not yet identify a regular use of the Index. The Index was identified as a

[30] https://www.undp.org/es/mexico/publicaciones/nuestras-voces-desde-abajo-diagnostico-sobre-los-resultados-de-sembrando-vida-y-jovenes-construyendo-el-futuro-en-el-salvador-y

very useful tool for positioning UNDP and gaining media space, given the high journalistic interest in this data. In addition, UNDP Mexico contributed to the national and regional debate on inequality through the analysis of the social protection system and its links to labour formality in Mexico within the UNDP Regional Human Development Report 2021.

Various populations at risk of vulnerability benefited from the generation of data and diagnostics worked by UNDP. In the COVID-19 pandemic phase, UNDP supported the standardization of the registers managed by the CDMX Information Network on Violence against Women and, together with its Acceleration Lab, improved the data platform on violence against women, resulting in greater access to the system and better registration, visualization and use of the data. Due to UNDP's support through participatory diagnostics, Indigenous and peasant populations and rural women have been identified within the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit's (Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Publico) inclusive insurance and risk financing agenda. Likewise, the National College of Professional Education in Tamaulipas adapted its educational offer due to the UNDP-supported diagnosis of strategic sectors and labour market demands in the state.

UNDP promoted a culture of evaluation in the country. It conducted evaluations at the subnational level in support of the federal entities with which it works in development planning. Public officials from local entities were trained thanks to UNDP's monitoring and evaluation incubator methodology. Counterparts interviewed pointed out the opportunity to receive greater support in implementing public policies, to ensure both the integration of evaluation dynamics and the use of evaluation results in decision-making.

While there was acknowledged work with CSOs and academia, it was smaller in scope than that with the CPD, which set an ambitious goal of collaboration with multiple CSOs and academia. Innovative advances were made, such as the positioning of messages in the film or fashion industry and the signing of agreements and projects with prestigious universities such as the National Autonomous University of Mexico or the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education. Nevertheless, the evaluation team found no evidence of a methodology or strategy for working with civil society that facilitates a collaborative framework and enhances the dissemination and promotion of shared values and goals.

2.3 Outcome on productive development

Outcome 4 of the UNSDCF: As of 2025, the Mexican State has a strategy for productive development that promotes associativity, innovation, productivity and competitiveness as well as higher levels of national inputs in production chains, with better governance for equality based on a human rights framework, with gender perspective.

Related outputs

Output 3. Strengthened inclusion of women, youth and migrants in production chains, labour markets and financial and educational services.

Output 4. Increased capacities of local businesses and productive organizations to implement inclusive and sustainable business models that lead to sustainable livelihoods.

Outcome 4 was comprised of 18 projects, with a total budget of US$11.2 million and a total expenditure of US$8.3 million (see Figure 9 for the breakdown per year), giving a delivery rate of 73 percent by mid-2024. The financial performance of this outcome is highly concentrated, with 79 percent of its expenditure allocated to one project, *Impulso Económico Global*, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nationally implemented with UNDP support. UNDP and several private actors were among the other funders of the outcome (see Figure 10).

FIGURE 9. Outcome 4: Budget and expenditure by year

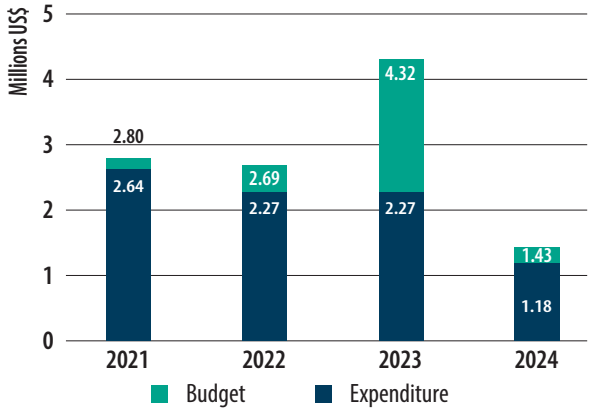
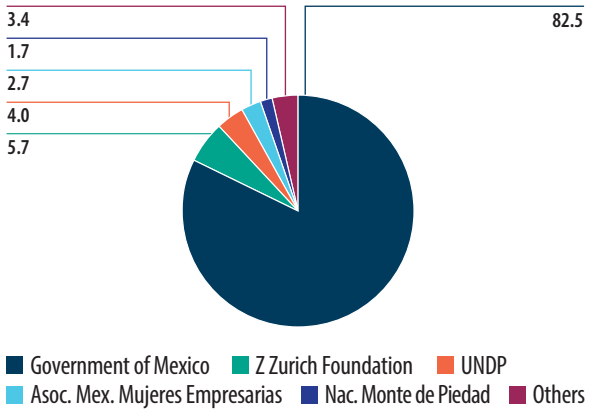


FIGURE 10. Outcome 4: Expenditure source by donor



Source: UNDP ATLAS & Quantum. Data by close of 2024

Finding 7. Productive development. UNDP contributed to strengthening institutional capacities for promoting MSME exports and achieved local improvements in entrepreneurial capacities with a gender approach. Considering the magnitude of human mobility challenges in the country, UNDP results in productive inclusion remained modest.

UNDP played a relevant role in the institutional strengthening of the new General Directorate for Global Economic Impulse within the Undersecretariat for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights. UNDP implemented a strategy articulated along three lines of action: 1) staff training and the configuration of the organizational structure; 2) capacity-building for the management of national and international strategic projects; and 3) international economic planning. The establishment of multidisciplinary teams with special emphasis on gender equality, the development of methodologies for the alignment of projects with the SDGs, the creation of a manual of procedures and operations, and the design of a financing system, were elements supported by UNDP that made possible the institutional strengthening and, with it, the contribution to the increased participation of MSMEs in exports in this cycle.

Downstream, UNDP contributed to the economic empowerment of women and the strengthening of MSMEs, supporting their resilience, post-COVID recovery, digitalization and integrator role in context of human mobility. In Chiapas, through the creation of sorority networks, a group of 106 Indigenous women were trained in financial education and inclusion, achieving savings of more than 100,000 Mexican pesos, equivalent to more than US$6,000. This was a significant achievement in a local context of almost total financial exclusion and knowledge only of informal savings mechanisms. Nearly half of the members had access to loans granted by the group to promote their sustainable business models. In Querétaro, the

implementation of digital means of payment and business training for MSMEs, 80 percent of which were led by women, was promoted, increasing their income and competitiveness. The use of digital payments was reported to have grown by 15 percent, while access to external financing increased by 18 percent.

Considering the migration volumes in the country, UNDP's contribution to the economic inclusion of people in contexts of human mobility was very limited. UNDP worked on a relevant project, *Intégrate*, to promote social and financial inclusion of people in contexts of human mobility through a digital platform. It mainstreamed the issue of human mobility in the development plans of 24 public and private institutions in Puebla, Mexicali, Nuevo Leon and Jalisco, thereby linking nearly 500 people in the context of mobility with 20 businesses.

2.4 Outcome on green economy, climate and energy

Outcome 6 of the UNSDCF: As of 2025, the Mexican State implements policies, strategies and programmes that allow moving towards a green economy that promotes the mitigation of climate change and the strengthening of the institutional framework, taking into consideration energy efficiency, promotion of clean and renewable energy, production, consumption, transportation, cities and sustainable agriculture, with a focus on health, human rights, gender, interculturality, life cycle and territory.

Related outputs

Output 5. Strengthened capacities and partnerships between key actors for promotion of sustainable economies and strengthening institutional frameworks to create resilience to climate change.

Output 6. Supported strategies focused on consolidating conservation policy and sustainable management of ecosystems and biodiversity from a perspective of green economy and inclusion.

In this cycle, Outcome 6 was the largest section of the UNDP country programme in terms of budget and number of projects. With a total budget of US$56.8 million (see Figure 11) divided across two programme outputs and 44 projects. Expenditure amounted to US$40.3 million, representing an implementation rate of 71 percent. This execution was the lowest among the four programme results and factors affecting it included 1) the extent of the field work that characterizes the projects in this area and 2) the disruption suffered in carrying them out due to the health contingency of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other factors pointed out by the actors involved were the large number and territorial dispersion of the projects and the multiple administrative burdens required.

In terms of funding sources, the Government of Mexico was the main source of the executed funds, with a contribution of US$17.5 million, followed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with US$14.9 million. In addition, a significant number of CSOs and private foundations and donors completed the funding support for this outcome (see Figure 12). The unit was a pioneer in the relationship with multiple private sector actors and foundations. Part of the added value brought by UNDP was its direct presence in the territory – for example, in Yucatan – and the efficiencies this implied in terms of knowledge and access to actors.

FIGURE 11. Outcome 6: Budget and expenditure by year

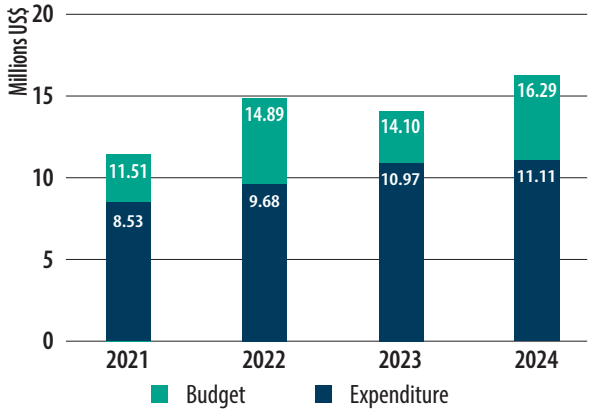
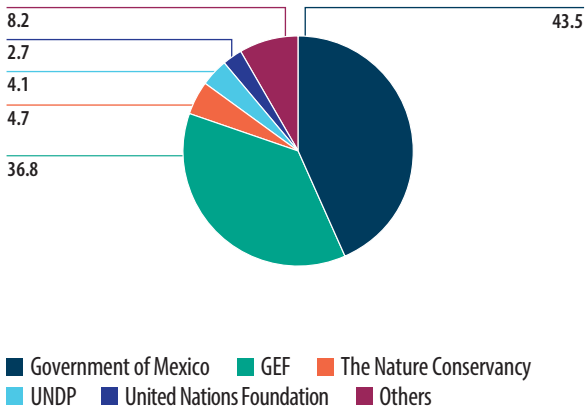


FIGURE 12. Outcome 6: Expenditure source by donor



Source: UNDP ATLAS & Quantum. Data by the close of 2024

Finding 8. Resilience to climate change. UNDP has effectively strengthened Mexico's disaster resilience and risk management through an integrated approach spanning national to local levels, responding to the country's significant vulnerability. While their scale remained modest, relative to the country's extensive risk exposure, the implementation of financial recovery mechanisms demonstrated promising results.

In a country in which 41 percent of the national territory and 31 percent of its population are at risk from hurricanes, floods, droughts, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, UNDP's institutional strengthening efforts and technical assistance yielded significant advances. The support for the development of a National Disaster Risk Management Strategy and the establishment of the National Prevention Committee were highlighted throughout the evaluation process. In addition, there were also achievements at the state and municipal levels, especially supporting the development in Puebla of a state resilience strategy and 18 municipal resilience programmes. The multilevel governance framework for disaster risk management was also strengthened through the training of 70 state officials from Nayarit, Quintana Roo and Yucatan.

At local and community levels, the programme demonstrated effective intervention models, reinforcing resilience and food security. UNDP reported that over a thousand people across five states benefited from capacity on resilience mechanisms and nature-based solutions, and 860 education professionals in Tabasco were trained on school resilience. The programme's reach extended to enhancing climate resilience in 10 coastal municipalities and strengthening food security for 4,600 people, primarily women vegetable producers, helping them overcome COVID-19's negative impacts. The counterparts highlighted notable success in post-disaster recovery in Acapulco after Hurricane Otis. Ongoing interventions, at the time of the evaluation, combining emergency reconstruction standards and economic reactivation, reported 500 small businesses and 2,000 families benefiting from UNDP support. The approach has the potential to be replicated in future disaster response and reconstruction efforts in tourism-dependent regions.

In addition, UNDP contributed to the promotion of innovative measures adopted by Mexico in the areas of financial risk management and economic resilience. Conducting a comprehensive diagnostic study of Mexico's insurance and risk financing system, UNDP identified key best practices and access barriers, leading to the successful implementation of a parametric insurance programme that protected 9,410 small-scale maize producers, including 3,388 women.

While these interventions created replicable models across sectors and established effective mechanisms for disaster response and economic recovery, their demonstrative nature suggests the need for scaling up to address the magnitude of Mexico's disaster risk challenges.

Finding 9. Biodiversity. UNDP demonstrated a forward-thinking approach to biodiversity conservation and finance, integrating traditional conservation efforts with innovative financial mechanisms. While strengthening environmental governance through protected area management and sustainable tourism, the programme simultaneously pioneered transformative biodiversity finance solutions through Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), contributing to a greener Mexican financial sector.

UNDP contributed to changes in the promotion of biodiversity through an approach that incorporated institutional capacity-building, the formalization of strategic partnerships and direct rehabilitation interventions on the field. Institutional strengthening was achieved through multiple interventions – including the institutionalization of Environmental Protection Expenditure reporting with the National Institute of Statistics and Geography and the enhancement of National Commission of Natural Protected Areas park ranger skills in ecosystem management practices, or the National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity milestone of developing National Biodiversity Goals aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Framework, through a highly diverse and participatory process – and submitted to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in a timely manner.

UNDP's conservation interventions achieved significant scale, reaching over 17 million hectares of protected areas through enhanced biological monitoring and community surveillance and sustainable use permits, according to UNDP data. The programme delivered tangible restoration outcomes, including the rehabilitation of 93 hectares of deciduous forest in Jalisco and 100 hectares of pine-oak forest in Tlaxcala's La Malinche Mountain National Park.

A strategic partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and CSOs established over 20,000 hectares as Sustainable Tourism Development Zones in Quintana Roo. While the programme faced challenges in securing federal approval for Sustainable Tourism Development Zones and engaging the private sector in biodiversity integration, it demonstrated the effectiveness of combining large-scale conservation efforts with targeted restoration projects.

Through BIOFIN, UNDP pioneered innovative financial solutions at both national and state levels, fostering a more sustainable and biodiversity-friendly economic model. The programme organized high-level conferences at the Bank of Mexico, developed pioneering input-output studies and facilitated the establishment of green investment offices and environmental funds across multiple states. BIOFIN's advancement of the bioeconomy was particularly noteworthy, creating Mexico's first bioeconomy acceleration fund and successfully supporting 13 initial projects. The programme's capacity-building efforts strengthened the financial sector's ability to integrate biodiversity considerations through environmental and social risk management systems and biodiversity-related taxonomies, creating a robust framework for sustainable finance while fostering increased private sector engagement in biodiversity conservation.

Finding 10. Green portfolio approach. UNDP's portfolio approach was exemplified by the programmatic integration of projects from the green economy, climate and energy portfolio with interventions from the Small Grants Programme (SGP),[31] to create a comprehensive environmental and social impact strategy in

[31] The SGP of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Mexico seeks to engage communities and organizations in collective action to improve the socio-ecological resilience of their productive landscapes.

the Yucatan Peninsula. This innovative approach maximized synergies between traditional knowledge and modern conservation practices, while successfully leveraging private-sector partnerships for resource mobilization. The portfolio's design enabled the simultaneous advancement of biodiversity conservation, gender equality and food security by the preservation of ancestral agricultural practices, demonstrating the effectiveness of coordinated, multi-level interventions.

The coordinated approach between UNDP and SGP teams, implemented through a clear territorial intervention strategy in the Yucatan Peninsula across more than three programme cycles, demonstrated the effectiveness of sequential and sustained support in achieving meaningful community transformation. This long-term portfolio approach proved particularly successful in building resilience and advancing sustainable development, even in the challenging context of severe climate events. The strategy's success in delivering consecutive, complementary interventions validates the importance of sustained, well-coordinated programming in achieving lasting developmental impact at the community level.

Leveraging its subnational office, UNDP's interventions in the Yucatan Peninsula demonstrated significant achievements in biodiversity, food security and agricultural resilience during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Food security was strengthened through the distribution of eight tonnes of native maize to 33 communities and the establishment of backyard vegetable gardens and poultry production helped the communities to address food demands during lockdown. The creation of the Seed House as a hub for native seed preservation and the positioning of women as guardians of both poultry genetics and traditional seeds exemplified successful integration of gender equality with biodiversity conservation. In numbers, between 2021-2024, UNDP reported a comprehensive impact through 66 SGP projects, positively influencing 19 protected areas covering 2.6 million hectares and conserving 50 significant species. Climate action initiatives reported enhanced carbon stocks across 54,292 hectares of forests.

UNDP´s work also contributed to reinforce gender equality and cultural and regional biodiversity. A landmark achievement was the recognition of the Mayan *milpa* as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System, alongside the portfolio's broader commitment to social inclusion demonstrated through 55 gender-responsive projects, 16 women-led initiatives and 34 projects involving Indigenous peoples. The Global recognition consolidated a five-year-long process of articulated work between networks of women *milperas* and multiple other stakeholders, with the support of UNDP.

The programme's innovative approach to resource mobilization, leveraging private sector partnerships and matching funds, enhanced its financial sustainability. This comprehensive strategy resulted in multiple projects being replicated or scaled up, while capacity development through peer-to-peer exchanges and community-level training strengthened local capabilities. The success of this integrated portfolio approach validated how traditional agricultural practices can effectively support modern conservation goals while empowering local communities and preserving cultural heritage. See Figure 13 for the chronology and main milestones of UNDP's approach in the Yucatan Peninsula.

FIGURE 13. Timeline of UNDP's integrated work approach in the Yucatan Peninsula

	2002-2010	2010-2019	2020-2023	2024 →
	Cycle 1: Recovery	**Cycle 2:** Governance	**Cycle 3:** Resilience	**Cycle 4:** Consolidation
Stressing Events	• **Hurricane Isidore:** Loss of crops and food production	• **Prolonged droughts:** Low production and loss of seeds	• **COVID-19 + Storm Cristobal:** Health crisis and crop losses	• **Increase in climate change effects**
UNDP Projects	• BCPR Project: Attention to Contingencies • SGP GEF	• Risk Management Programme • SGP GEF • State projects	• COVID-19 Economic Recovery • Green Solidarity Networks	• Livelihoods and Green Business • SGP GEF
Process Milestones	• Construction of seed guardians' identity	• Network expansion to other regions like Chiapas and Guatemala	• Native bird shortage reported and Guardian of hens is created	• Seed House in the center peninsula and Creole hen breeding center as a women's social enterprise
Achievements	• Post-disaster recovery • Native seed bank • First Seed Fair • Guardian Training • Climate observation system	• Maya Network (Chiapas-Guatemala) • 18 regional fairs • Territory defense • Xuuches protection • Direct field-to-city sales	• Donation of 8 tonnes of corn • Educational Seed House • Native chicken guardians • SADER-PPB Recognition • Community resilience	• Central seed house • Female social enterprise • SIFAM Advisory Council • Digital network of guardians • Productive autonomy
Other Funding	• Mexican Government	• Mexican Government • Kellogg Foundation • Fomento Social Banamex	• Kellogg Foundation • Federal Subsidy Milpa-PPB	• Kellogg Foundation • Fomento Social Banamex • The Nature Conservancy

Source: SGP and UNDP Mexico Green Economy, Climate and Energy portfolio team

Finding 11. International commitments. UNDP provided strategic support, strengthening Mexico's capacity to meet international environmental commitments (UNFCCC, Montreal Protocol, Kigali Amendment) and improving hazardous waste management. However, while progress was made, some targets fell short of expectations.

UNDP continued to be a trusted partner of the Government of Mexico, providing support to ensure compliance with the country's international environmental commitments. UNDP strengthened Mexico's biodiversity[32] and climate reporting capacity. It supported the development of the Seventh National Communication and the First Biennial Transparency Report. Additionally, UNDP helped develop a comprehensive update to the National Inventory of Anthropogenic Emissions and the establishment of a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification system. As a notable advancement, stakeholders pointed out the inclusion of gender analysis in the energy sector – Mexico's primary source of greenhouse gas emissions – in the Third Biennial Update Report, marking a significant step toward more inclusive climate reporting.

UNDP's contribution to effective hazardous waste management was relevant in supporting the country to comply with the Stockholm Convention, although it failed to keep pace with the country programme targets. This intervention area has historically and financially been highly relevant within UNDP's environmental portfolio. Even though UNDP facilitated partnerships with key industrial actors, resulting in the elimination of 472.89 metric tonnes of polychlorinated biphenyls (2018-2022) and 134.8 metric tonnes of expired pesticides across eight Mexican states in 2022, these achievements represented only 23 percent and 34 percent of their respective elimination targets.

[32] Regarding biodiversity contributions, see Finding 9.

2.5 Outcome on anti-corruption and governance

Outcome 9 of the UNSDCF: By 2025, Mexican State institutions and civil society have articulated and installed capacities to prevent, denounce and sanction acts of corruption, promote accountability mechanisms and guarantee social and political participation in inclusive decision-making, in a transparent manner, on equal terms, and leaving no one behind.

Related outputs

Output 7. Increased social participation in public decision-making fostered by accessible, democratic mechanisms put forward by transparent, trustworthy public institutions.

Output 8. Strengthened capacities in the public sector for effective prevention, denunciation and prosecution of corruption at all government levels.

UNDP implemented 20 projects under Outcome 9, for a total budget of US$8.1 million and expenditure of US$6.4 million, representing an 80 percent execution rate (see Figure 14 for the breakdown per year). In terms of funding sources, the Government of Mexico is the main source of funding, with US$1.9 million, but there was a significant number of bilateral cooperation donors, including the United States, Germany or Spain, among others (see Figure 15).

FIGURE 14. Outcome 9: Budget and expenditure by year

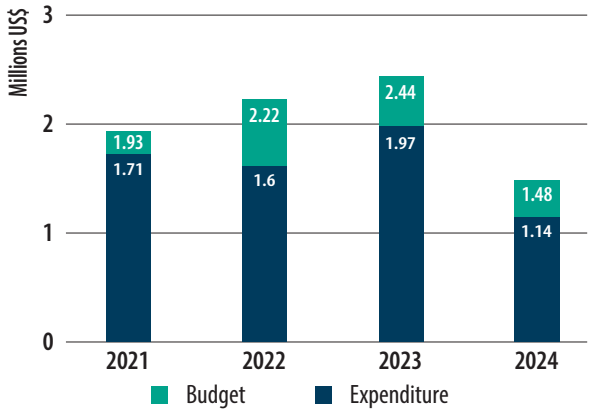
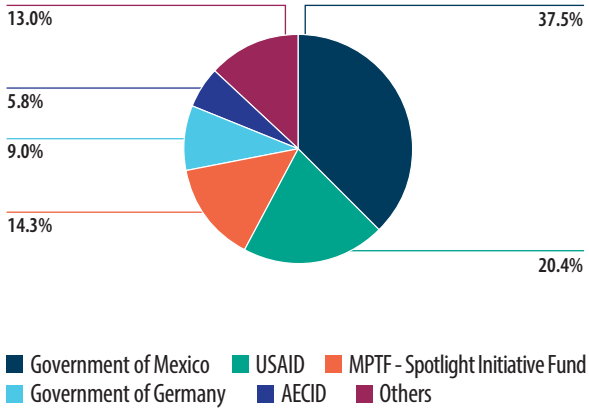


FIGURE 15. Outcome 9: Expenditure source by donor



Source: UNDP ATLAS & Quantum. Data as of August 2024

Finding 12. Fight against corruption. UNDP strengthened corruption control systems through citizen participation and oversight mechanisms. It made digital tools available to identify corruption risks and to adopt preventive solutions, thereby strengthening the National Anti-Corruption System from a risk measurement approach. Challenges such as the continuity and replication of the pilots, the difficulty to show impact or the lack of collaboration with key federal entities limited the achievement of more transformative and sustainable results.

In response to one of the main concerns of the government and the country, UNDP supported the fight against corruption by opening institutional spaces for social participation and strengthening corruption control systems through citizen oversight mechanisms. The Theory of Change that UNDP formulated to guide its interventions was precise and very pertinent but also very ambitious and partly inertial to the themes worked on in the previous cycle. UNDP met the output level indicators established in its CPD ahead of schedule and above expectations. It delivered instruments and opened up spaces for citizen participation and decision-making. Even so, there was no progress on indicators at the level of the programme's intended outcome, e.g., on national corruption incidence rates.

UNDP contributed to the promotion of a culture of prevention of corruption by involving public institutions and civil society organizations. UNDP developed an 'Open Municipality Toolkit',[33] enabling more transparency and openness to the public. It contributed to strengthening civil society to influence corruption prevention and monitor the use of public resources, creating effective spaces for advocacy in local governments. UNDP created a methodology for Citizen Oversight Mechanisms,[34] which was piloted with the organizations of the National Anti-Corruption Network in six social programmes. Other relevant tools developed by UNDP were the self-diagnosis of corruption risks and the search for solutions,[35] the mapping of good practices of corruption risks in the administration, the Model for Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Anti-Corruption Policy and the Guide for Gender Mainstreaming with a Human Rights Approach in the Fight against Corruption.

UNDP complemented the delivery of tools with capacity-building for civil servants, businesses and CSOs. UNDP provided training in ethics and integrity to public servants of the Ministry of Public Administration and the Financial Intelligence Unit of the SHCP through a course designed in the Virtual Training System for Public Servants, with more than 32,000 people reportedly trained. A Model for Corruption Risk Management was implemented,[36] piloted in nine states by the National Anti-Corruption Network and a Sectoral Methodology for social programmes under the principles of openness and participation. Over 1,000 people involved in MSMEs were trained in corporate integrity according to UNDP data. In conjunction with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), guidelines were developed to improve corporate integrity and social responsibility systems. UNDP succeeded in getting 19 MSMEs to implement at least one corporate integrity tool in 11 states of the country.

The set of initiatives faced difficulties in monitoring and generating evidence on the effects of the pilots carried out. It was not possible to overcome the lack of a legal framework that obliges the application of the corruption risk management model by the institutions, limiting the sustainability and scaling up of the initiatives developed and probably the impact of the contribution. At the level of Outcome indicators, none of the two selected made significant progress. For the most part, there were setbacks or stagnation in their fulfilment. This was the case, for instance, with the corruption incidence rate. The high turnover of institutional staff and the lack of capacities in CSOs to carry out impact assessments were factors that limited the possibility of identifying and showing results in a more meaningful way in the territories of intervention. In addition, the planning assumption of being able to collaborate with a broad set of key federal institutions was not met.[37] Factors such as the pandemic, federal budget constraints and the distancing of traditional

[33] https://anticorrupcionmx.org/instituciones-abiertas

[34] https://anticorrupcionmx.org/corresponsabilidad

[35] PAD Plataforma de Análisis para el Desarrollo (undp.org.mx) and https://anticorrupcionmx.org/herramienta-digital-para-gestion-de-riesgos-de-corrupcion/

[36] https://www.undp.org/es/mexico/publicaciones/modelo-para-la-gestion-de-riesgos-de-corrupcion-en-el-sector-publico-version-20

[37] Apart from the Executive Secretariat of the National Anti-Corruption System, it was expected to work with the Public Function Secretariat, the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Protection of Personal Data, as well as with civil society, through the Citizen Participation Committee and the National Anti-Corruption Network of the National Anti-Corruption System, and with the private sector.

donors from these issues played a role. UNDP only managed to work systematically with the Executive Secretariat of the National Anti-Corruption System; however, the sustainability of the results was very weak, given the lack of a legal framework that obliges the application of both the model and the tools created.

Finding 13. Women's political participation. UNDP played a key role in supporting national mechanisms to promote women's political participation, non-discrimination and equal opportunities. It also promoted a novel line of research on gender and corruption. However, UNDP faced significant limitations in impact measurement.

UNDP raised in its CPD a relevant line of action on the full and effective participation of women at all levels of political decision-making, regardless of electoral cycles, and as a way to combat corruption. It continued to support the National Programme to Promote Women's Political Participation, which is a historic initiative of the NEI. UNDP made it possible, through technical support, training, follow-up and systematization of results, for organized civil society to carry out projects to promote women's effective participation in public decision-making processes. The number of projects increased and the coverage of federal entities grew, from 19 to 21, and several women involved were elected at the municipal level. With an emphasis on promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination, UNDP contributed to placing the promotion of Afro-Mexican women's political participation on the agenda. In addition, it also developed a pioneering diagnosis on masculinities within the Public Administration, reaching all State Secretariats.

UNDP opened an innovative line of research on gender and corruption, given the limited literature on the subject. With USAID funding, it developed the study 'Women and Corruption. Reflections to mitigate its effects',[38] which made the issue visible and generated reflection among the institutional actors involved. The theory of change underlying this line of action was highly relevant, which summarizes how the under-representation of women in spaces of participation and oversight and the differentiated impact of the consequences of corruption on their lives can be addressed through greater political participation by women and greater incidence of their demands in spaces of decision-making and oversight of corruption, as well as through greater knowledge of the impact of corruption on their lives and better measures to counteract it. This opened up a multiplicity of potential working spaces for the next CPD.

The difficulty common to all the initiatives in this cycle involved the demonstration of concrete results and their derived effects. It was difficult to demonstrate concrete results in terms of greater participation of women and their demands in political spaces or in those spaces for decision-making or anti-corruption monitoring that were created in the intervention territories. This, in turn, made it difficult to link the results obtained with possible expected effects on women's lives. Evidencing this link would have required clarity between changes in anti-corruption public policy priorities and the issues that most impact women, or the demonstration of women's participation in monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Finding 14. Combating violence against women. UNDP reinforced the systems of prevention and response to violence against women and girls through the *Spotlight Initiative*, enhanced support for survivors of violence in Mexico City during the COVID and post-COVID period and promoted innovative initiatives to protect women from political violence.

Given the alarming and growing problem of violence against women and femicide in Mexico, it was pertinent and coherent for UNDP to give continuity and impetus to initiatives for the prevention and eradication of femicide and other forms of violence against women and girls. UNDP, together with UNICEF and OHCHR, led Component 2 of the global *Spotlight Initiative* (2018-2023) with funding from the European

[38] Available here: https://anticorrupcionmx.org/docs/genero-y-corrupcion.pdf

Union in Mexico. UNDP positively leveraged its comparative advantage in terms of subnational geographic reach and capacity to generate partnerships and prioritized a localized and multi-stakeholder approach in five municipalities in the states of Mexico, Chihuahua and Guerrero. UNDP trained public servants, promoted inter-institutional coordination, promoted resources and programmes for attention and response and promoted gender-responsive budgeting. The Initiative had some design weaknesses, such as the lack of participation of the State of Guerrero authorities and key counterparts such as the European Union Delegation, which generated some dissatisfaction, accentuated by the difficulty in demonstrating the effects of the interventions.

At the local level, UNDP's main contribution was to improve the prevention of and attention to violence against women in the CDMX, which has been promoted since the pandemic period. UNDP made it possible for the Secretariat for Women of CDMX to have a virtual/telephone platform to support women, girls and youth at risk and in emergency situations of violence, a community support and sorority network; to facilitate direct transfers for three months for women at risk of returning to their aggressor's home; and to strengthen its institutional coordination mechanisms. UNDP used the Acceleration Lab to improve the CDMX data platform on violence against women. It designed digital tools to visualize information in real-time for decision-making, standardizing information records and making it possible to provide evidence-based assistance services to women escaping cycles of violence and eliminating the re-victimization of women.

In a novel and relevant way, UNDP promoted initiatives to reduce political violence against women at times of election, but it was difficult to demonstrate the results and possible impacts of this support. In the wake of the intensification of political violence against women during the 2021 electoral period that followed the 2020 legal reforms on parity, UNDP initiated a work strategy in this area in support of NEI, which managed to mobilize funds from Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. UNDP provided technical assistance to civil society and political parties to enhance their awareness and actions on gender-based political violence, with an emphasis on women candidates from Indigenous communities. It provided training to the NEI and elected women candidates, accompanied political parties in protecting women victims of gender-based political violence and provided a protocol for response. It paid special attention to the intersectionality of the double discrimination faced by Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women. However, the number of complaints did not rise as expected because of a lack of financial resources, the need for legal aid and fear of additional violence or institutional discrimination, especially for Indigenous and Afro-Mexican women.

2.6 Cross-cutting issues

Finding 15. Gender equality. Through a dedicated gender unit, UNDP accelerated the mainstreaming of gender equality throughout its programme. However, weaknesses in programme design made it challenging to define and measure expected outcomes effectively.

The establishment in 2021 of a dedicated gender equality promotion unit in the Country Office was a positive accelerator for strengthening the programme and its equality results. It enabled the Country Office to obtain the corporate silver seal of approval for gender equality. In terms of gender marker, the Office has managed to move to a scenario where more than 82 percent of spending is on projects designed as GEN 2 or GEN 3 (see Figure 16). This has occurred in a process of closing projects that were mostly GEN1-designated and adjusting and opening new projects reviewed by the gender unit, which has led to a situation where nine out of every 10 dollars are spent on GEN 2 or GEN 3 initiatives (see Figure 17).

FIGURE 16. Distribution of expenditure by gender marker

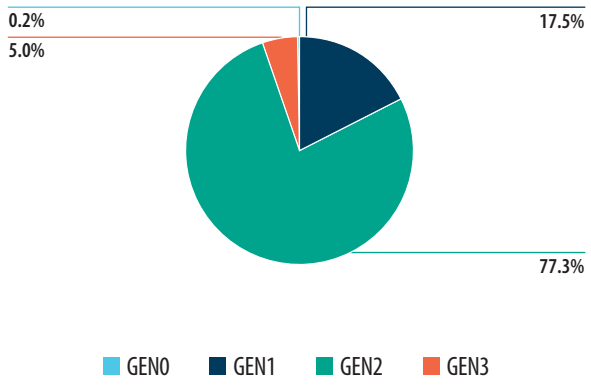
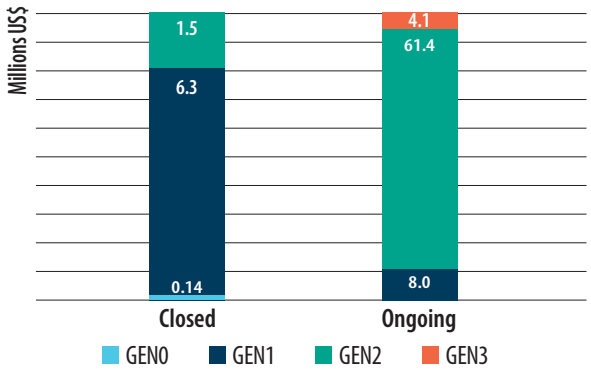


FIGURE 17. Expenditure by gender marker and project status



Source: UNDP ATLAS & Quantum. As by the close of 2024

UNDP's recognition of progress in the promotion of gender equality was shared by the different actors interviewed for this evaluation. There was a shared assessment of the priority of this issue, given the conditions of political, economic and social vulnerability faced by many women, particularly young and Indigenous. UNDP stood out in this regard for its promotion of cultural changes at the level of promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics education with a view to women's economic empowerment, with tangible results in changing the nature of higher studies chosen by the participating female students. UNDP was acknowledged for its contributions in integrating a gender approach in its Human Development Reports and for its promotion of feminist foreign policy.[39] Although no specific frictions were reported with other agencies in the system, the opportunity to clarify scopes and mandates and to strengthen joint work was identified.

The cross-cutting approach did not help measure results in promoting gender equality. Both the UN Country Cooperation Framework and the UNDP programme promoted a cross-cutting approach to advancing gender equality. While, as evidenced in the case of UNDP, this has facilitated the work with the different thematic areas, it limited the availability of specific indicators, and the lack of a clear mandate, in terms of what effects were to be achieved. This weakness in terms of theory of change made it difficult to assess contributions in complex areas of work such as those that depend on being clear about the causal links between gender inequality and corruption.[40] Likewise, in the cases of promoting women's political participation and reducing political violence against women, although the important synergies achieved with the NEI and SESNA (the first federal public institution to request UNDP support for a Gender Seal) are evident, it was not possible to assess the degree to which they will have gender-transformative effects due to the lack of clear indicators linked to the expected effects.

Finding 16. Leaving no one behind. UNDP's CPD prioritized leaving no one behind, with strong focus on mainstreaming people in contexts of human mobility. However, it had difficulty articulating the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, mobilizing resources, generating projects and developing indicators to measure evidence of results.

UNDP's capacity to contribute to improving the living conditions of people and territories marked by the context of high human mobility was reduced and affected by multiple limiting factors. On the one hand, the CPD design had difficulties in translating the cooperation framework's mandate to mainstream human mobility in its theory of change and its results framework. In addition, there was difficulty in articulating the humanitarian-development

[39] Together with AMEXCID, UNDP elaborated the 'Guide for Gender Mainstreaming in International Development Cooperation Programmes and Projects'.

[40] For a better understanding of this, UNDP promoted a specific study during this cycle. https://www.undp.org/es/mexico/publicaciones/mujeres-ante-la-corrupcion-reflexiones-para-mitigar-sus-efectos

nexus. On the one hand, the existence of other UN agencies with more explicit mandates on migrants and refugees reduced UNDP's space and motivation to lead mainstreaming efforts and, on the other hand, the limited interest of local governments in addressing the issue as a development problem was a barrier.

UNDP could have further deepened its work with civil society to broaden its scope of work with Indigenous and Afro-Mexican populations, particularly on economic and social development issues. The mid-term evaluation of UNDP's Economic and Social Development portfolio revealed areas of opportunity in the areas of intercultural inclusion, life cycle and human rights, for which UNDP did not have a defined strategy. Among the lessons learned, functional alliances with local authorities, shelters and academia were identified to identify people in contexts of human mobility, in the face of the difficulty in expanding the number of private sector companies interested in labour integration initiatives for these populations.

In addition to the work carried out with Indigenous populations in the framework of the SGP and other environmental initiatives, UNDP strategically initiated work to make possible the realization of the right to be adequately consulted in relation to extractive energy or mining projects. This was a highly relevant line of work, given the importance of mining for a just and sustainable energy transition, but it was still incipient for UNDP as it was not included in its CPD. UNDP rightly identified the existing window of opportunity to address an issue that requires greater normative specificity on how to carry out citizen consultation exercises and that requires neutral actors involved to minimize both the uncertainties of the private sector and the risks to the community coexistence of the affected populations.

Finding 17. Strategic enablers. UNDP was notable for its promotion of financing for development as a key catalyst for its country programme. While there were specific initiatives on digital transformation and on the use of innovative approaches to development, there was no clear UNDP strategy or positioning on these issues.

UNDP worked in a highly saturated context of driving digital transformation and innovation. Its differentiation strategy with the Accelerator Lab was to emphasize people-centred innovation. This materialized in UNDP's promotion of technological solutions to enable participatory processes and dissemination of topics of high interest to partners, such as the citizen consultations promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on issues such as Stockholm +50, the promotion of feminist foreign policy or the understanding of the country's position on issues such as plastic pollution.

However, UNDP's programme portfolio has not yet achieved a clear positioning and recognition of its added value in the fields of innovation and digitization. No prioritization of innovative dynamics was identified, beyond specific initiatives, and the approach to some novel topics, in the implementation of the projects. For example, analyses of digital political violence were highly valued by electoral actors and authorities. One factor that hindered the promotion of digital transformation among some of the partners was the internal attrition and the initial loss of efficiency generated by the transition to Quantum, which weakened UNDP's positioning among partners. A window of opportunity was identified in the high level of interest shown by authorities and the private sector in artificial intelligence and its capacity to drive development.

In terms of financing for development, UNDP did manage to position itself and contributed to the successful leveraging of national public and private capacities. The most noteworthy aspects were the continuity of the accompaniment and support to SDG sovereign bonds in up to five editions (see Finding 4) and to new subnational bond issues, such as the first one carried out by the State of Mexico in 2022, for an equivalent of almost US$150 million. UNDP was recognized for its technical inputs and recommendations in its reports as an external observer to the issuance frameworks. In addition, through BIOFIN (see Finding 9), UNDP demonstrated innovative capacity to expand access to green and sustainable finance beyond traditional public financing frameworks. These experiences enabled UNDP Mexico to share lessons on financing for development with other UNDP offices such as those in the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Uzbekistan and Cambodia.

CHAPTER 3
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. UNDP maintained strategic federal partnerships and demonstrated a willingness and capacity to adapt, achieving during this cycle the expansion of its subnational work, its relationship with the private sector and the strengthening of its capacity to contribute to the drive to leave no one behind or out, in line with the national development priority.

UNDP's main comparative advantage is its capacity to engage with key federal actors to address strategic initiatives, such as feminist foreign policy or international cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or SDG-related bond issues with the SHCP, as well as its broad subnational and local presence. This duality was reflected in the implementation of interventions at all different administrative levels, mostly effective except for the difficulties experienced by transitions in corporate operating systems. This cycle saw UNDP increase its contribution in the northern states of the country, complementing its historical presence in the Yucatan Peninsula and the southern states.

In addition, the main added value was UNDP's capacity to recognize and incorporate the multiple inequalities in the country and its advocacy for the importance of focusing policies and programmes on the groups most at risk of vulnerability. This was included in cross-cutting approaches, such as the alignment of state development planning with the SDGs, and with targeted initiatives focused on the most vulnerable, such as the parametric insurance that recognized the needs of small-scale maize producers.

While UNDP's positioning and partnerships are positively valued, including partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental entities, the cycle was not without its challenges. UNDP's ability to advocate its flagship priorities, including poverty reduction, economic development and the transition to renewable energy sources, was challenged by economic austerity and the prioritization of direct transfer policies and the use of traditional energy sources.

Conclusion 2. UNDP contributed to advancing national priorities in social and productive development and the fight against poverty and inequality through a programmatic approach that combined institutional strengthening at the subnational level, the generation of knowledge products, access to non-traditional sources of funding and targeted support for vulnerable groups. While some strategies showed promising potential, challenges remained in measuring impact, replicating and scaling up pilot projects.

UNDP continued to support the country in promoting and consolidating evidence-based policies through technical assistance and the generation of knowledge products. With an emphasis on the local level, UNDP strengthened capacities for development planning, data generation and public policy evaluation. In addition, it contributed with multiple assessments focused on highlighting inequalities and vulnerabilities. Its contribution to the municipal Human Development Index was particularly noteworthy. Although the technical quality of the products and the capacities installed were widely acknowledged by counterparts, there were still difficulties in demonstrating the effects generated due to weaknesses in the design of the programme and its indicators.

Achievements in boosting productive development were mainly confined to local levels, in small-scale community initiatives focused on improving livelihoods and resilience in the framework of projects with vertical environmental funding. There were some initiatives that generated contributions at the federal level, such as those boosting MSME access to exports, or at the state level with the establishment of sustainable tourism development zones. The focus on enhancing economic inclusion for people affected by human mobility was evident, but the results remained limited, given the scale of the issue in the country.

Conclusion 3. Through integrated approaches to fostering sustainable and resilient development, UNDP proved to be strategic and timely. It strengthened the adaptive and response capacity of agricultural and cultural systems to adverse climatic events, while protecting biodiversity. These contributions were complemented by the support given at the level of international environmental commitments and hazardous waste management. However, the set of results did not achieve the visibility it deserves outside the more technical range of counterparts and partners.

UNDP's environmental portfolio was key in contributing to the programme's objectives. The dynamics of promoting integrated approaches and seeking synergies, feedback and progress on results achieved in previous cycles demonstrated how resilience-building can effectively integrate aspects of environmental protection, cultural preservation and economic development, with a focus on vulnerable communities. Although the call to work on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction was not explicit in the programme, UNDP demonstrated significant results in this area and an ability to respond quickly, as in the case of Acapulco after Hurricane Otis.

UNDP promoted biodiversity conservation by combining conservation initiatives with traditional methods in the field, together with the promotion of innovative financing mechanisms, and by achieving substantial progress in terms of environmental protection strategies, in a context of institutional weakness to promote these issues. UNDP contributed to Mexico's climate goals, both through its support for the implementation of international commitments and through indirect mitigation results derived from conservation and hazardous waste management outcomes. However, the scale of the results was small, given the magnitude of the country's emissions. Stakeholders reiterated the opportunity to further communicate and leverage UNDP's contributions in these areas.

Conclusion 4. UNDP's neutrality enabled it to support the Mexican authorities in addressing politically sensitive issues that affect the quality of governance, including anti-corruption efforts, transparency and citizen participation. The results achieved were limited, weighed down by a context of low interest at the federal level, scarce sources of funding and limited opportunities to take advantage of innovation or digital transformation initiatives.

UNDP strengthened mechanisms for citizen participation and oversight and promoted the generation of pilots and digital tools for the identification and measurement of corruption risks, the adoption of preventive solutions and thus the strengthening of the National Anti-Corruption System. However, the scope, replicability and sustainability of the results were limited by contextual factors, mainly linked to low institutional interest and lack of funding to invest in these issues.

UNDP sought to open up spaces on these issues at the subnational and local levels, and with a greater presence of civil society organizations, given the progressive reduction of spaces for work at the federal level. The distancing of donors from the strengthening of public authorities, to work more on issues of corporate responsibility, was a trend identified throughout the entire cycle.

Conclusion 5. UNDP pursued a more ambitious approach than initially planned, prioritizing development and results aimed at improving women's living conditions. It strengthened systems for preventing and addressing violence against women, including measures against political violence, while addressing complex issues, such as economic empowerment, political participation and corruption, from a gender perspective. The novelty of some initiatives highlighted the need to strengthen results frameworks and tools for measuring impacts.

One of the characteristics of this programme cycle was the emphasis that UNDP placed on addressing gender inequalities in its portfolio. Among the most outstanding contributions were those related to the fight against gender-based violence and attention to victims, such as the support given to Mexico City to strengthen its case management platform, avoid re-victimization and improve prevention. The reinforcement of the UNDP

team with a dedicated unit allowed for the expansion of initiatives on novel and complex issues, such as those exploring the links between gender inequality and corruption. It also made it possible to strengthen the gender equality perspective in the other areas of work, highlighting the collaboration with environment and productive development, exemplified by the impact of the Indigenous women's sorority network.

However, the newness of some of the work streams, together with the fact that these issues were addressed only to a limited extent during the programme design and results framework formulation stages, limited the availability of indicators and tools to define and measure the achievement of expected outcomes.

3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. UNDP should further solidify its strategic positioning as a leading agency for understanding and addressing inequality and inequity in Mexico. In addressing these disparities at the subnational level, UNDP efforts should be guided by the objective of facilitating and ensuring the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups.

Accompanying and supporting the different institutional actors in addressing the large gaps in terms of socio-economic and territorial disparities should be a pillar of its next programme. This will require a clear proposal on how to address the reduction of inequalities in complex contexts such as Mexico's, which is highly heterogeneous in terms of installed capacities and with the singularities of a federal state.

To enable this goal, UNDP should continue to strengthen its position as a thought leader on these issues by generating knowledge products and proprietary metrics such as the municipal HDI. It should support the expansion of sustainable finance, with emphasis on green finance instruments and mechanisms, the issuance of sustainable bonds at the subnational level and the encouragement of incentives for private financial sector investment. UNDP should apply lessons from the continued work in the Yucatan Peninsula to strengthen territorial approaches in other areas of the country, maximize the usefulness of pilot initiatives and generate continuity of approaches in the medium and long terms.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should explicitly integrate climate adaptation and resilience objectives into its next programme, ensuring a more structural approach to environmental sustainability. Additionally, it should improve and extend communication about its value proposition and the contribution that it makes to Mexico's international goals and commitments on biodiversity protection and climate change through its environmental initiatives.

The impact of climate change and the risks that it generates in the country should prompt UNDP to raise the ambition of its programme objectives in terms of mitigation, adaptation and climate resilience. It should also be prepared to address new challenges such as those arising from human mobility as a result of climate change or those of accompaniment and intermediation in extractive processes that require Indigenous consultations.

It is key for UNDP to better communicate its added value in terms of sustainable environmental development, highlighting its ability to put people at the centre of the development model, and in particular those at greatest risk of vulnerability. Given the size and importance of the portfolio, it is important for UNDP to ensure that the team has the necessary resources and corporate support to be able to scale up successful local pilot initiatives and raise the external visibility of the area's results.

Recommendation 3. Given the challenges of advancing work supporting on anti-corruption efforts at the federal level, UNDP should refine its strategy, identify priority areas and the most effective entry points and leverage innovation and digital transformation to enhance transparency and accountability.

To optimize efforts and achieve meaningful impact, UNDP should take a proactive, yet realistic approach, recognizing challenges that it may face to advance certain issues while leveraging some opportunities at the federal and subnational levels to advance governance issues. Rather than stepping back from challenging but important issues, such as accountability and transparency, due to limited interest from national counterparts and donors, UNDP should identify alternative entry points, maintaining its governance role by focusing on innovative areas where it could make a strategic impact – such as digital governance, artificial intelligence ethics or transparency in emerging technologies.

Building on its efforts to clarify its anti-corruption strategy, UNDP should refine its service offerings in rule of law, fiscal reforms, transparency and access to justice and security, ensuring relevance in a rapidly evolving governance landscape. UNDP Mexico could draw on the new Governance for Development framework promoted by CAF and UNDP for the region, which, among other aspects, prioritizes: 1) the professionalization of public administration, 2) transparency in public management and 3) the digital transformation of institutions and digital democracy.[41] By leveraging its recognized niche in governance and embracing forward-thinking approaches, UNDP can maximize its influence and impact.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should renew and expand partnerships with academia, think tanks and autonomous public and private institutions to further strengthen them and further leverage their capacities to enhance national statistical and evaluation systems. In addition, it should reinforce the design of theories of change and indicators to facilitate the measurement of the effects of its initiatives' medium- and long-term effects, ensuring a more robust approach to impact measurement and evidence-based decision-making.

In response to the evolving landscape of data generation and accountability, UNDP should foster its partnerships with all those actors that can strengthen statistical and evaluation systems in the country. Internally, both in the formulation exercises of its next programme and of the different projects, UNDP should pay greater attention to the design of the theories of change that will guide the interventions and the formulation of indicators not only for monitoring, but also for measuring intermediate and long-term effects.

Recommendation 5. Without detracting from cross-cutting approaches to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and leaving no one behind, UNDP should advocate, at the level of the UN Cooperation Framework and in making clear in its country programme, its commitment to promoting more gender-transformative policies and approaches to challenge and change harmful norms, cultural values and power structures.

This approach would not only allow UNDP's internal gender equality unit to reach its full potential but also facilitate greater integration of mandates between agencies on these issues, particularly in addressing violence against women and girls and the scaling up of joint programming. UNDP has opened multiple lines of work in this cycle with the potential for transformative results that it should continue to promote, such as the promotion of women's political participation or their incorporation into decision-making spaces or anti-corruption monitoring.

Given the designation of 2025 as the Year of Indigenous Women, UNDP should not only highlight its past and present contributions to this population but also support the country in generating initiatives and accompanying implementation throughout the next cycle to improve the living conditions and the full exercise of the rights of Indigenous women and girls.

[41] Governance for development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Recommendations based on the dialogues promoted by CAF and UNDP (2024). https://scioteca.caf.com/handle/123456789/2294

3.3 Management response

This management response outlines the commitments and planned actions of the UNDP Mexico Country Office (CO) in response to the findings and recommendations presented in the Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) for Mexico, applicable to the CPD 2021-2025. The evaluation highlighted key strengths in environmental sustainability, governance, gender equality and territorial development, while also identifying opportunities to deepen UNDP's strategic positioning, improve visibility of results, enhance partnerships and advance transformative approaches.

The CO recognizes the pertinence of the ICPE's main findings and conclusions and fully accepts all the recommendations. To enhance institutional accountability and the CO's continuous improvement, this document presents the justification and detailed actions for each recommendation, including timeframes, responsible units and their status.

Date: May 2025

Country Office Resident Representative: Lorenzo Jiménez de Luis

Country Office Deputy Resident Representative: Daniel Vargas

National Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst: Virginia Leal

RECOMMENDATION 1.

UNDP should further solidify its strategic positioning as a leading agency for understanding and addressing inequality and inequity in Mexico. In addressing these disparities at the subnational level, UNDP efforts should be guided by the objective of facilitating and ensuring the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups.

Accompanying and supporting the different institutional actors in addressing the large gaps in terms of socio-economic and territorial disparities should be a pillar of its next programme. This will require a clear proposal on how to address the reduction of inequalities in complex contexts such as Mexico's, which is highly heterogeneous in terms of installed capacities and with the singularities of a federal state.

To enable this goal, UNDP should continue to strengthen its position as a thought leader on these issues by generating knowledge products and proprietary metrics such as the municipal HDI. It should support the expansion of sustainable finance, with emphasis on green finance instruments and mechanisms, the issuance of sustainable bonds at the subnational level and the encouragement of incentives for private financial sector investment. UNDP should apply lessons from the continued work in the Yucatan Peninsula to strengthen territorial approaches in other areas of the country, maximize the usefulness of pilot initiatives and generate continuity of approaches in the medium and long terms.

Management response: Fully accepted

Recognizing UNDP's strength in Mexico in maintaining strategic alliances with federal and subnational actors that contribute to promoting territorial equity and implementing local solutions for development, the Country Office (CO) will seek to strengthen and consolidate subnational positioning, innovative partnerships and the generation of evidence to strategically address territorial inequality, environmental problems, exclusions as well as underlying development challenges.

◀ Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 In line with national priorities, the CO will use its capacity for dialogue to strategically position the objectives of combating inequality, development gaps and exclusion in the Cooperation Framework, the upcoming CPD and its results framework.	Oct 2025	Country Office		Initiated
1.2 As part of its efforts to combat exclusion and inequality among the most vulnerable groups, the CO, in partnership with UNFPA Mexico, will implement a unique methodology to measure the HDI from a youth perspective. This initiative seeks to strengthen institutional collaboration while maintaining the commitment to providing solid evidence for development.	Dec 2025	Country Office / Socio-economic Development Unit	The Youth Human Development Report will be publicly launched on June 17. Once launched, UNFPA and UNDP will start a positioning strategy with the local governments for youth policy impact.	Initiated
1.3 The CO will implement a renewed strategy to consolidate alliances with subnational territories, prioritizing key geographic coverage and reaching out to new partners as part of the windows of opportunity identified by the various units.	Aug 2026	Country Office / Programmatic and Communication Units		Initiated
1.4 The CO will maintain its commitment to the sustainable financing for development agenda nationally and internationally. This will be reflected in technical and methodological support for the country's authorities, for example, in generating non-binding opinions on sustainable bonds or contributing to the design of budget classification methodologies. Likewise, South-South Cooperation actions will be promoted to exchange national experiences in sustainable financing.	Nov 2026	Country Office / Strategic initiatives		Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 2.

UNDP should explicitly integrate climate adaptation and resilience objectives into its next programme, ensuring a more structural approach to environmental sustainability. Additionally, it should improve and extend communication about its value proposition and the contribution that it makes to Mexico's international goals and commitments on biodiversity protection and climate change through its environmental initiatives.

The impact of climate change and the risks it generates in the country should prompt UNDP to raise the ambition of its programme objectives in terms of mitigation, adaptation and climate resilience. It should also be prepared to address new challenges such as those arising from human mobility as a result of climate change or those of accompaniment and intermediation in extractive processes that require Indigenous consultations.

It is key for UNDP to better communicate its added value in terms of sustainable environmental development, highlighting its ability to put people at the centre of the development model, and in particular those at greatest risk of vulnerability. Given the size and importance of the portfolio, it is important for UNDP to ensure that the team has the necessary resources and corporate support to be able to scale up successful local pilot initiatives and raise the external visibility of the area's results.

Management response: Fully accepted

Development is not possible without a healthy, clean and resilient environment. In this context, the CO recognizes its comparative advantage in environmental and climate action at the national level, identifying this element as a key aspect for the next planning cycle. As the largest portfolio, the environmental pillar will benefit from more explicit integration into planning, highlighting resilience objectives. Furthermore, a strengthened communications strategy will allow for strategic dissemination of the unit's results and scope of work, enhancing the CO's positioning and amplifying the impact of the environmental projects.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 The climate adaptation and resilience objective will be explicitly integrated into the next CPD in line with national priorities, as well as conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity strategic lines.	Feb 2026	Country Office		Initiated
2.2 Design and implement a results-based communications plan to disseminate the CO's actions and results in environment, energy and resilience and strategically position its comparative advantages in these areas.	May 2026	Country Office / Environment, Energy and Resilience and Communication Units		Initiated

2.3	Promote the scaling up of successful results of interventions with an environmental focus, whether through territorial expansion of their scope, their transformation into public policies or the institutional formalization of their derived practices.	Jul 2027	Country Office / Environment, Energy and Resilience Unit		Initiated
2.4	Considering that the triple planetary crisis – climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – requires a complex systems approach and the UNDP's comparative advantage based on its comprehensive development offering, the CO will review and adapt its strategy to integrate a portfolio approach, building on the strength of the environmental area as a central focus. The plan aims to strengthen internal capacities and to enhance engagement with counterparts to integrate new programmatic offerings that address emerging challenges and opportunities in a structured manner.	Jan 2028	Country Office / Environment, Energy and Resilience Unit and Programmatic Units		Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 3.

Given the challenges of advancing work supporting on anti-corruption efforts at the federal level, UNDP should refine its strategy, identify priority areas and the most effective entry points and leverage innovation and digital transformation to enhance transparency and accountability.

To optimize efforts and achieve meaningful impact, UNDP should take a proactive, yet realistic approach, recognizing challenges it may face to advance certain issues while leveraging some opportunities at the federal and subnational levels to advance governance issues. Rather than stepping back from challenging but important issues, such as accountability and transparency, due to limited interest from national counterparts and donors, UNDP should identify alternative entry points, maintaining its governance role by focusing on innovative areas where it could make a strategic impact, such as digital governance, artificial intelligence ethics or transparency in emerging technologies.

Building on its efforts to clarify its anti-corruption strategy, UNDP should refine its service offerings in rule of law, fiscal reforms, transparency and access to justice and security, ensuring relevance in a rapidly evolving governance landscape. UNDP Mexico could draw on the new Governance for Development framework promoted by CAF and UNDP for the region, which, among other aspects, prioritizes: 1) the professionalization of public administration, 2) transparency in public management and 3) the digital transformation of institutions and digital democracy.[42] By leveraging its recognized niche in governance and embracing forward-thinking approaches, UNDP can maximize its influence and impact.

[42] Governance for development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Recommendations based on the dialogues promoted by CAF and UNDP (2024). https://scioteca.caf.com/handle/123456789/2294

◀ Recommendation 3 (cont'd)

Management response: Fully accepted

Governance is fundamental to achieving development within the framework of UNDP's mandate and strategy. In this regard, and in line with the ICPE recommendations, the CO recognizes the need to adapt and to strengthen the programmatic strategy in this area to bolster both technical support and institutional partnerships in the face of contextual transformations in the national and international environments.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 The CO´s governance strategy will be reviewed and adapted, considering the challenges and opportunities at the federal and subnational levels, including the consideration of new factors like the role of AI.	Jan 2026	Country Office / Effective Governance and Democracy Unit / UNDP Accelerator Labs		Initiated
3.2 The CO will define a strategy for programmatic prioritization and integration of aspects of portfolio approach, innovation, digital transformation and new technologies according to their strategic impact on development and governance. The CO will seek to harness and further advance the uses of the platforms and tools on whose development it has collaborated with national counterparts in the previous period.	Feb 2026	Country Office		Initiated
3.3 The CO will strengthen its cross-sectoral strategic alliances that are aligned with the Governance for Development agenda, both in the country context and in support of regional multilateralism.	Aug 2027	Country Office / Effective Governance and Democracy Unit		Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 4.

UNDP should renew and expand partnerships with academia, think tanks and autonomous public and private institutions to further strengthen them and further leverage their capacities to enhance national statistical and evaluation systems. In addition, it should reinforce the design of theories of change and indicators to facilitate the measurement of the effects of its initiatives' medium- and long-term effects, ensuring a more robust approach to impact measurement and evidence-based decision-making.

In response to the evolving landscape of data generation and accountability, UNDP should foster its partnerships with all those actors that can strengthen statistical and evaluation systems in the country. Internally, in the formulation exercises of its next programme and of the different projects, UNDP should pay greater attention to the design of the theories of change that will guide the interventions and the formulation of indicators not only for monitoring but also for measuring intermediate and long-term effects.

Management response: Fully accepted

The CO recognizes that institutional and academic partnerships and improved evaluation frameworks are key to developing evidence-based interventions. In this regard, it will renew its strategy and commitment to collaboration with knowledge institutions and strengthen internal capacities to drive innovation, accountability and learning.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 A strategy will be implemented to monitor the reassignment of national functions and capabilities resulting from the significant institutional reorganization of government, in order to renew and maintain collaborative networks in strategic areas such as poverty measurement, public policy evaluation, transparency, accountability and key aspects of public service, among others.	Jan 2027	Country Office		Initiated
4.2 In addition to consolidating a robust results framework for the next CPD, the CO will implement a strategy to strengthen quality criteria in the programming and implementation of interventions. Capacity will be developed among CO staff in theories of change, evidence-based management, driving innovation, research and development and the integration of UNDP standards and principles.	Dec 2026	Country Office / Monitoring and Evaluation Unit		Initiated

4.3 Within the new partnership and communication strategy framework, the CO will formalize new partnerships with academic and civil society institutions for the exchange of knowledge, practices, evidence generation and collaboration on development actions. Strategic partnerships will be prioritized with broad-based and recognized academic institutions whose comparative advantages complement UNDP's.	Jan 2027	Country Office / Programmatic and Communication Units		Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 5.

Without detracting from cross-cutting approaches to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and leaving no one behind, UNDP should advocate, both at the level of the UN Cooperation Framework and by making it clear in its country programme, its commitment to promoting more gender-transformative policies and approaches to challenge and change harmful norms, cultural values and power structures.

This approach would not only allow UNDP's internal gender equality unit to reach its full potential but also facilitate greater integration of mandates between agencies on these issues, particularly in addressing violence against women and girls and the scaling up of joint programming. UNDP has opened multiple lines of work in this cycle with the potential for transformative results that it should continue to promote, such as the promotion of women's political participation or their incorporation into decision-making spaces or anti-corruption monitoring.

Given the designation of 2025 as the Year of Indigenous Women, UNDP should not only highlight its past and present contributions to this population but also support the country in generating initiatives and accompanying implementation throughout the next cycle to improve the living conditions and the full exercise of the rights of Indigenous women and girls.

Management response: Fully accepted

The CO will maintain its strong commitment to advancing gender equality, recognizing the transformative power of gender programming to address the needs arising from the national context. In the next CPD, the CO will consolidate its commitment to positioning itself as a leading office on equality, both within the UN system and with external actors, partners and counterparts. It will also strengthen the inclusion of intersectional and culturally relevant approaches throughout its actions.

◀ Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 In line with national priorities, the subsequent CPD will incorporate an Outcome reflecting the CO's commitment to gender equality.	Feb 2026	Country Office		Initiated
5.2 The CO will strengthen its results framework and monitoring and reporting processes for the cross-cutting implementation of gender equality, intersectionality and cultural relevance approaches throughout its actions.	Oct 2026	Country Office / Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and Gender Unit		Initiated
5.3 The CO will implement a plan to continue its internal gender seal certification process and to secure a culture of gender equality within the office.	Oct 2028	Country Office / Gender Unit		Initiated
5.4 Strengthen the CO's leadership in gender equality by participating and highlighting its contributions in national high-level forums and conferences, such as the Year of Indigenous Women.	Oct 2027	Country Office / Gender Unit		Initiated

* 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/24700.

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Evaluation framework

Annex 3. List of projects reviewed

Annex 4. Country at a glance

Annex 5. Documentation and bibliography

Annex 6. Stakeholders consulted

Annex 7. Country Programme Performance Rating

Annex 8. Status of CPD outcome & output indicators

Annex 9. Maps

Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

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

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