



Independent  
Evaluation  
Office

United Nations Development Programme

# INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION BOTSWANA



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responsiveness MANAGING FOR RESULTS relevance COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
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### INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: Botswana

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would like to thank all those who have contributed to this evaluation.

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The IEO could not have conducted this evaluation without the support of the following:

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# ACRONYMS

<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area
<b>BIOFIN</b>	Biodiversity Finance Initiative
<b>BITC</b>	Botswana Investment and Trade Centre
<b>BOISA</b>	Botswana Informal Sector Association
<b>BWP</b>	Botswana Pula
<b>CEDA</b>	Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency
<b>CPD</b>	Country Programme Document
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>DCEC</b>	Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime
<b>DWNP</b>	Department of Wildlife and National Parks
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GCS</b>	Government Cost Sharing
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>ICPE</b>	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
<b>IED</b>	Inclusive Economic Development
<b>IEO</b>	Independent Evaluation Office
<b>INFF</b>	Integrated National Financing Framework
<b>KGDEP</b>	Kgalagadi and Ghanzi Drylands Ecosystem Project
<b>MoLGRD</b>	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
<b>MSME/MSMEs</b>	Micro, small and medium enterprise(s)
<b>NBSAP</b>	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NIM</b>	National Implementation Modality
<b>PCAP</b>	Partnerships and Communications Strategy and Action Plan
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SDP</b>	Supplier Development Programme
<b>SME/SMEs</b>	Small and medium enterprise/s
<b>UMIC</b>	Upper-middle-income country
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

# Evaluation Brief: Botswana

Botswana stands out as one of the few upper-middle-income countries (UMIC) in sub-Saharan Africa, having achieved sustained economic growth and notable human development outcomes since independence, largely underpinned by diamond revenues and relatively strong institutions. Its early transition to UMIC status, however, has also exposed structural vulnerabilities that continue to constrain progress towards high-income status.

Despite this success, Botswana faces interlinked challenges typical of a middle-income trap, including a narrowly diversified economy, high youth unemployment, entrenched inequality, and increasing exposure to climate shocks such as recurrent droughts. Continued reliance on the diamond sector heightens vulnerability to external volatility, while a relatively small private sector limits job creation and economic transformation. Declining access to international development assistance has further tightened fiscal space, increasing pressure on domestic institutions to deliver results with limited resources.

Against this backdrop, the UNDP Country Programme (2022–2026) was designed to support transformational change towards a green, just, and prosperous Botswana, aligned with Vision 2036 and National Development Plan 11. The programme prioritized economic diversification, resilience-building, and strengthened governance, and was structured around three strategic portfolios: (i) A Green Botswana (Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and Resilience); (ii) A Just Botswana (Governance, Human Rights and Justice); and (iii) A Prosperous Botswana (Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth).

## Findings and conclusions

UNDP maintained strong strategic relevance and credibility in Botswana, leveraging its technical expertise and long-standing presence to deliver results at both policy and implementation levels. Its dual engagement model remained pertinent in a context where sound national frameworks coexist with limited local execution capacity. UNDP's work in underfunded, but vital areas such as justice, anti-corruption, and gender-based violence reinforced its role as a trusted partner; while its data-driven initiatives, such as the Integrated National Financing Framework and census analytics, added value to evidence-based policymaking.

However, UNDP's ability to deliver integrated and sustainable results was constrained by weak institutional capacities, operational inefficiencies, and unpredictable financing. Policy gains were often not institutionalized or translated into services due to slow legislative processes and limited implementation capacity. The unpredictability of Government Cost Sharing, once central to the programme's financing, and fragmented monitoring and evaluation systems further limited coherence and sustainability.

In the Justice and Governance portfolio, despite limited resources (less than 8 percent of total expenditure), UNDP influenced key reforms such as the establishment of the National Gender Commission and the 2024 Criminal Justice Sector Review. Support to Legal Aid Botswana and anti-corruption initiatives advanced access to justice, though systemic change remained constrained by weak institutional follow-through and entrenched gender-based violence.

The Prosperity Portfolio, accounting for half of total expenditure, aligned well with Botswana's economic diversification agenda. UNDP contributed to the National Investment Strategy and Informal Sector Recovery Plan, strengthened small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through the Supplier Development Programme,

and supported digital transformation via the UniPOD innovation hub. Despite these achievements, translating policy and innovation gains into sustained private sector growth remained limited by fragmented implementation and rigid operational procedures.

In the Green Portfolio, UNDP played a catalytic role as the main implementing partner for Global Environment Facility (GEF)-financed projects. It supported policy frameworks such as the updated Nationally Determined Contributions and scaled the national biogas programme, with 317 biodigesters operational by 2024. Flagship projects such as the Kgalagadi and Ghanzi Drylands Ecosystem Project promoted conservation and nature-based livelihoods. While UNDP's environmental niche remained strong, overreliance on GEF financing and limited private-sector engagement continued to challenge long-term sustainability.

Overall, UNDP's integrated model linking upstream policy work with downstream implementation delivered visible results and strengthened national ownership through the National Implementation Modality. Yet fragmented monitoring, limited policy follow-through, and declining cost-sharing have constrained the depth and scale of transformation. Sustaining progress will require sharper portfolio focus, stronger institutional partnerships, integrated M&E, and diversified financing.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1: Better Support National Priorities:** UNDP should reposition itself to better support national priorities by co-developing a renewed engagement model focused on strengthening institutional capacity, accelerating delivery systems, and advancing high-impact reforms. The approach should prioritize Botswana-led, evidence-based solutions with visible results – especially those that drive systematic reforms and have the potential to address local development needs.

**Recommendation 2: Help Turn Policies into Tangible Results:** UNDP should conduct a systematic review of policy implementation and establish an implementation acceleration framework to strengthen national execution capacity and help translate strategies and policies into tangible, sustained outcomes in the next programme cycle. This requires enhancing end-to-end implementation support that extends beyond policy development to drive more effective delivery and long-term sustainability.

**Recommendation 3: Make Youth Employment a Core Priority:** UNDP's next Country Programme should position youth empowerment and tackling youth unemployment as a central, cross-cutting priority, integrated across all portfolios so as to catalyse inclusive growth, expand job opportunities, and strengthen long-term resilience in Botswana's upper-middle-income context.

**Recommendation 4: Improve How UNDP Works with Government and Partners:** To improve efficiency as well as financial and programmatic delivery, UNDP should adopt a more transparent, collaborative, and impact-oriented approach that strengthens national ownership, improves coordination across systems, and unlocks new partnerships and financing opportunities aligned with Botswana's development priorities.

**Recommendation 5: Secure and Diversify Funding for Long-Term Impact:** UNDP Botswana should adopt a comprehensive partnership and resource mobilization strategy that safeguards Government Cost Sharing as a major enabler and model of national ownership, while at the same time broadening funding sources to stay relevant and effective.

# CHAPTER 1

# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION



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

## 1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The IEO of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to critically assess UNDP contributions to national development priorities and results. ICPEs are carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP evaluation policy.<sup>1</sup> In the ICPE framework, the evaluation team assesses UNDP's contributions and the effectiveness of the UNDP Country Office's strategy towards the achievement of the development results articulated in its Country Programme Document (CPD).

The objectives of this ICPE were to:

- Support the development of the next Botswana UNDP Country Programme by identifying best practices, results and key lessons learned from the current cycle;
- Strengthen the accountability of UNDP to national and international stakeholders and the UNDP Executive Board; and
- Contribute to knowledge generation, organizational learning and decision-making within UNDP.

This ICPE was carried out in 2025 and focused on the period from January 2022 to end of May 2025. However, most interventions under UNDP's Green and Prosperous Portfolio date back to the previous programme cycle (2017–2021). Accordingly, the evaluation also reviewed activities from the previous period to assess the evolution of interventions, longer-term results, and application of lessons learned. This is the second Country Programme evaluation conducted by IEO in Botswana.<sup>2</sup> The ICPE covered major UNDP activities and interventions funded through all sources, including UNDP core resources, government cost-sharing, vertical funds, and bilateral contributions.

## 1.2 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation based its analysis on the outcomes presented by the Country Programme for the period 2022–2026, looking at each of the planned outcomes and their respective links to the strategic objectives of the programme.

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### 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, considering Botswana's upper-middle-income country status?
  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 its comparative and collaborative strengths?
  3. To what extent were UNDP approaches and interventions successful in achieving the intended results 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?
- 

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

<sup>2</sup> IEO conducted an Independent Country Programme Review in 2021, validating UNDP Botswana's self-assessed performance for 2017–2021.

The effectiveness of the UNDP Country Programme was evaluated through analysis of the progress made towards the achievement of the expected outputs and the extent to which these outputs contributed to the expected outcomes of the Country Programme. To better understand UNDP's performance and the sustainability of results in the country, the ICPE examined the specific factors that have influenced the Country Programme either positively or negatively. The capacity of UNDP to adapt to changing circumstances and respond to evolving national development priorities was also examined. The evaluation sought to answer the four evaluation questions listed in Box 1 above.

The evaluation methodology adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards.<sup>3</sup> In line with the UNDP gender mainstreaming strategy, the evaluation examined the level of gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the formulation of the Country Programme and its operations, as well as the results achieved. Gender marker data were used to analyse the level of expected contribution to gender equality at programme design. Gender-related results were assessed using the IEO's Gender Results Effectiveness Scale.<sup>4</sup> The detailed methodology of the ICPE and retrofitted Theory of Change are presented in Annex 1 and Annex 2.

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

- A comprehensive analysis of the full portfolio of projects and programmes, including a review of relevant programme documents and reports produced by UNDP, the Government of Botswana, and other stakeholders (see Annex 8).
- Preliminary consultations and scoping interviews with UNDP Botswana country office management and portfolio leads to gather reflections on programme performance, results, and key crosscutting issues such as gender, partnerships, and design and implementation challenges.
- In-country stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions involving 129 participants, including representatives from government, UN personnel, civil society, development partners, business associations/private sector actors, and programme beneficiaries.
- Field observations, including site visits to Gaborone and the three districts of Hukuntsi, Tsabong, and Ghanzi covered key UNDP's programme level interventions such as GEF projects and flagship initiatives across the Green and Prosperity portfolios.

Data obtained through the documentary review, interviews, group discussions and observations was triangulated using multiple data and information sources. Data was organized thematically to identify patterns and cross-validated across the different sources to assess validity. The findings were then synthesized according to the evaluation matrix, which was underpinned by the main evaluation questions (Annex 3). Preliminary findings were validated with the country office to ensure accuracy while maintaining analytical independence.

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

<sup>4</sup> The IEO's Gender Results Effectiveness Scale classifies gender results into five categories: gender negative (results have a negative outcome that aggravated or reinforced gender inequalities and limiting norms); gender blind (results gave no attention to gender, and failed to acknowledge the different needs of men, women, girls and boys and other marginalized populations); gender targeted (results focused on the number of women, men, or marginalized populations that were targeted); gender responsive (results addressed the differential needs of men, women, and marginalized populations, and focused on the equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, etc., but did not address root causes of inequalities); and gender transformative (results contributed to changes in norms, cultural values, power structures and the roots of gender inequalities and discriminations).

This ICPE used the IEO's rating system to assess the performance of the Country Programme against the criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability. Evidence was triangulated against a set of parameters for each of the criteria, and a four-point rating scale was used for the assessment (see Annex 7).

This ICPE conducted a rigorous quality assurance process, first with an internal peer review at the IEO and one external reviewer. Thereafter, the report was submitted for review to the country office, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and, finally, the government and other partners in the country. This process was concluded by the organization of a stakeholder debriefing workshop carried out through videoconference, which brought together the main stakeholders of the programme and offered an additional opportunity to discuss the results and recommendations contained in this report.

### 1.3 Challenges and limitations

One of the primary challenges encountered was the limited availability of relevant project and reports documentation. The departure of the M&E personnel during the preparation phase led to delays in compiling essential documents, particularly project-level annual reports and the validation of the project list. This problem was resolved, however, through active engagement by the Deputy Representative and the appointment of an M&E staff on a detail assignment to support the ICPE process. These measures helped expedite important preparatory processes, including project validation, coordination of field visit agendas, and stakeholder engagement. However, some documentation gaps created challenges, especially in tracing the evolution of interventions across successive programming cycles. The evaluation team mitigated this through in-depth interviews with country office personnel and key stakeholders as well as document and reports retrieval from key partners.

Additionally, the team was unable to travel from Gaborone to Francistown (approximately 500 kilometres) to visit and observe interventions implemented on the ground. To compensate for this limitation, a thorough desk review of secondary sources, including terminal evaluation reports, were reviewed.

### 1.4 Country context

Botswana, a landlocked country with a population of 2.4 million, is one of the few upper-middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with a high per capita income of \$7,695.<sup>5</sup> Since gaining independence in 1966, it has achieved remarkable development progress, transitioning from one of the world's poorest nations to one of the fastest-growing economies.<sup>6</sup> This transformation has been largely driven by its diamond wealth, prudent economic management, robust institutions and relatively small population.<sup>7</sup>

Botswana's human development achievements are equally notable, with a Human Development Index value of 0.731 in 2023, placing it in the high human development category. The country ranks 111th globally out of 193 nations, with life expectancy at 69.2 and near universal education.<sup>8</sup> Despite its impressive economic growth and early transition to upper-middle-income status in 2005,<sup>9</sup> Botswana finds itself caught in a middle-income trap, with its development prospects threatened by persistent structural challenges.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank (2025), GDP per capita (current US\$), 2024 data, World Development Indicators, <https://databank.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>.

<sup>6</sup> UNSDCF (2022–2026).

<sup>7</sup> IMF data (2024) and <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?locations=BW>.

<sup>8</sup> UNDP, "Human Development Report, 2025."

<sup>9</sup> UN Botswana (2023), "Common Country Analysis," p. 8.

The country remains among the 10 most unequal countries globally, with a Gini coefficient of 53.310.<sup>10</sup> Poverty remains high, with 15 percent of the population living below the poverty line, significantly above the upper-middle-income country average of 1.5 percent.<sup>11</sup> Unemployment further compounds these challenges. In 2024 overall unemployment stood at 27.6 percent, while youth unemployment reached 38.2 percent, with some estimates for the 15–24 age group as high as 45.6 percent.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, a series of significant shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic and droughts in 2018–2019 and 2023–2024, have severely impacted the livelihoods of the most vulnerable, worsening existing inequalities.<sup>13</sup> Significant geographic variations are evident, with rural districts (Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, and Central districts) experiencing limited access to education, health care, and economic opportunities.

Botswana faces challenges due to its heavy reliance on the minerals sector, with diamonds accounting for a quarter of gross domestic product (GDP), over 80 percent of export earnings, and about a third of government revenues, positioning it among the most mineral-dependent economies globally. Efforts to diversify the economy away from dependence on the minerals sector have shown moderate results. The diamond sector's downturn has significantly impacted Botswana's economy, leading to a 3 percent contraction in GDP in 2024.<sup>14</sup> Tourism contributed 12.1 percent to GDP in 2023, ranking Botswana 52nd globally and second in sub-Saharan Africa after Namibia for its relative total contribution to GDP.<sup>15</sup> Historically, Botswana's economy has been government-led, dominated by state-owned enterprises, with the private sector playing a limited role. In 2023 agriculture accounted for approximately 1.58 percent of GDP, while industry contributed 34.32 percent and services 59.42 percent.<sup>16</sup> In 2019 foreign aid contributed to 0.6 percent of the country's GDP, on par with the average for upper middle-income Africa.<sup>17</sup>

Botswana ranks 5th in Africa on good governance.<sup>18</sup> The country is known for its stable political environment, characterized by a peaceful, multi-party democratic tradition with general elections held every five years. The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has been in power since the country gained independence in 1966.<sup>19</sup> In 2024, Botswana held a peaceful election that marked a significant milestone in its democratic history. The opposition party, the Umbrella for Democracy Change, ended the 58-year rule of the BDP, signalling a historic shift in the nation's political landscape.<sup>20</sup> However, some governance indicators such as safety and rule of law, participation, and human rights have shown some regression.<sup>21</sup>

Botswana has made strides in gender equality, but challenges remain across politics, employment and socio-economic dimensions. Women's labour force participation stands at 63.8 percent, compared to 73.4 percent for men in 2024.<sup>22</sup> Women face disparities in access to assets such as land, and bank account ownership shows a gender gap of 10.4 percent. Only 9 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women,

<sup>10</sup> African Development Bank, "Country Focus Report, 2024"; "UNDP Human Development Report 2023–2024," <http://11hdr.undp.org>.

<sup>11</sup> UNDP, "Human Development Report 2023–2024"; UN Botswana (2023), "Common Country Analysis," p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Masisi, M.E.K., State of the Nation Address to the First Meeting of the First Session of the 13th Parliament, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> IMF Country Report, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> World Bank webpage.

<sup>15</sup> World Travel & Tourism Council, Botswana Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2024.

<sup>16</sup> UNDP Botswana, Partnerships and Communications Strategy and Action Plan (PCAP) 2022–2026; Botswana: Distribution of gross domestic product (GDP) across economic sectors from 2013 to 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Institute for Security Studies, "Botswana: African Futures (2024), p. 52.

<sup>18</sup> Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2024).

<sup>19</sup> World Bank webpage.

<sup>20</sup> Aljazeera, 1 Nov. 2024.

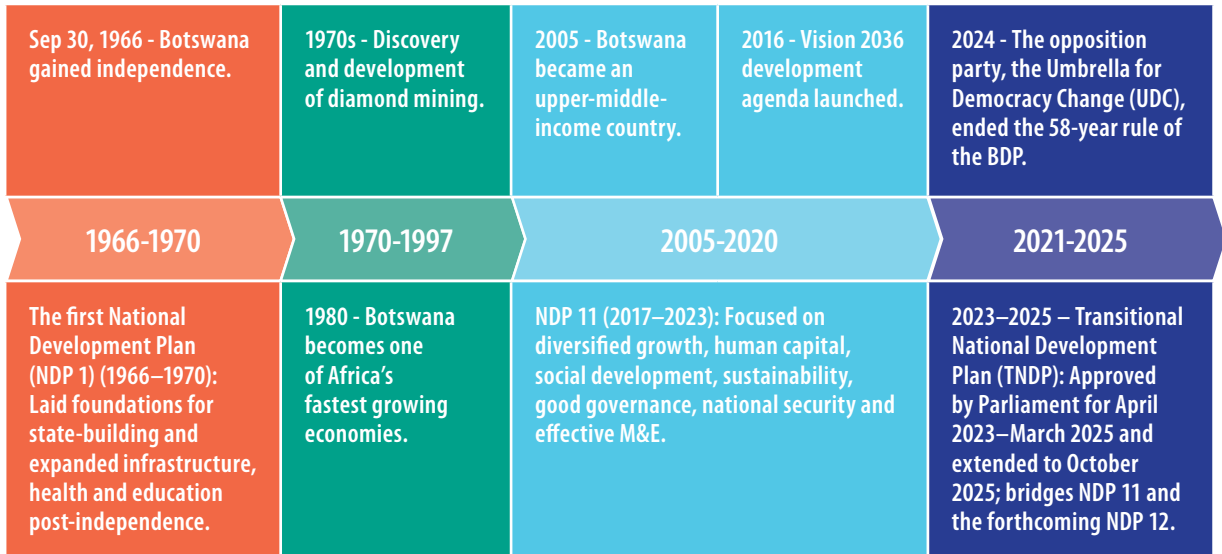
<sup>21</sup> The Big Governance Issues in Botswana: A civil society submission to the African Peer Review Mechanism.

<sup>22</sup> See <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/botswana>.

which is well below the Southern African Development Community target of 30 percent.<sup>23</sup> In addition, 17.1 percent of women aged 15–49 report intimate partner violence, indicating rising levels of gender-based violence, which disproportionately affects women.

Botswana is rich in wildlife and wetlands. Its diverse ecosystems, from the Okavango Delta to the Kalahari Desert, are home to a wide range of species, making it one of Africa’s premier safari destinations. Some 70 percent of the country is occupied by the Kalahari Desert; and with its semi-arid climate, Botswana faces significant climate-related challenges, including extreme weather events such as droughts and floods, desertification, land degradation, and low agricultural productivity.<sup>24</sup> Despite contributing only 0.02 percent of global emissions in 2021, Botswana’s climate vulnerability poses significant threats to food security, nature-driven tourism, and livelihoods.<sup>25</sup> The country is heavily reliant on imported fossil fuel and coal-based energy to power household consumption, industrial production and economic activity. However, the country possesses significant renewable energy potential, particularly in solar power, with a direct normal irradiation of 3000 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year – one of the highest globally.<sup>26</sup>

**FIGURE 1. Botswana timeline of key events**



## 1.5 UNDP in Botswana and Country Programme under review

The UNDP Country Programme (2022–2026) builds on a long-standing partnership with the Government of Botswana, established in 1975. Its overarching goal is to support transformational change towards a green, just, and prosperous Botswana, aligned with national development priorities such as Vision 2036 and the National Development Plan (NDP 11). Grounded in UNDP’s comparative advantage in an upper-middle-income context with constrained resources, the programme was designed to address three interconnected challenges: a narrow economic base, high youth unemployment, and climate vulnerability.

<sup>23</sup> IPU Parline, “Botswana: Data on Women in Parliament.”

<sup>24</sup> World Bank, *Climate Risk Country Profile, Botswana (2021)*.

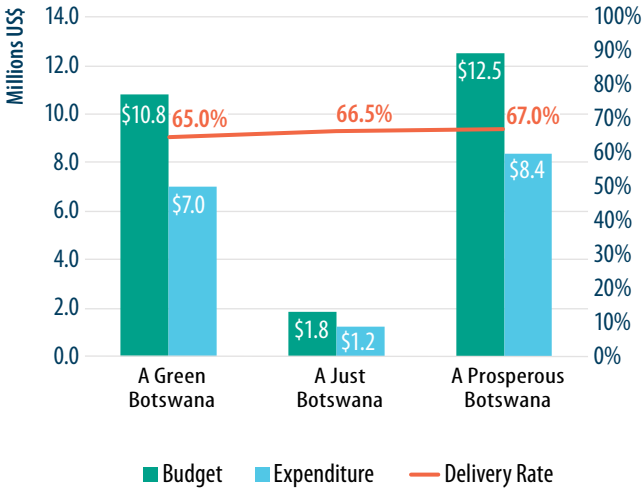
<sup>25</sup> African Development Bank, *Country Focus Report (2024)*.

<sup>26</sup> See [https://www.seforall.org/sites/default/files/1/2015/05/Botswana\\_RAGA.pdf](https://www.seforall.org/sites/default/files/1/2015/05/Botswana_RAGA.pdf).

The UNDP Country Programme (2022–2026) contributed to four of the five outcomes of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, 2022–2026) and was structured around three strategic portfolios: (i) A Green Botswana (Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and Resilience), aligned with UNSDCF Outcome 3; (ii) A Just Botswana (Governance, Human Rights and Justice), aligned with Outcomes 1 and 5; and (iii) A Prosperous Botswana (Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth), aligned with Outcome 4.

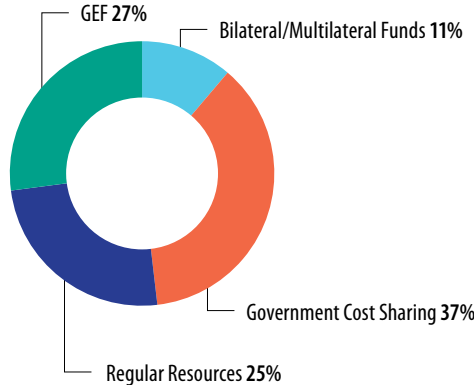
The UNSDCF was endorsed with an indicative budget of \$81.3 million,<sup>27</sup> of which the UNDP CPD comprised approximately 40.6 percent (\$33 million). By May 2025 the country office had spent \$16.6 million, 50.3 percent of the expected resources for the 2022–2026 period. A Prosperous Botswana recorded the highest spend at \$8.4 million (50.4 percent) across 11 outputs, followed by A Green Botswana with \$7 million (42.2 percent) across 11 outputs, and A Just Botswana with \$1.2 million (7.4 percent) across two outputs. This distribution reflected a strategic emphasis on inclusive economic growth and environmental sustainability, which were prioritized due to their critical importance in addressing Botswana’s structural development challenges. The relatively lower expenditure in the Governance portfolio was based on the assumption that Botswana’s existing institutional and governance systems required less external financial support.

**FIGURE 2. Budget and expenditure by outcome (2022–2025)**



Source: UNDP Financial Systems (Atlas and Quantum)

**FIGURE 3. Distribution of expenditures by source of funds (2022–2025)**



Source: UNDP Financial Systems (Atlas and Quantum)

<sup>27</sup> UNSDCF 2022–2026, p. 35N.

# CHAPTER 2 FINDINGS



## 2.1 UNDP's contribution and programme coherence in Botswana

This chapter presents the results of the outcome analysis and an assessment of strategic issues of the UNDP Country Programme in Botswana. The main factors that have influenced UNDP's performance and contribution to results are also described.

**Finding 1. UNDP strategic and programmatic offer: UNDP's strategic positioning and integrated engagement across policy and implementation levels reinforced its role as a trusted development partner in Botswana, with opportunities to further strengthen thematic focus and establish a clearer pathway for scale.**

UNDP's positioning in Botswana was rooted in its technical expertise, long-standing presence, and ability to operate at both policy and implementation levels. The programme's strategic alignment with Vision 2036 and NDP 11, and its structuring around the Green, Just, and Prosperous Botswana portfolios, enabled engagement across diverse national priorities – from governance reform and biodiversity conservation to inclusive economic development and digital innovation. UNDP's relevance was also reinforced through its support to underfunded but critical areas such as justice, anti-corruption and gender-based violence. Stakeholders consistently highlighted the comparative advantage of UNDP's integrated approach, combining policy-level advisory with catalytic, community-level interventions. This dual model proved particularly relevant in Botswana's context, where strong policy frameworks often coexist with limited subnational implementation capacity.

At the policy level, UNDP played a prominent role in shaping national strategies and aligning them with global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate commitments. It supported the formulation of national instruments, including the Multidimensional Poverty Index, the National Human Development Report, and the Voluntary National Review of the SDGs. In development finance, its contribution to the Integrated National Financing Framework, and the 'Tax for SDGs' initiative strengthened domestic resource mobilization. UNDP also contributed to public sector transformation, decentralization, and social protection strategies, often facilitating multi-sector dialogue and foresight-based policymaking. These strengths consolidated UNDP's standing in Botswana's development landscape, particularly in areas requiring strategic policy engagement and high-level advisory support.

UNDP's data-driven engagement further underscored its upstream value. Partnership with Statistics Botswana on census data analytics, and youth employment surveys strengthened national statistical capacities and improved the evidence base for policymaking. UNDP also supported poverty and inequality mapping using anonymized mobile Call Detail Records with Botswana's mobile phone service provider, MASCOM. This initiative is a new approach, showing the potential of using alternative data sources for poverty analysis instead of waiting for long-term surveys. The placement of embedded experts within key ministries was recognized as a major value-add, offering technical guidance in areas such as poverty eradication, local governance, climate policy, and public sector reform. These efforts enhanced institutional capacity, particularly where ministries lacked specialized expertise. Support of implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) framework, digital transformation, systems strengthening in government ministries, and institutional innovation such as the UniPOD initiative further expanded UNDP's influence across both traditional and emerging development priorities.

At the regional level, UNDP's recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) marked a step in the right direction towards deepening regional engagement, especially in light of dwindling bilateral aid and the tendency of most bilaterals to work through regional mechanisms. While the MoU itself represents a critical milestone, it has yet to be

translated into something tangible both in terms of resource mobilization and driving joint actions across UNDP priority areas in Botswana. Lack of full accreditation with SADC has constrained access to strategic engagement, and stakeholders viewed this as a missed opportunity, particularly given SADC's growing role as a platform for regional economic cooperation and integration under broader frameworks such as the AfCFTA. With its 16 member states, SADC offers Botswana a vital platform for scaling cross-border solutions, harmonizing policies, and attracting investment, particularly in such sectors as climate adaptation, trade integration, and digital economy development.

Downstream interventions complemented upstream policy work by delivering tangible and inclusive results. For example, the Biogas II initiative, which transitioned from a GEF-funded pilot to full government financing, demonstrated UNDP's credibility in implementation and its capacity to scale solutions with national ownership. Other initiatives such as the Kgalagadi and Ghanzi Drylands Ecosystem Project, and the Supplier Development Programme supported livelihoods, strengthened resilience, and informed policy processes. These initiatives were especially valued for their inclusiveness and practical impact in rural areas.

Nonetheless, limited resources, operational bottlenecks, and a broad programme scope at times stretched UNDP's capacity to delivery deeply integrated and sustainable results. A persistent gap between policy formulation and implementation further constrained the full realization of contributions, a disconnect evident across all three UNDP portfolios that weakened the intended impact of reforms and programmes. Delays in parliamentary approval, especially for reforms requiring legislative action such as decentralization, further stalled implementation. Where such approvals were delayed or deprioritized, related projects could not proceed as planned. While ultimate responsibility rested with national institutions, stakeholders emphasized the importance of stronger advocacy and continued UNDP support to identify strategic entry points to influence timely policy implementation. In this context, UNDP's ambition to drive systemic transformation may require clearer prioritization and sequencing of interventions to ensure feasibility given existing institutional and resource constraints.

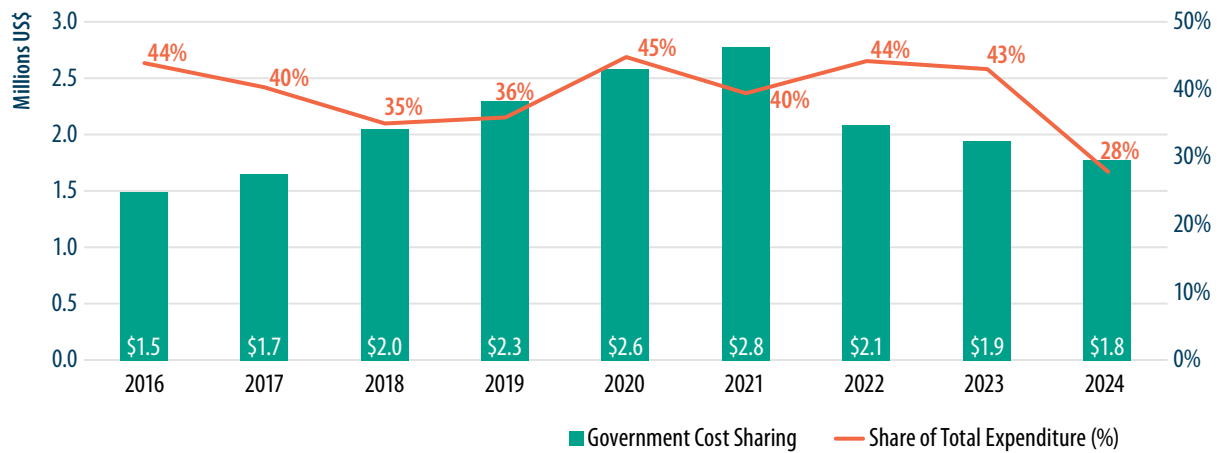
**Finding 2. Resource mobilization: In Botswana's upper-middle-income country (UMIC) context, UNDP's financing model, anchored in Government Cost Sharing (GCS), has reinforced national ownership and positioned UNDP as the government's preferred partner for flagship initiatives. Yet increasing fiscal pressures have driven declining contributions, exposing growing risks to both programme and operational sustainability.**

UNDP Botswana operated in a constrained resource mobilization environment, shaped by the country's upper-middle-income status and shrinking access to traditional development finance. For over two decades, GCS has been the cornerstone of its financing model, covering up to 60 percent of programme and operational costs<sup>28</sup> and reflecting strong national alignment and confidence in its strategic and implementation capacities. However, contributions have declined sharply in recent years, from \$2.8 million in 2021 to \$1.9 million in 2023 and \$1.8 million in 2024,<sup>29</sup> significantly reducing the resource base from which the current CPD has been implemented. The reduction in GSC is chiefly driven by fiscal pressures, inflation, and currency depreciation. While government commitment remains strong, evidenced by an additional \$1.5 million earmarked allocation for the national rollout of the Biogas II project (2023–2025), the changing dynamics of the GCS environment have nonetheless limited UNDP's ability to plan long-term and to scale up successful interventions.

<sup>28</sup> Government of Botswana Contribution to the UNDP, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 6 April 2018.

<sup>29</sup> UNDP Financial System (Atlas and Quantum).

**FIGURE 4. Trends in government cost sharing and its share of overall expenditure (2016–2024)**



**Source:** UNDP Financial System (Atlas and Quantum)

Furthermore, the year-to-year nature of GCS disbursement has posed significant predictability risks. The absence of a formal, updated cost-sharing agreement last signed in 2001<sup>30</sup> but no longer retrievable created operational uncertainty and ambiguity, particularly around disbursement procedures and mutual obligations. These challenges were compounded by misaligned budget cycles (UNDP: January–December; Government: April–March), which has reportedly disrupted planning and delayed transfers.

Beyond GCS, UNDP’s funding base has remained heavily concentrated in GEF grants, which in recent years financed nearly a quarter of its activities. Bilateral contributions declined sharply from 23.5 percent (\$1.4 million) in 2013 to 7.5 percent (\$0.48 million) in 2024. Similarly, TRAC allocations dropped from \$1.01 million in 2012 to about \$150,000 annually between 2021 and 2024, reflecting the impact of UNDP’s allocation formula, which considers the country’s upper-middle-income status, population size, and Human Development Index. The UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa partially offset these reductions by providing Track II resources of around \$600,000 annually, along with occasional supplemental resources such as the UniPod initiative, amounting to \$1.7 million. As a result, in 2024 core resources for the first time surpassed GCS, reaching \$2.4 million.

Efforts to diversify funding from other partners have had mixed results. The MoU with SADC offers potential but has been slow to yield concrete outcomes, while private sector engagement, particularly in the extractives sector, has been hampered by stringent corporate due diligence requirements and a nascent domestic private sector. Continued reliance on GCS and vertical funds underscores both UNDP’s credibility and the vulnerability of its financing model, raising concerns about long-term viability and the ability to sustain operational and technical capacity.

Within the United Nations Country Team, proposals to centralize government cost-sharing under the UNSDCF were met with caution, as some feared this could dilute UNDP’s comparative advantage and reduce agility. Nonetheless, stakeholders broadly recognized GCS as a model of national ownership, especially in addressing inequality and institutional capacity gaps in a UMIC context. With the advent

<sup>30</sup> Government cost-sharing has long underpinned UNDP Botswana’s operations, anchored in a 2001 agreement whereby the Government of Botswana committed to covering 60 percent of both technical assistance and operational costs.

of a new administration, there is strong momentum to renegotiate a revised GCS agreement with clearer commitments and accountability, while simultaneously diversifying the funding base to ensure sustainability and continued relevance.

## 2.2 UNDP contributions to programme objectives and sustainable development results

### Justice Systems Strengthening: UNDP's contribution to A Just Botswana

#### A Just Botswana (Outcome 1 and 5)

**Outcome 1:** By 2026 gender inequality is reduced, and women and girls are empowered to access their human rights and participate and benefit from inclusive development.

**Outcome 5:** By 2026, Botswana is a just society where leaders are accountable, transparent, and responsive; corruption is reduced; and where people are empowered to access information, services, and opportunities, and to participate in decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods.

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#### Related output

**Output 1.2.** More responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making enabled at all levels.

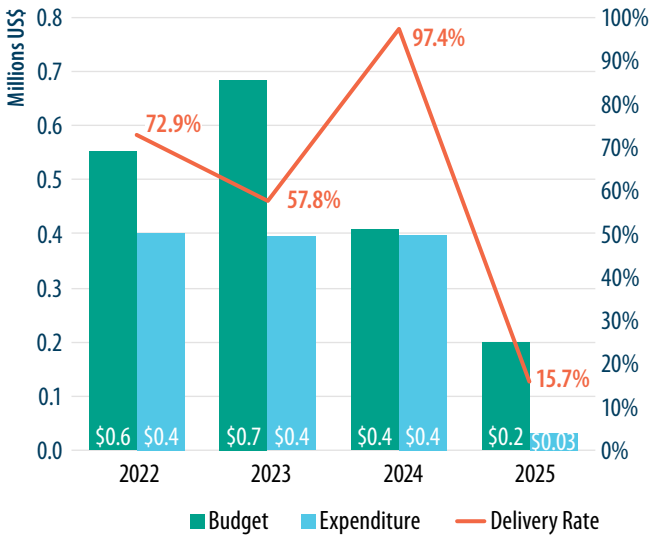
**Output 5.1.** Enhanced public access to information and increased protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in line with national legislation, plans and strategies, and international agreements and SDGs.

**Output 5.2.** Increased effectiveness, accountability, and transparency among institutions at all levels.

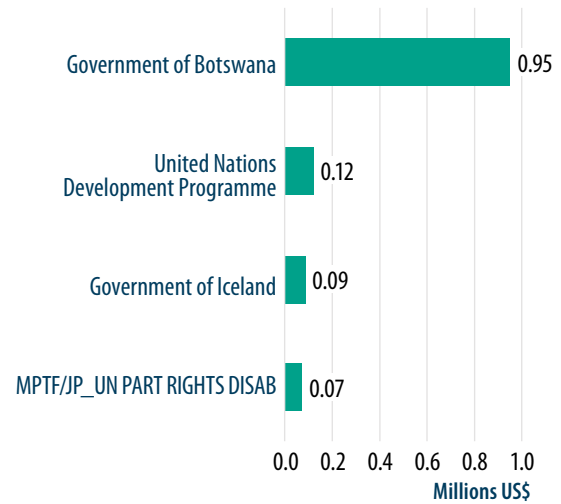
**Output 5.3.** Capacity of justice and rule of law institutions enabled at national and subnational levels for improved access and redress, including for cases of gender-based violence.

Between 2022 and 2025, UNDP implemented two projects under its Governance portfolio. The flagship Justice Project, initiated during the current CPD cycle, accounted for 96 percent of total portfolio expenditure. The second project was a carryover from the previous programme cycle (2017–2021). The portfolio built on the achievements of the prior Governance Programme (2018–2021), particularly its contributions to policy and strategy development in areas such as disability rights, youth development, human rights, justice, and legal reform. Over 85 percent of the total funding (\$1.23 million) was sourced from two main streams: Government Cost Sharing (\$0.95 million) and Donor Cost Sharing (\$0.15 million), with Regular Resources contributing the remaining \$0.12 million.

**FIGURE 5. A Just Botswana – Annual budget & expenditure (2022–2025)**



**FIGURE 6. A Just Botswana – Donor contributions (2022–2025)**



**Source:** UNDP Financial System (Atlas and Quantum). Figures for 2025 reflect expenditures up to 5 May and are not for the full year.

**Finding 3. Justice and governance.** Despite persistent funding constraints, UNDP’s Justice and Governance portfolio demonstrated resilience by sustaining delivery through adaptive resource mobilization, strategic partnerships, and targeted interventions.

Although it accounted for less than 8 percent of the total programme budget during the CPD period, the Justice portfolio achieved notable policy influence, institutional strengthening, and grassroots engagement. A notable contribution was the establishment of the National Gender Commission and support to the integration of gender into the draft NDP 12. UNDP also reinforced institutional responses to gender-based violence (GBV), including the creation of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on gender equality and capacity-building for the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime to manage GBV cases.

At the community level, UNDP trained more than 550 Dikgosi (traditional chiefs) and partnered with civil society organizations (CSOs) such as Women Against Rape to scale national GBV prevention efforts. However, entrenched socio-economic barriers and systemic justice sector challenges, including case backlogs and limited prosecutorial independence, continue to undermine progress, with GBV prevalence remaining high.

Ahead of the 2024 general elections, UNDP trained over 300 women and youth political aspirants in campaign management and inclusive governance. While participation was strong, the impact on electoral outcomes was limited, partly due to the timing of the trainings. Women’s representation in Parliament declined from 9 percent to 8 percent, with only 4.9 percent of elected seats held by women. Nevertheless, the trainings yielded individual success stories, including one participant from the Women in Politics Technical Working Group who was elected and appointed Minister for Child Welfare and Basic Education.

To adapt to constrained funding, UNDP leveraged technical support from the UK Government, co-financing from feminist organizations and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung for gender equality and political participation work, and a \$70,000 private sector contribution to support disability inclusion. Integrated initiatives such as the Justice–Prosperity Project linked economic justice, social protection, and governance reform, further strengthening institutional capacity. Nonetheless, many stakeholders viewed these measures as stopgap

solutions rather than systemic shifts. Without predictable funding, stronger domestic ownership, and sustained institutional capacity, the long-term impact and scalability of UNDP's justice and governance work remain uncertain.

**Finding 4. Justice and anti-corruption: UNDP made important contributions to justice and anti-corruption reforms in Botswana, but progress remained uneven due to limited institutional capacities and constrained funding, which undermined the scale and sustainability of results.**

UNDP played a pivotal role in advancing justice and anti-corruption reforms in Botswana through targeted policy, technical and advisory support, contributing to Botswana's long-term development priorities. Its partnership with the Ministry of Justice was instrumental in completing the comprehensive Criminal Justice Sector Review in December 2024, which produced actionable recommendations across the justice chain (police, prosecution, judiciary, corrections and rehabilitation). The review addressed legislative gaps, institutional inefficiencies and resource needs, while identifying systemic challenges such as case backlogs, weak coordination and capacity constraints. Other support included change management, accountability, and digitization initiatives, notably the piloting of a digital court system to improve case turnaround times.

UNDP also partnered with the Attorney General's Chambers to develop the Botswana Legal Information Institute, a publicly accessible legal platform integrating Botswana's laws, court judgments, government gazettes, Hansards (official, near-verbatim transcripts of parliamentary debates), and policies replacing the outdated e-Laws system. In the anti-corruption sphere, UNDP's longstanding collaboration with the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) included support for the National Anti-Corruption Policy, the review of the Whistleblower Protection Act, the development of DCEC's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, and the establishment of a Quality Management System.

UNDP's longstanding partnership with Legal Aid Botswana expanded access to justice through community outreach, radio and television dramas, legal roadshows, and public education while upgrading Legal Aid's website to enhance digital legal access. Additionally, UNDP worked with the Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organizations to strengthen civil society's voice in governance, supporting the establishment of the Transparency and Accountability Committees with inclusive representation. While these efforts improved civic participation, stakeholders raised concerns about their sustainability in the absence of reliable funding and deeper institutional anchoring. Some also noted that UNDP's policy influence often remains behind the scenes, calling for stronger strategic communication to boost visibility and reinforce its governance profile. However, CSOs remain underfunded and have struggled to mobilize resources. Without sustained support, there is a risk that promising initiatives and hard-won momentum could be lost.

Despite the breadth of support, progress remained uneven due to fragmented institutional mandates, weak coordination and limited funding. Key reforms were delayed, such as the non-approval of the National Anti-Corruption Policy due to formatting issues, and the late operationalization of the Whistleblower Protection Act, which was enacted in 2016 but only implemented in 2023. The DCEC's M&E and quality systems remain only partially functional, undermining efforts to track long-term results such as conviction rates or corruption prevalence.

Stakeholders commended UNDP's technical leadership but emphasized that dwindling resources and shifting donor priorities slowed reform momentum. Engagement of the broader UN system in governance and anti-corruption remained limited, leaving UNDP as one of the few active actors in this space. They stressed the need for more collaborative co-design processes to enhance project relevance, national ownership and sustainability. DCEC further called for mainstreaming anti-corruption across all UNDP

portfolios, reflecting its cross-cutting relevance. CSO actors, on the other hand, cautioned that Botswana's international image as a governance model often masks unsettled issues in institutional integrity and accountability. As one stakeholder observed, "International rankings don't always reflect what is happening on the ground." They called for stronger investments in digital tools such as e-governance systems, online reporting platforms, and automated auditing as critical to improving service delivery and reducing corruption risks.

While UNDP has initiated elements of a portfolio approach, the country office has not yet fully adopted the approach in its truest sense, particularly with respect to applying systems approach tools. Nonetheless, these initial efforts have facilitated the integration of governance, justice, disability inclusion, and political participation under a single strategic framework. However, the effectiveness of this emerging portfolio approach has been constrained by weak internal coherence, limited outcome-level monitoring, and unrealistic target-setting. For example, the CPD target of increasing women's representation in Parliament from 3 percent to 30 percent in one election cycle was seen as unrealistic without structural electoral reforms. Progress was further constrained by frequent leadership turnover and persistent data gaps, such as the absence of 2024 data on women in managerial positions despite observed gains. The Corruption Perception Index declined slightly from 59 in 2023 to 57 in 2024, falling short of CPD targets.<sup>31</sup>

Nonetheless, recent signs of political will such as proposed reforms to strengthen DCEC's autonomy, revise the Corruption and Economic Crime Act, and delink DCEC from the Public Service Act signalled renewed momentum for institutional reform. These dynamics created opportunities for UNDP to expand support for decentralization, digital transformation and public sector modernization.

## Driving Inclusive Growth: UNDP's contribution to Botswana's prosperity

### A Prosperous Botswana (Outcome 4)

**Outcome 4:** By 2026, Botswana has strengthened resilience to shocks and emergencies and is on a sustainable, equitable economic trajectory, reducing levels of inequality, poverty and unemployment.

#### Related output

**Output 4.1.** Strengthened, participatory and resilient private sector and MSME to create green jobs through inclusive strategies.

**Output 4.2.** Robust research and development, innovation and digital approaches enabled at national and subnational levels for improved competitiveness and sustainable job creation.

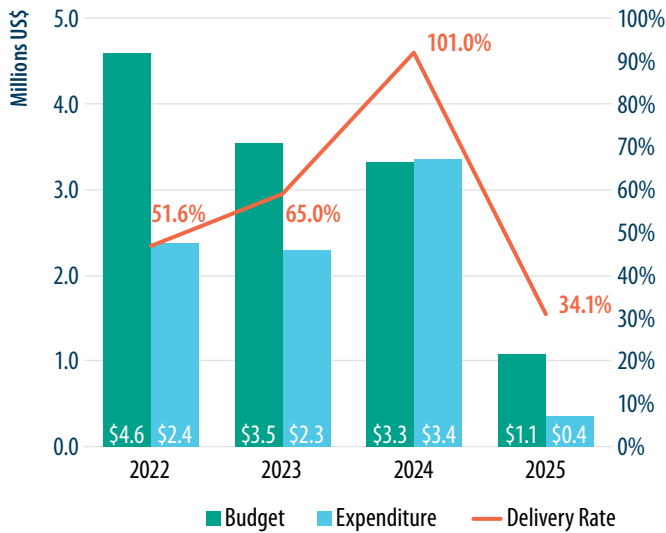
**Output 4.3.** Economic diversification strategy implemented, strengthening exports and green growth.

**Output 4.4.** Capacities developed for expansion of inclusive social protection systems and efficient local public service delivery.

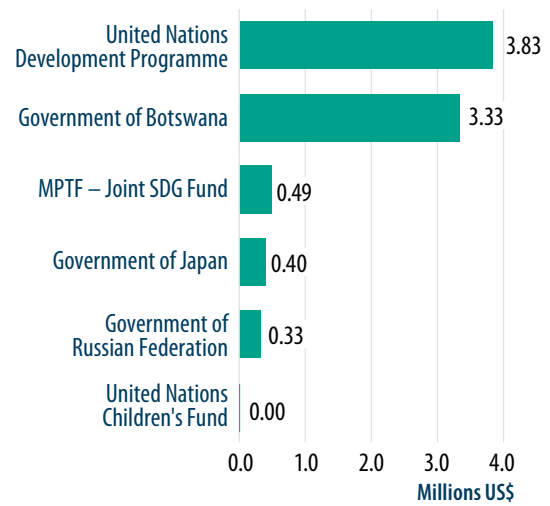
<sup>31</sup> [Transparency International corruption perceptions index, 2024.](#)

The Prosperity portfolio was the largest in UNDP Botswana’s country programme, with expenditures totalling \$8.4 million, or 50.4 percent of total programme spending. The four flagship projects under this portfolio accounted for 66 percent of total expenditure: the Inclusive Economic Diversification Project (\$1.6 million), UniPod Project Botswana 2024 (\$1.5 million), the Flagship Sustainable Private Sector Development Project (\$1.4 million), and the Joint Justice–Prosperity Project (\$1 million). UNDP also secured \$408,352 from Japan’s Supplementary Budget and complemented government drought relief efforts.

**FIGURE 7. A Prosperous Botswana – Annual budget & expenditure (2022–2025)**



**FIGURE 8. A Prosperous Botswana – Donor contributions (2022–2025)**



**Source:** UNDP Financial Systems (Atlas and Quantum). Figures for 2025 reflect expenditures up to 5 May and are not for the full year.

**Finding 5. Economic diversification and private sector development: UNDP’s strong policy and institutional contributions have laid important foundations for Botswana’s economic diversification and private sector development reforms.** However, persistent challenges in policy implementation and institutional coordination have limited the translation of these efforts into sustained, outcome-level change.

UNDP has positioned itself as a key policy partner in Botswana’s diversification agenda, contributing to national strategies across multiple sectors. Implemented through a multi-sectoral approach and building on gains from prior investments, the Prosperity portfolio engaged key government partners such as the Ministries of Trade and Industry, Entrepreneurship, and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD). UNDP integrated the Multidimensional Poverty Index into national policymaking; and it worked with the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) and Local Enterprise Authority<sup>32</sup> to support the finance and development of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME). Collaboration with the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) advanced export development and market access, while engagement with the Chamber of Mines enhanced private sector linkages.

<sup>32</sup> A government agency established to promote and support the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises through training, mentorship, and business development services.

UNDP also worked closely with private sector associations and the informal economy, building on partnerships with Business Botswana, the Botswana Informal Sector Association (BOISA), the Women in Business Association, and Women Finance House Botswana to promote enterprise growth and women's economic participation. Within the UN system, partnership with the ILO further supported the informal economy. These partnerships enabled UNDP to engage at both the policy and enterprise levels, directly contributing to Botswana's efforts towards economic diversification and job creation.

In trade and investment, UNDP's collaboration with BITC produced key deliverables such as the National Investment Strategy (2023–2030) and the 2023 Automotive Sector Study, providing pathways for investment attraction and potential entry into regional automotive supply chains linked to South Africa. Support to AfCFTA engagement included studies, workshops and technical assistance for local manufacturers. The 2021 National Informal Sector Recovery Plan, developed with Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship and the Local Enterprise Authority, filled a longstanding policy gap by recognizing the informal sector as the 'missing middle' in economic response and recovery, especially for women and youth. Stakeholders praised these contributions, noting that the informal sector strategy was a timely response to COVID-19's economic fallout. However, limited integration of the strategy into national programmes highlighted weak cross-ministerial coordination and policy follow-through.

UNDP also contributed to policy development in renewable energy, guiding the rooftop solar policy and supporting Botswana Power Corporation's 5-year energy strategy, which aimed to diversify the national energy mix. In agro-processing, UNDP assisted the Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship in drafting a national strategy to add value to agricultural products, though delays due to initial consultant capacity slowed progress. In digital governance, UNDP assisted in designing an integrated business services registration, licensing, and SME support platform for the Ministry of Entrepreneurship, and worked with the Trade Ministry and the Botswana Unified Revenue Service to simplify customs, tax, and rules-of-origin procedures for SMEs.

UNDP also advanced public sector transformation through its partnership with MoLGRD under both the Prosperity and Justice pillars, notably via the Joint Justice Project, reflecting integration and coherence across the pillars. It supported the Strategic and Transformation Plan (2021–2025) and complementary initiatives in e-governance, M&E frameworks, fiscal decentralization system, school feeding assessment and service delivery improvement. However, many of these initiatives faced implementation delays. For instance, the Microsoft Dynamics rollout for local authorities was discontinued before full implementation due to funding and coordination challenges, while the M&E framework for local governance remains incomplete due to consultant turnover and inconsistent quality. Broader public sector reform efforts, such as the Communication Strategy, Transformation Strategy, and Social Protection programme consolidation, experienced significant delays or abandonment due to shifting mandates, fiscal constraints and institutional weaknesses.

Stakeholders broadly recognized UNDP's added value in providing technical expertise, convening multi-stakeholder dialogue and bridging capacity gaps. However, systemic constraints, including frequent leadership changes in key partners, weak inter-ministerial coordination, limited implementation capacity, and fiscal shortfalls, hindered the full realization of reforms. Many strategies lacked integrated M&E frameworks, undermining long-term tracking, accountability and learning. The use of local consultants enhanced contextual relevance and ownership, while over-reliance on international consultants, as seen in the agro-processing strategy, often weakened delivery. Embedded technical assistance such as seconding programme officers into ministries was widely praised as an effective and impactful model.

**Finding 6. SME ecosystem and institutional building: UNDP played an important contribution in strengthening Botswana’s SME ecosystem, while also enhancing institutional capacities and market access.** The absence of sustained investment, technical capacity and scalable mechanisms limited the programme’s potential to drive economic transformation.

UNDP’s engagement with the private sector has been largely catalytic, focusing on technical, strategic and convening support rather than financial contributions involving associations such as the Botswana Chamber of Commerce and informal economy actors. The most tangible results emerged under the Prosperous Botswana portfolio through the Supplier Development Programme (SDP), which provided SMEs with technical support and capacity-building.

Building on earlier investments such as the SDP and Inclusive Economic Development (IED) initiatives, UNDP helped strengthen entrepreneurship ecosystems by linking policy frameworks to practical SME support, such as access to finance, entrepreneurship training and market opportunities. Stakeholders widely recognized its role in supporting inclusive growth, particularly for youth, women and informal sector actors. These interventions supported job creation in underserved communities and aligned with national development priorities outlined in Vision 2036 and NDP 11.

UNDP further contributed in strengthening exporter readiness through market assessments, Intellectual Property analysis, and technical support in pricing, branding, and certification, enabling SMEs, especially women-led and remote enterprises, to enhance competitiveness. Collaboration with key institutions such as the BITC and Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship yielded tangible gains in market access. SMEs participated in international expos such as the AfCFTA Forum in Namibia, the Biashara Forum in Rwanda, and trade events in London, securing supply chain connections, global buyers and market insights. UNDP also co-hosted the National Manufacturing Summit, bringing together the government, the private sector, and innovators to showcase Botswana’s potential. As one stakeholder highlighted, this approach enabled SMEs to see themselves “not as peripheral, but as integral actors in Botswana’s diversification agenda.”

The SDP also linked 42 women- and youth-owned businesses with domestic and international buyers through structured mentorship,<sup>33</sup> while the YouthConnect platform supported 36 youth entrepreneurs with tailored business development. Stakeholders consistently emphasized UNDP’s value in facilitating regional value chains, building SME capacity, and promoting policy reforms favouring local production and procurement. UNDP also engaged with financial institutions to improve SME access to tailored financial products.

Several private sector actors reported meaningful results from their collaboration with UNDP. For example, High-Density Polyethylene pipe manufacturers moved from import reliance to local production; GT Auto Clinic expanded from a small repair shop to a knockdown engineering facility; and Virgil Stennis launched Botswana’s first waste oil recycling plant, expanding its workforce by nearly 50 percent. GreenGem Hydroponics received support in aligning its ESG strategy with mining sector clients. UNDP’s assistance also enabled SMEs to improve operations, attain ISO certifications, and meet buyer quality standards, particularly in engineering and environmental sectors. Additionally, UNDP helped link SMEs with anchor clients such as Debswana and other industry platforms, reinforcing market access and growth pathways.

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<sup>33</sup> Project Document – Women and Youth Build Resilient Businesses (2021).

The Joint Justice–Prosperity Project focused on strengthening social protection systems through MoLGRD, while the IED Project supported policy and institutional development to promote inclusive trade, particularly under the AfCFTA framework. The programme’s structured model linking buyers, suppliers, and intermediaries helped strengthen domestic procurement systems and enabled SMEs to meet the compliance requirements of major retailers.

Despite these achievements, UNDP’s MSME and private sector interventions have yet to generate sustained, outcome-level shifts in export diversification or structural transformation. Although UNDP provided financial and technical assistance to MSMEs, these initiatives were not extensive or sustained enough to meaningfully curb unemployment. Promising pilots such as AfCFTA market readiness and renewable energy initiatives were constrained by limited budgets, short-term funding and weak downstream capacity. New SMEs often struggled to access procurement opportunities, meet certification requirements, or compete with established players. Capacity gaps in key parastatals further hampered support for export logistics and regional market entry.

Nonetheless, systemic barriers such as limited private sector maturity, the dominance of state-owned enterprises, and rigid due diligence protocols continued to hinder progress. A key example was the year-long delay of a major partnership with an extractive company due to UNDP compliance procedures. Stakeholders consistently called for a more flexible, context-sensitive approach to private sector collaboration, especially given Botswana’s upper-middle-income status and its reliance on extractives. They emphasized that unlocking private sector potential required a long-term vision, systems-level coordination, and a shift away from short-term, funding-driven partnerships. UNDP’s comparative value was also viewed not only in mobilizing resources but also in promoting responsible business practices; environmental, social, and governance alignment; and enabling SMEs to influence policy and access markets. Without stronger collaboration with the private sector, broader economic and environmental goals were seen as difficult to attain.

**Finding 7. Inclusive economic growth: UNDP has advanced inclusive economic growth in Botswana by strategically targeting systemic barriers faced by women- and youth-led enterprises and informal sector actors.** Although small scale, its approach fostered expanded economic participation among underserved groups in remote areas.

A cornerstone of this work has been the SDP, which was expanded to support women- and youth-owned SMEs in priority sectors such as health, agriculture, and technology. Initiatives such as youth mentorships, women in mining, and rural digital literacy have yielded tangible social and economic returns. UNDP’s broader engagement with the informal economy has also been crucial, recognizing its importance in supporting livelihoods. Collaborations with the BOISA and women’s business organizations enabled targeted support to overcome systemic barriers facing informal entrepreneurs.

In partnership with the Women’s Finance House Botswana, UNDP launched targeted initiatives in 2021 to support women transitioning from informal to formal entrepreneurship. Initially piloted in the Southern and Central districts, the project expanded nationally due to its early success. Post-pandemic recovery assistance included business continuity training, financial literacy, and capacity-building. For example, 150 traders received training in financial and business management, enabling 30 to secure financing from CEDA and other lenders. Technical mentorship programmes trained 40 women in construction, 40 smallholder farmers in climate-smart agriculture (15 were later assessed by De Beers as potential suppliers), and 100 women and youth in solar energy assembly.

UNDP helped informal economy associations develop business strategies and establish service centres that expanded financial access for around 200 women. Although small scale, this support has been crucial for empowering vulnerable women. Under the Women and Youth Build Resilient Businesses initiative, nearly 1,000 informal traders were trained in business formalization and solar assembly, leading to 30 securing funding and 40 receiving TVET mentorship in construction. The Thusang Basadi Francistown Service Centre exemplified UNDP's institutional capacity-building approach, with leadership and mind-set training reaching 98 participants and the launch of a 2025–2028 strategic plan. In Tsabong, the Women's Finance House received support for seed funding, equipment, and entrepreneurship training, benefiting 65 women. These interventions were widely recognized by stakeholders for their inclusivity and targeted support to vulnerable populations.

To enhance digital and market readiness, UNDP partnered with Young Africa Botswana to introduce tech-based entrepreneurship courses and digital skills training. Exposure visits and strategic planning workshops, such as in Zimbabwe, offered practical learning. Assistance in branding, marketing, product registration, and certification helped improve SME visibility and access to markets. Tailored mentorship under the SDP connected 42 SMEs with national and international buyers, enabling them to scale operations.

Despite these achievements, significant challenges remain in formalizing women-owned businesses. The Women's Finance House noted that out of 12,000 clients, only 25 had successfully transitioned into formal SMEs. High registration and compliance costs, complex regulatory processes, and limited access to affordable finance persist as major barriers. Many women lack resources for legal fees, and informal businesses often face limited credit access due to insufficient collateral and perceived risk. Nonetheless, several success stories illustrate the programme's potential: a bakery expanded and hired four staff after acquiring machinery; a tailor grew her enterprise to supply school uniforms and employ others; and a small kiosk evolved into a full-scale retail outlet.

**Finding 8. Innovation and digitalization: UNDP has positioned itself as a credible innovation partner in Botswana, with early traction and strong institutional backing.** Systemic and inclusive impact has not yet been achieved, visibility has not translated into tangible results, and there continues to be participation gaps and challenges securing long-term investment beyond the start-up phase.

UNDP played a catalytic role in Botswana's digitalization agenda by working with key ministries to modernize fragmented service delivery systems. A flagship initiative was the development of an integrated digital services platform in collaboration with the Ministry of Entrepreneurship, designed to streamline citizen-facing processes such as business registration, licensing, and access to business support schemes for entrepreneurs and SMEs. This was complemented by such tools as the Rules of Origin platform and an online portal for reporting Non-Tariff Barriers, helping exporters navigate complex eligibility requirements under regional trade agreements such as AfCFTA. These innovations were widely appreciated by both government and private sector stakeholders as steps towards reducing administrative burdens and improving transparency. Still, stakeholders highlighted the need for full platform integration across ministries and sustained technical support to ensure long-term success.

Beyond digitalization, UNDP promoted innovation-focused approaches to public sector reform. Its partnership with the MoLGRD supported a shift in institutional culture from traditional administrative routines to a more results-oriented and innovation-driven service model. This included capacity-development activities such as strategic foresight workshops, transformation planning, and embedding innovation into ministerial systems. While ministry officials welcomed this upstream engagement and noted its potential to drive internal reforms, many cautioned that sustaining the momentum would require stronger internal capabilities and consistent leadership commitment.

UNDP also contributed to Botswana’s broader innovation ecosystem by supporting the establishment of innovation hubs. One notable success was the creation of UniPOD in 2024, a university-based innovation hub in two institutions to foster youth-led innovation across critical sectors such as fintech, photography, music production, robotics and AI, prototype development, and health. UNDP invested about \$ 1.5 million to set up the UniPOD and its satellite pod, including facility renovations and full laboratory equipment at the University of Botswana and another satellite pod at Botswana International University of Science & Technology. Although still in its early phase with inauguration in December 2024, the initiative has already yielded promising results: two student-led e-commerce start-ups are operational, and a bio-fertilizer venture is undergoing certification in South Africa following successful field trials.

The high-profile launch of UniPod, with strong government and UN visibility, reinforced UNDP’s role as a key innovation partner. To promote financial sustainability and national alignment, the Ministry of Finance holds a seat on UniPod’s steering committee, and the University of Botswana has committed to annual core budget funding beginning in 2025. Strategic partnerships with the Ministries of Trade, Communications, Higher Education, and Entrepreneurship were considered critical for scale-up and long-term sustainability. Nonetheless, stakeholders stressed the need for continued investment, inclusive outreach, and robust monitoring to avoid stalled delivery.

## A Green Botswana: UNDP contributions to a green and climate-resilient economy

### A Green Botswana (Outcome 2)

**Outcome 2:** By 2026, Botswana sustainably uses and actively manages its diverse natural resources, improves food security, and effectively addresses climate change vulnerability.

#### Related output

**Output 2.1.** National capacities to implement appropriate climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies strengthened.

**Output 2.2.** Capacities of departments and communities strengthened to develop and implement innovative and sustainable rangeland and agricultural management strategies.

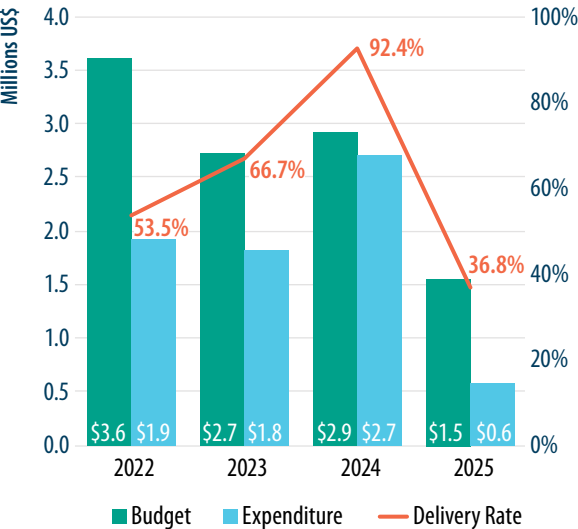
**Output 2.3.** National institutions and local communities have strengthened technical capacities to conserve and manage biodiversity and wildlife in line with international conventions.

**Output 2.4.** National capacities strengthened to develop and implement gender-responsive, environmental, and disaster management policies and strategies.

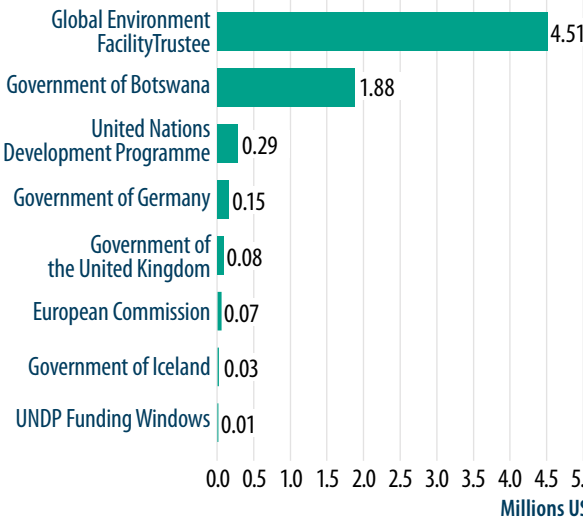
The Green Botswana portfolio was the second largest in UNDP Botswana’s 2022–2025 Country Programme, with expenditures reaching \$7 million, which corresponds to 65 percent of its allocated budget of \$10.8 million. Three flagship projects accounted for 80 percent of the total expenditure: Managing the Human-Wildlife Interface (\$3.6 million), Green Botswana (\$1.2 million), and the Biogas National Rollout

Project II (\$0.9 million). This portfolio stands out for its strong resource mobilization, with 96.2 percent (\$6.7 million) of expenditure funded through non-core resources. Notably, over 89 percent was sourced from two funding streams: GEF vertical funds (\$4.5 million) and GCS (\$1.9 million).

**FIGURE 9. A Green Botswana – Annual budget & expenditure (2022–2025)**



**FIGURE 10. A Green Botswana – Donor contributions (2022–2025)**



**Source:** UNDP Financial System (Atlas and Quantum). Figures for 2025 reflect expenditures up to 5 May and are not for the full year.

**Finding 9. Climate and environmental sustainability: UNDP remained as a key partner in advancing Botswana’s climate and environmental agenda, supporting policy development, institutional capacity and cross-sector coordination.** While this policy and planning foundation is strong, significant execution gaps persist driven by limited institutional capacity, fragmented coordination, and inadequate access to climate finance.

UNDP has established itself as a leading partner in advancing Botswana’s climate and environmental sustainability agenda gamut – from policy formulation and institutional strengthening to the operationalization of biodiversity conservation, climate adaptation and renewable energy strategies. As the main implementing partner for GEF-financed projects, UNDP supported a broad portfolio of initiatives, including the Kgalagadi and Ghanzi Drylands Ecosystem Project, the Biogas National Rollout, and the Small Grants Programme. These efforts helped address energy insecurity, support vulnerable communities, and promote the integration of biodiversity and climate objectives into national priorities.

Through its longstanding partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and CSOs, UNDP contributed to the formulation and operationalization of key frameworks. UNDP’s technical assistance in preparing Botswana’s updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), development of the Fourth National Communication (4NC), and Biennial Transparency Reports (1BTR and 2BTR) under the UNFCCC<sup>34</sup> contributed to enhanced institutional readiness and alignment with global frameworks such as the Paris

<sup>34</sup> ROAR 2022 & 2024, Climate Change Response Policy, NDCs, 4NC, and NAPs support.

Agreement and Vision 2036.<sup>35</sup> It also helped institutionalize measurement, reporting and verification systems, and the preparation of updated greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories<sup>36</sup> across sectors (Energy, Industrial Processes, Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use, Waste); and it promoted gender-responsive climate planning. Foundational work in climate coordination enabled ministries such as the Ministry of Minerals and Energy to develop tailored adaptation and energy transition strategies, while modernizing data systems within agencies such as the Department of Meteorological Services.<sup>37</sup>

UNDP also supported a range of other strategies, including the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), National Drought Plan (2021), the Renewable Energy Framework, and the National E-Mobility Promotion Strategy.<sup>38</sup> Its support was especially significant during the development of the draft NDP 12, where UNDP provided technical inputs to mainstream climate and environmental sustainability into sectoral plans and institutional reform processes. In the area of green energy and waste, UNDP facilitated the development of a National Biogas Strategy, a draft Integrated Waste Management Bill, and Biofuels Guidelines following pilot project successes.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, reforms in community-based natural resource management were supported through updated regulations and bylaws to reinforce sustainable local governance systems.<sup>40</sup>

Apart from its strong policy engagement, it also played a crucial role in operationalizing biodiversity and wildlife strategies, including the National Anti-Poaching Strategy<sup>41</sup> and Human-Wildlife Conflict Strategy.<sup>42</sup> These included strengthening the capacities of wildlife management institutions and law-enforcement agencies to combat illegal wildlife trade and poaching; the establishment and operationalization of Joint Operations Centres at national and district levels with information diffusion centres, strengthened roadblocks, and a specialized drone; and the preparation and gazetting of Integrated Land Use Management Plans. Reforms in community-based natural resource management were advanced through updated regulations, benefit-sharing mechanisms and support to local governance structures. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism acknowledged that UNDP's technical and financial support was "instrumental in shaping national reporting systems and enhancing cross-ministerial cooperation on climate change."<sup>43</sup> UNDP's approach also promoted gender mainstreaming and inclusive stakeholder engagement.

On biodiversity conservation, the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) Phase II enabled Botswana to assess its biodiversity finance gap, institutionalize expenditure tracking, and design public-private financing solutions.<sup>44</sup> It also supported the 2022 reform of protected-area fees, the first in over 20 years, which generated \$7.8 million in its first year, creating a sustainable revenue stream for conservation and community livelihoods. The Access and Benefit Sharing Phase II project strengthened legal and institutional frameworks for managing genetic resources and traditional knowledge, particularly for women-led biodiversity enterprises.<sup>45</sup> The Environment and Climate Change Response project supported policy integration and institutional capacity in line with the NBSAP. Together, these initiatives advanced environmental governance, legal coherence and community-based natural resource management.

<sup>35</sup> Botswana, 2nd Updated NDC under the Paris Agreement (Oct. 2024), [UNFCCC link](#).

<sup>36</sup> ROAR 2024, CPD OI 1.1.

<sup>37</sup> 4NC/1BTR-2BTR Project, Inception Workshop Report, UNDP-GEF (2023).

<sup>38</sup> ROAR 2022 and 2023, "Renewable energy, E-mobility strategy, and NBSAP implementation."

<sup>39</sup> KGDEP, "GEF Terminal Evaluation, Final Report" (2024), pp. 26–27.

<sup>40</sup> Stakeholder interviews; ROAR 2023.

<sup>41</sup> [Botswana National Anti-Poaching Strategy 2025–2030, UNDP Botswana](#).

<sup>42</sup> Stakeholder interviews; KGDEP, "GEF Terminal Evaluation."

<sup>43</sup> Botswana, 2nd Updated NDC.

<sup>44</sup> Project Document – BIOFIN Phase II (2024); CPD Mid-Term Evaluation Report, 2022–2026 (2024).

<sup>45</sup> Project Document – ABS Phase II (Access and Benefit Sharing), 2022–2023.

Despite these contributions, implementation of many climate commitments, including those under the NDCs, has lagged due to persistent execution gaps, limited access to climate finance and weak private sector engagement. Institutional fragmentation, limited capacity to develop bankable projects, and lack of integrated data systems have reportedly slowed progress. There were also concerns about the quality and oversight of technical assistance, with ministries reporting limited influence over consultant selection and supervision, resulting in outputs that sometimes-lacked contextual relevance. Stakeholders stressed that ownership of the process should rest with the client ministry and called for greater transparency in procurement and financial management. Promising developments such as the establishment of project steering committees and the national anti-poaching coordination committee mark a significant shift in addressing past gaps in strategic oversight, while signalling progress, but sustained effort is needed to ensure the sustainability and scalability of results. Despite growing interest in carbon credits, awareness and understanding of carbon markets remain limited across government and other sectors. Stakeholders noted that UNDP could play a critical role in building foundational capacity, offering 'Carbon 101' training to align understanding across institutions.

**Finding 10. Renewable energy: UNDP has played a sustained and strategic role in scaling Botswana's biogas sector from a small pilot to a nationally endorsed clean energy solution.** Through institutional support, public financing, and capacity-building, biogas has been positioned as a viable response to energy insecurity, rural poverty, and climate change. Gaps in private sector engagement, local technical support, and sustainability planning continued to limit long-term impact.

Through flagship initiatives such as the Biogas National Roll-Out Projects (Phases I & II), UNDP has made notable contributions to Botswana's clean energy transition. Its long-standing engagement through pilot initiatives, institutional development, and national rollout has positioned UNDP as a trusted partner in both policy and implementation. Its support has spanned the expansion of the biogas sector, promotion of solar energy and creation of green jobs. Complementing these efforts, UNDP has also 'walked the talk' by reducing its own carbon footprint through actions such as transitioning the UN compound<sup>46</sup> to solar energy and procuring an electric vehicle, resulting in a 37 percent reduction in electricity costs and reinforcing alignment with national climate goals.<sup>47</sup>

UNDP played a foundational role in establishing Botswana's biogas sector by introducing biogas technology through the GEF-funded pilot project Promoting Production and Utilization of Biogas from Agro-Waste (2017–2022). Implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Mineral Energy, Green Technology and Energy Security, the project installed 230 small-scale biodigesters across four districts. This provided multiple co-benefits, particularly for rural women, by reducing firewood use, improving indoor air quality, and saving time on domestic tasks. Collaborations with institutions such as the Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation facilitated uptake among households and agro-businesses, and the Boteti District pilot was cited in the terminal evaluation for its high community adoption and replication potential, informing the subsequent national roll-out.<sup>48</sup>

Building on this success, UNDP supported the Ministry of Minerals and Energy in launching the Biogas National Roll-Out (2023–2026), aimed at scaling clean energy access and reducing GHG emissions. UNDP helped design the national roll-out plan, mobilized BWP 20 million (\$1.5 million) in government

<sup>46</sup> Launch of the UN Solar PV System and UNDP Electric Vehicle.

<sup>47</sup> ROAR 2024, B.3.1.

<sup>48</sup> National Biogas Project Phase I, "GEF Terminal Evaluation."

co-financing, and expanded implementation under a cost-sharing model.<sup>49</sup> The project has a national scope, extended from south-eastern Botswana to additional districts such as the Central and North-East districts, demonstrating scalability and strong institutional buy-in.

As of December 2024, 317 biodigesters had been constructed and operationalized (230 under Phase I and 87 under Phase II), with an estimated energy production of 1,426 kWh/day and reducing annual emissions by approximately 246 tons CO<sub>2</sub>eq, mainly by offsetting the use of firewood and traditional cooking fuels.<sup>50</sup> Over the 8-year operational lifespan of each digester, cumulative emissions reductions are projected to remain substantial, with the potential to quadruple if usage is optimized, contributing meaningfully to Botswana’s target of reducing GHG emissions by 15 percent by 2030.

In terms of human capital, UNDP worked with the Ministry and trained 128 masons (in addition to 77 master masons trained in Phase I) in 2023–2024 in the construction, operation, and maintenance of biogas systems while creating job opportunities, and cultivated local expertise and community ownership.<sup>51</sup> By including women in these training programmes, the project not only advanced clean energy but also promoted gender equality in the renewable energy sector. At the institutional level, UNDP supported the development of national biogas standards, a green certification framework, and key legislative instruments such as the draft Integrated Waste Management Bill and Biofuels Guidelines.<sup>52</sup> The integration of biogas into Botswana’s 2024 NDC Implementation Framework as a priority mitigation action reflects the growing institutionalization of the technology.

UNDP’s operational efficiency and fiduciary systems are often viewed by government stakeholders more favourably than national systems, though procurement and financial execution have been slowed by systemic delays and the Quantum transition. The biogas initiative demonstrated strong potential to expand household access to clean energy and build capacity in both the public and private sectors. However, evaluations and stakeholder feedback consistently highlighted critical gaps in private sector engagement, long-term monitoring, and decentralized technical capacity needed to sustain and scale environmental solutions.<sup>53 54</sup>

**Finding 11. Sustainable rangeland management and nature-based livelihoods: UNDP advanced conservation, livelihoods, and environmental governance using a systems approach to address Botswana’s complex environmental and socio-economic challenges.** The overall impact was limited by delayed implementation and insufficient time to translate early gains into sustained biodiversity and livelihood outcomes.

Implemented from 2017 to 2025, the Kgalagadi and Ghanzi Drylands Ecosystem Project (KGDEP) was UNDP Botswana’s largest initiative in recent years, with a \$6.8 million budget excluding significant in-kind contributions. Targeting the ecologically sensitive Kalahari landscape, the project pursued a systems-based approach linking sustainable land management, protected area governance and nature-based livelihoods across multiple districts.

<sup>49</sup> Project Document – Biogas National Roll-Out Project II (2023).

<sup>50</sup> ROAR 2024, Outcome 3 – Biogas expansion and mason training.

<sup>51</sup> ROAR 2024, CPD OI 1.1.

<sup>52</sup> National Biogas Project Phase I, “GEF Terminal Evaluation.”

<sup>53</sup> “Mid-Term Evaluation Report, 2022–2026” (2024).

<sup>54</sup> National Biogas Project Phase I.

Early implementation (2017–2021) was marked by design flaws, fragmented coordination and low delivery rates.<sup>55</sup> A comprehensive project reset in 2022, prompted by the midterm review, improved coordination, staffing and delivery. Field observations by the evaluation team confirmed the acceleration of delivery, including the wilderness campsite in Hukuntsi and the Veld Products and Craft Centre in Ghanzi. The project was credited with connecting upstream policy objectives to grassroots action in remote dryland communities.

UNDP's integrated approach helped address land use conflicts among wildlife conservation, commercial ranching, and local livelihoods. At the strategic level, the project supported the operationalization of the National Anti-Poaching Strategy. Tools such as Joint Operations Centres, Intelligence Diffusion Centres, and GIS-enabled patrol tracking improved the capacity of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) for real-time response and coordination. DWNP field officers in Tsabong and Ghanzi highlighted the usefulness of these tools in improving response times and operational efficiency. The project also supported two comprehensive integrated land use plans:<sup>56</sup> for Kgalagadi and Ghanzi, two ecologically sensitive districts spanning over 228,000 km<sup>2</sup>; and for a wildlife connectivity study between the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Broadly, these efforts enhanced law enforcement capacity, improved cross-border coordination and strengthened intelligence-sharing.

Human–wildlife conflict mitigation efforts included 36 predator-proof kraals, GPS collars and improved grazing practices. While evidence remains largely anecdotal, DWNP and community leaders reported reduced poaching and livestock loss in targeted areas. In some affected areas, livestock compensation claims reportedly dropped from BWP 30,000 to as low as BWP 1,500.<sup>57</sup> DWNP officers and community trust members also observed a reduction in snaring and illegal off-take around community-managed zones, attributing this to more frequent patrols and stronger deterrence measures.<sup>58</sup> However, systematic tracking remains weak and reported incidents still exceeded project targets. For example, 3,668 incidents were recorded between 2020 and 2024 – significantly above the project's reduction target. The project advanced bushfire management through training 376 community members and by implementing risk plans across 500,000 hectares. Although firefighting equipment reportedly improved response capacity, data on actual fire suppression outcomes remains limited.

On livelihoods, the project aimed to establish at least four value chain and ecotourism ventures to diversify incomes and incentivize conservation. The KGDEP supported broader skills development efforts, including the training of 58 individuals in holistic range management, 121 farmers in fire management, and 50 women in solar technology and entrepreneurship.<sup>59</sup> Overall, 7,603 people, 46.5 percent of whom were women, have directly benefited from the initiative through participation in value chains, ecotourism ventures, and the integration of sustainable land management practices into the wider landscape and land use planning processes.<sup>60</sup>

Following the 2022 reset, implementation accelerated, with visible progress in infrastructure development, including the revitalization of the Veld Products Centre in Bere, the Highway Craft Centre in Kacgae, wilderness campsites in Ngwatle, and the expansion of the Zutshwa Salt Mine. While construction advanced, commercial operations had not commenced by the project's end due to pending final touches

<sup>55</sup> Limited progress in the early implementation phase (2017–2021) was mainly due to design flaws and incomplete infrastructure (e.g., community-based tourism facilities lacking essential services and insufficient market or feasibility studies), fragmented coordination, underestimated implementation risks (e.g., delays in Free, Prior and Informed Consent and environmental safeguards), and inadequate co-financing documentation.

<sup>56</sup> KGDEP, "GEF Terminal Evaluation"; KGDEP, "GEF MTR, Final Report" (2021).

<sup>57</sup> Site visits and interviews.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> ROAR 2024, CPD/RPD Result Name Output 4.3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Output 3.3.

and formal handovers. Budget limitations left out key components such as solar energy connections, with the expectation that communities would secure additional resources to complete them. These ventures created some local jobs, but household-level income gains remained modest due to short implementation timelines and budget constraints. For example, the Zutshwa Salt Mine employed up to 25 people at its peak and still supports 15 workers, including six women. Stakeholders noted that while the groundwork was promising, the delayed implementation and short post-reset timeframe hindered the realization of sustainable livelihood benefits.

At the community level, 10 community trusts were legally recognized and supported to co-manage Wildlife Management Areas with inclusive platforms, such as Kgotla meetings and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes, helping to build transparency and local ownership. However, many interventions failed to achieve measurable improvements in livelihoods or conservation outcomes. While communities appreciated the various supports, trainings and infrastructure, initiatives such as the Ngwatle campsites (Hukuntsi district) remained incomplete, prompting concern among local leaders who felt the project ended without delivering tangible benefits. Systemic issues including prolonged FPIC processes and weak post-construction support further undermined sustainability. Stakeholders also flagged systemic issues, including underreported in-kind government co-financing (\$2.4 million of \$21 million expected), lack of harmonized M&E systems, and limited private sector engagement. While some gender gains were noted, greater effort was needed to ensure women's participation in leadership and technical roles.

## 2.3 Overall cross-cutting issues

**Finding 12. Efficiency: UNDP is recognized by government and non-government partners for its results-oriented approach, technical expertise, and operational efficiency despite some financial, operational and coordination challenges that have limited overall effectiveness and impact.**

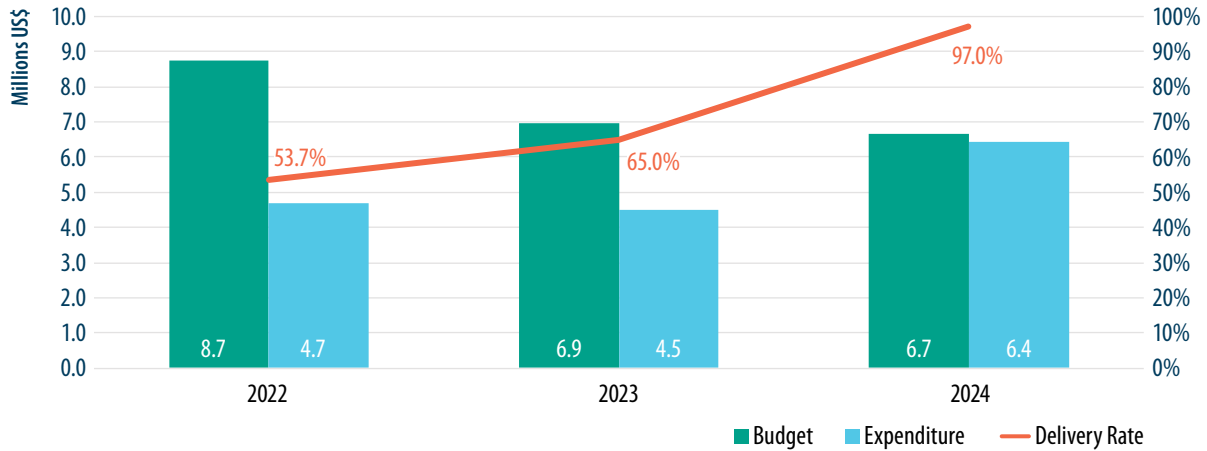
Leveraging the National Implementation Modality (NIM), the Country Programme strengthened national institutions, enhanced policy coherence, and promoted national ownership across all three portfolios. UNDP's presence in rural and underserved areas was particularly appreciated by government partners, filling critical gaps that national programmes often struggle to address. The installation of biogas digesters in remote communities demonstrated UNDP's ability to deliver clean energy solutions that directly benefit local livelihoods. The deployment of embedded personnel within ministries further contributed to institutional capacity-building, with government counterparts recognizing UNDP's implementation mechanisms as more efficient and effective.

However, implementation of the Country Programme has been constrained by financial, operational, and coordination challenges that have undermined effectiveness and impact. The most pressing constraint has been limited financial resources. Over the years, TRAC funding has steadily declined while government cost-sharing contributions have been less predictable and delayed. Factors such as differing fiscal calendars between UNDP and the Government of Botswana have contributed to some of these delays and planning uncertainty.

The country office experienced fluctuations in delivery rates over the years, with signs of underutilization. Between 2022 and 2024, delivery rates fluctuated between 53.7 percent and 97 percent. The low delivery in 2022 was due to COVID-19, the Quantum transition and delays in a major project under the Green portfolio. The trend reversed in 2024, when expenditure nearly matched the budget with a delivery rate

of 97 percent. The encumbrance of staff-related costs, particularly for long-term technical assistance and project personnel, contributed to perceptions of under-delivery, as a substantial share of resources was tied up in operational expenses.

**FIGURE 11. Annual budget & expenditure (2022–2024)**



Source: UNDP Financial Systems (Atlas and Quantum)

Throughout implementation of the CPD, regular consultations with government partners, CSOs, and local communities helped keep the programme responsive to evolving needs. The country office established coordination mechanisms overseen by a Portfolio Steering Committee, which meets twice a year and is preceded by Technical Working Groups (TWGs) for each portfolio. These structures have supported coherence across strategic areas and the integration of cross-cutting issues, with TWGs providing detailed updates on progress, challenges and opportunities at the portfolio and project level. However, their effectiveness was uneven due to irregular meetings, limited project-level visibility, and challenges stemming from institutional restructuring. For example, after the split of the Planning Commission, coordination with key partners such as the Ministry of Finance is reportedly more ad hoc and reactive over time.

Government and CSO partners expressed mixed views on the quality of UNDP’s technical support and commissioned studies, with satisfaction varying by project. The CPD effectively leveraged local expertise in areas such as social protection and gender equality, while in technical fields such as renewable energy it relied on international consultants. While some studies were appreciated for their analytical depth, others lacked follow-up, had limited visibility, or were poorly aligned with national contexts. Several studies were described as generic or lacking actionable insights (e.g., the Russia–Ukraine Conflict Impact Study). Stakeholders also noted delays in recruitment, limited involvement in consultant selection, and inconsistent quality, particularly among international consultants unfamiliar with the local environment. In contrast, national consultants were consistently praised for their responsiveness and sustained contributions.

The absence of robust follow-up mechanisms further reduced the value of UNDP’s analytical work and limited opportunities for learning. Success stories, outcome-level data, and programmatic impacts were not systematically communicated. Greater transparency on the use of cost-sharing funds and more granular financial reporting were also frequently requested to reinforce trust and alignment. There was broad interest in ensuring that GCS are increasingly directed towards implementation on the ground.

These gaps adversely impacted the credibility of UNDP-supported initiatives and threatened the long-term viability of the government cost-sharing model, especially in a context where visible results are essential for maintaining continued support.

**Finding 13. Sustainability: The sustainability of UNDP’s work across its three portfolios reflects a mixed picture, shaped by constrained funding, evolving national priorities and structural limitations.**

While Botswana, as an upper-middle-income country, has the institutional capacity to sustain its development agenda with reduced external assistance, the Country Programme’s long-term impact depends on how well national systems absorb and carry forward UNDP-supported reforms. Implementation through the NIM has helped embed interventions within government structures; and several ministries have demonstrated renewed interest in institutional partnerships – particularly in governance, public finance and results-based implementation. UNDP has also played a key role in supporting the development of policy frameworks and strategies that align with Vision 2036 and NDP 11.

Most projects show promising prospects for sustainability. Stakeholder consultations and evaluations point to strong government and community ownership, complemented by UNDP’s upstream work to strengthen regulatory and institutional frameworks. Key achievements include support for decentralization, biodiversity conservation, and national capacity-building in digitalization and data systems. Flagship initiatives such as the SDP, the national biogas programme, the Integrated Land Use Management Plan, and the rollout of the Kgalagadi Bush Fire Risk Management Plan have demonstrated lasting value, generating employment, promoting local production and contributing to ecosystem restoration.<sup>61</sup> The establishment of community-led trusts and Joint Operations Centres also highlights UNDP’s contribution to systemic change with strong ownership.

Nonetheless, several projects face sustainability risks due to inadequate follow-through, weak institutionalization and limited financing. While UNDP has supported the formulation of sound policies such as the Informal Sector Strategy and local government digital tools, implementation has often lagged due to capacity and budgetary constraints. The absence of a national digital infrastructure strategy and weak oversight mechanisms hinder the scalability of these efforts. Civic engagement platforms and anti-corruption bodies such as the Transparency and Accountability Committees have expanded public participation, but stakeholders raised concerns about their ability to endure without reliable financing or institutional anchoring. Moreover, sustained democratic governance programming beyond electoral cycles is needed to secure long-term policy coherence and institutional accountability.

Financial sustainability also remained a critical concern. UNDP’s heavy reliance on GCS and vertical funds such as the GEF is increasingly perilous given Botswana’s income classification and tightening aid landscape. Climate and IED projects, while impactful, remain dependent on these limited streams, making scale-up and long-term continuity uncertain. Private sector engagement has also been weak in areas such as climate finance, further limiting systemic transformation and ownership. The broader economic downturn has intensified vulnerability among small businesses and community projects, raising questions about whether current conditions allow for sustained implementation of development initiatives. Terminal Evaluations consistently rate sustainability as only moderately likely, citing insufficient local financial resources and constrained departmental budgets as ongoing challenges to post-project continuity.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> KGDEP, “GEF Terminal Evaluation,” pp. 5, 7.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.; Okavango SAP, GEF TE (2022); National Biogas, GEF TE (March 2022).

On the other hand, promising efforts are being implemented across different levels. In decentralization, for example, the MoLGRD has appointed a dedicated partnership coordination officer and made initial efforts to integrate strategic priorities into national budget processes. This structural shift towards domestic financing frameworks offers a more sustainable model for institutional reforms.

**Finding 14. Integrated programming and results-based management: The design and implementation of the UNDP Botswana’s Country Programme demonstrated a reasonable level of cross-sectoral coherence and delivered early gains under the portfolio-based approach.** However, deeper integration across thematic areas and a more unified M&E were still needed to fully harness the potential of this model, particularly in a resource-constrained context where strategic synergy and value for money were critical.

UNDP Botswana’s shift towards a portfolio-based approach was a deliberate effort to promote integrated, cross-sectoral interventions and enhance coherence across programming. As one of the first Regional Bureau for Africa offices to embrace this model, the country office structured its programme around three thematic portfolios – Prosperous, Green, and Just Botswana – supported by realigned internal structures, including the Programme Management Support Unit, M&E, and Communications units. Staff were encouraged to contribute across portfolios, and initiatives such as cross-portfolio flagship projects were introduced to foster systems thinking.

Cross-portfolio linkages were evident in areas such as economic inclusion and women’s empowerment. Early signs of integration emerged, notably through the Joint Justice–Prosperity Project and the Supplier Development Programme’s linkages with home-grown school feeding, green economy, and MSME initiatives. These efforts promoted inclusive economic opportunities and illustrated alignment among governance, climate, and livelihood goals. Thematic synergies were also evident in projects supporting women-led essential oil production, solar panel installation, and nature-based enterprises, offering integrated solutions that addressed empowerment, green job creation, and resilience.

However, integration has yet to reach its full potential. The repurposing of legacy projects, weak cross-portfolio accountability structures, and reporting often reverted to siloed, project-based practices. For example, while governance interventions had the potential to support climate resilience and economic diversification, such synergies were not consistently embedded across sectors. Similarly, MSME-related initiatives often overlooked informal sector actors, despite their natural alignment with economic empowerment goals.

Parallel to these challenges, the results-based management and M&E systems have not kept pace with the demands of integrated programming. This was compounded by a weak results framework and the absence of harmonized indicators, which made it difficult to measure cross-portfolio outcomes or generate strategic learning. While the country office responded adaptively to evaluations such as improved delivery following mid-term and terminal evaluations of the KGDEP, monitoring remains largely output-oriented, focused on deliverables such as policy drafts, trainings, and strategies. Mechanisms to track outcome-level changes (e.g., in corruption prevalence, institutional integrity, or access to justice) were often lacking, limiting strategic learning and long-term performance assessment.

The absence of harmonized indicators across portfolios weakened the ability to aggregate results or assess the cumulative effects of UNDP’s interventions. Moreover, some CPD targets were overly ambitious: for instance, the goal of raising women’s parliamentary representation from 3 percent to 30 percent, despite structural limitations such as the absence of gender quotas and restrictive electoral systems. Stakeholders

noted that more incremental and realistic targets would have improved accountability and relevance. Key partners also focused on deliverables such as policy drafts and training workshops, with limited mechanisms to track community-level impact or longer-term outcomes such as institutional integrity or public trust.

Inadequate communication of results contributed to gaps in strategic visibility and stakeholder engagement. Some key government officials reported limited awareness of ongoing initiatives, learning of them only through informal channels. This contrast, where UNDP is widely regarded as a strategic partner yet not consistently visible across ministries, reflects a communications and outreach gap rather than a lack of substantive engagement. This underlines the need for improved communications and stakeholder outreach. In response, the country office took steps in 2024 to co-locate the M&E, Programme Management Support Unit, and Communications units, aiming to strengthen internal coherence and raise the visibility of results and partnerships.

Finally, external and funding-related pressures hampered implementation and weakened coherence. Frequent changes in government structures, delays in cost-sharing disbursements due to fiscal-year misalignment, and constrained funding opportunities compelled the country office to pivot back towards a project-based model. This shift not only contradicted the strategic vision of integrated programming but also mirrored changes in staffing structures from policy advisors aligned with national systems in earlier cycles to direct implementation-focused roles in the current one. Consequently, while examples of cross-portfolio collaboration exist, the portfolio model has yet to fully unlock a cumulative, systemic impact.

## 2.4 Gender equality and women's empowerment

**Finding 15. Gender: UNDP Botswana has contributed to strengthening an enabling environment for gender equality through policy support, targeted capacity development, and gender-responsive initiatives.** However, limited capacity for systematic data collection and monitoring continues to hinder tracking of inclusion outcomes.

UNDP has made meaningful progress in advancing gender equality and inclusion across its Governance, Prosperity, and Green portfolios, combining policy support with grassroots action. Between 2022 and 2025, 88 percent of programme expenditure (\$14.69 million) supported outputs with significant gender equality objectives (GEN2), while 4 percent (\$0.59 million) supported outputs expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way (GEN1). Further, 7 percent (\$1.18 million) was directed towards outputs where gender equality was the principal objective (GEN3).<sup>63</sup>

At the policy level, UNDP supported the establishment and operationalization of the National Gender Commission, which now plays a central role in mainstreaming gender in national development planning, including the draft 12th National Development Plan (2025–2029). It also helped embed gender frameworks across justice, planning, and anti-corruption institutions. Notable achievements include strengthened legal aid for GBV survivors, training of over 550 traditional leaders on GBV response, and political empowerment workshops for 300 women and youth aspirants.

In the Prosperity portfolio, UNDP supported women and youth in the informal and MSME sectors through initiatives such as the SDP, partnerships with BOISA and Women Finance House, and localized interventions such as the Thusang Basadi Centres. These generated modest business growth and employment. For instance, out of 12,000 women supported by Women Finance House, only 25 have transitioned to formal

<sup>63</sup> UNDP ATLAS & Quantum.

SMEs,<sup>64</sup> reflecting systemic gaps that require policy-level attention. UNDP also prioritized economic inclusion at the grassroots level. Initiatives such as Women and Youth Build Resilient Businesses trained nearly 1,000 informal traders in business development and renewable energy skills. Digital entrepreneurship and tech-based training, implemented with Young Africa Botswana, expanded learning opportunities for marginalized groups. Although UniPod was designed to be inclusive, early participation has been male-dominated. Despite their small scale, these interventions empowered vulnerable women, youth, and persons with disabilities to engage in Botswana's economic transformation.

Gender equality was also embedded in climate action under the Green Portfolio. Initiatives, such as the national biogas rollout and the Kgalagadi and Ghanzi Drylands Ecosystem Project promoted women's participation in sustainable energy and conservation.<sup>65</sup> UNDP supported gender-responsive environmental policies, and developed detailed gender and climate vulnerability maps to inform local planning.<sup>66</sup> These actions aligned with the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan and helped integrate gender in national climate reporting.<sup>67</sup>

UNDP actively supported the domestication and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), reinforcing inclusion in programming.<sup>68</sup> Following Botswana's accession to the CRPD and the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act (2024), UNDP supported the National Disability Coordinating Office in developing monitoring systems, facilitating national reporting under Article 35, and mainstreaming disability in climate planning. This also included multi-sectoral capacity-building workshops for government ministries, districts, CSOs, and organizations of persons with disabilities. UNDP further supported the National Human Rights Coordinating Committee to develop a self-paced Human Rights and SDG online course, launched in 2023, with 1,000 registrants to date. However, completion rates remain low, and UNDP is now assisting the Ministry of Justice to expand participation nationwide.

Despite this progress, structural and operational bottlenecks persist. In the Governance and Justice portfolio, while institutional frameworks such as the National Gender Commission and Legal Aid Botswana have expanded access and policy coherence, their effectiveness is often constrained by limited human and financial resources and insufficient data systems to track gender outcomes. GBV remains a serious issue, particularly in rural areas with entrenched social norms and economic dependency. In the prosperity and Green portfolios, interventions remain fragmented, heavily reliant on external funding, and difficult to scale. Many women- and youth-owned enterprises remain trapped in the informal economy due to high compliance costs, rigid regulatory processes, and limited access to affordable capital barriers that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups.

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<sup>64</sup> Key informant interview.

<sup>65</sup> KGDEP Project Document – KGDEP (2017), p. 25.

<sup>66</sup> CPD Mid-Term Evaluation Report.

<sup>67</sup> ROAR 2024.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

# CHAPTER 3

# CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



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

## 3.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1. Strategic relevance and positioning: UNDP maintained strong strategic positioning and operational relevance in Botswana; yet, its ability to deliver integrated, scalable, and sustainable impact was constrained by institutional capacity gaps, operational inefficiencies, and a limited and unpredictable resource base.**

UNDP remained strategically positioned as a trusted development partner in Botswana, with strong alignment to national priorities and a credible track record in addressing both structural and emerging challenges. It supported the development and implementation of sectoral policies across the three portfolios, enabling engagement in high-level policy dialogues within a post-COVID, climate-sensitive, and fiscally constrained context. In a development context characterized by strong national policy frameworks but limited implementation capacity, especially at local levels, UNDP's dual engagement at both policy and implementation levels has proven particularly relevant and appreciated. Efforts in support of AfCFTA implementation, digital transformation, systems-level support to government ministries, and institutional innovation such as the UNIPOD initiative further cemented UNDP's influence in both traditional and emerging development areas. UNDP's downstream work particularly under the Green and Prosperity portfolios was frequently cited for its impact in underserved regions.

Despite strong policy level engagement, however, implementation lagged due to policy paralysis, slow institutional processes, limited legislative follow-through, and capacity gaps. As a result, policy gains were not consistently institutionalized or translated into services at the community level. Moreover, while the Country Programme embedded ambitions for systems-level change, the breadth of its programming often stretched institutional capacity and weakened strategic focus.

Beyond institutional and capacity constraints, government cost-sharing, once a cornerstone of UNDP Botswana's operational model, has become unpredictable, posing significant risks to programme sustainability, effective delivery, and long-term strategic planning. Moreover, fragmented monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems limited the ability to systematically track integrated outcomes, validate community-level results, and drive adaptive learning across portfolios, thus constraining the demonstration of long-term impact.

**Conclusion 2. Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability: While UNDP's interventions achieved notable outputs, their contribution to systemic change and sustainability was limited due to structural constraints. Policy gains were not institutionalized because of slow legislative processes and insufficient capacity at the subnational level.**

UNDP's interventions in Botswana have been broadly effective and delivered tangible results across the Green, Prosperous, and Just portfolios, contributing to national development priorities and institutional capacity-building. By using the national implementation modality, embedding technical expertise, and fostering inclusive partnerships, UNDP reinforced national ownership and enhanced operational efficiency, particularly in community-based initiatives and underserved regions. Projects in sustainable ecosystem and land management, MSME development, and inclusive entrepreneurship improved livelihoods enhanced business competitiveness and demonstrated clear potential for scale. Initiatives such as the Biogas Rollout, AfCFTA support, and UniPOD showcased UNDP's adaptive, cross-sectoral engagement. Support

to biodiversity conservation and anti-corruption frameworks addressed key structural gaps, while notable gains were achieved in underserved regions through nature-based livelihood projects and human-wildlife conflict mitigation.

However, in the context of constrained resources, limited private sector participation, outdated regulatory frameworks, and weak subnational capacity, the transformational impact of UNDP's support remained gradual and uneven. Sustainability of results was mixed, with some initiatives showing promise for scale-up while others remained dependent on external funding and lacked stronger national ownership. Heavy reliance on consultants, often with limited national oversight, led to inconsistent quality and low institutional buy-in, while the absence of change management frameworks weakened reform outcomes. Additionally, weak visibility and communication of results, especially among key government partners and UN agencies, further limited strategic engagement and recognition of UNDP's contributions. Structural barriers and rigid due diligence requirements also constrained private sector engagement, particularly in climate action, economic diversification and resource mobilization.

**Conclusion 3. Prosperity portfolio: UNDP's strategic alignment with Botswana's economic diversification agenda has delivered meaningful policy and institutional reforms, but translating these gains into sustained, outcome-level impact – particularly in private sector growth – remains a critical challenge.**

UNDP's support under the Prosperity portfolio became increasingly relevant as Botswana faced fiscal pressures and pursued a shift from mineral dependency to a diversified, inclusive, and private sector-led economy. Flagship initiatives such as the SDP and IED enhanced SME competitiveness and local value chains, with a strong focus on youth and women. Technical collaboration with ministries, parastatals, and business associations advanced trade readiness, enterprise development, and digital transformation. UNDP's support to AfCFTA implementation, institutional innovation through UniPOD, and digital systems strengthening positioned it as a credible partner in both traditional and emerging development domains.

However, progress towards sustained, outcome-level transformation in private sector growth and economic diversification remained limited. These results lie beyond UNDP's direct control and require shared accountability across government, development partners, and the private sector. Fragmented ownership, weak subnational capacity, funding constraints, and implementation bottlenecks hindered scale and sustainability. Many promising initiatives did not translate into measurable gains in SME performance, job creation, or competitiveness due to institutional capacity gaps and weak follow-up mechanisms. While the portfolio showed catalytic promise, its strategic coherence needs sharpening, alongside deeper private sector engagement and a more integrated approach to unlock Botswana's economic potential through systemic economic change.

**Conclusion 4. Green portfolio: UNDP played a catalytic and strategic role in advancing Botswana's climate resilience and environmental sustainability by supporting policy development, institutional capacity-building, and locally driven solutions that linked environmental goals with community livelihoods and national development priorities.**

Through flagship initiatives such as KGDEP and the national biogas programme, UNDP played a catalytic role in advancing ecosystem restoration and promoting alternative livelihoods in Botswana. These interventions yielded tangible community benefits such as income generation, clean energy access, and reduced ecosystem pressure while also laying foundations for future carbon trading and co-managed ecosystems. Scalable models such as the Integrated Land Use Management Plan and Wildlife Management Areas demonstrated potential for sustainable land use, while UNDP's support to national climate reporting,

NDC updates, and international engagement helped strengthen institutional capacity. Interventions effectively spanned both upstream policy frameworks and downstream action, ranging to human–wildlife management and community-led conservation.

However, many pilots have yet to mature into self-sustaining models. Weak M&E systems limited the ability to track outcomes, capture lessons, and ensure continuity beyond project closure. Heavy reliance on GEF, which accounted for 67 percent of non-core resources, combined with low private sector participation undermined financial sustainability. Subnational implementation gaps such as incomplete infrastructure and slow progress on rangeland management further constrained effectiveness, while uneven institutional uptake reduced the scalability. Accountability challenges, including weak documentation of co-financing shortfalls in KGDEPs, highlighted a need for stronger oversight. Moreover, limited collaboration beyond BIOFIN underscored the importance of deeper UN integration, broader financing partnerships, and strong national ownership to sustain and scale UNDP’s environmental impact.

**Conclusion 5. Justice portfolio: UNDP played a pivotal role in strengthening Botswana’s governance systems, particularly in justice, anti-corruption, and inclusion through strategic partnerships, technical assistance, and policy reforms. However, systemic and sustained change was constrained by inadequate funding, weak institutional capacity, and insufficient national ownership.**

Despite its modest resource envelope, UNDP’s Governance portfolio contributed meaningfully to inclusion and rights-based development by promoting civic engagement, gender equality, and disability rights. Support to Legal Aid Botswana, the National Gender Commission, and grassroots initiatives helped elevate marginalized voices. Notable contributions included backing female political aspirants, training traditional leaders on GBV, supporting disability mainstreaming, and advancing justice sector reform through the Criminal Justice Sector Review, legal digitization, and anti-corruption efforts.

However, the impact and sustainability of these gains were constrained by entrenched structural barriers such as pervasive GBV, limited prosecutorial capacity, and electoral system shortcomings. Unpredictable funding and short-term programming cycles, diluted progress and limited scale-up. Monitoring remained output-driven, with limited evidence of systemic shifts such as improved public trust, reduced corruption, or sustained access to justice.

## 3.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided to support UNDP’s contribution to Botswana’s development priorities. They cover the key elements of UNDP performance under the current programme cycle that could be improved to enhance the organization’s future support, and they address changes in the external context that should be considered in the design of the next country programme.

**Recommendation 1. Better Support National Priorities: UNDP should reposition itself to better support national priorities by co-developing a renewed engagement model focused on strengthening institutional capacity, accelerating delivery systems, and advancing high-impact reforms.** The approach should prioritize Botswana-led, evidence-based solutions with visible results, especially those that drive systematic reforms and have the potential to address local development needs.

To seize the opportunity presented by Botswana’s first political transition in nearly six decades, UNDP should co-create a refreshed engagement model with key government counterparts. UNDP should work alongside the new administration to identify institutional bottlenecks, strengthen capacity, drive digital transformation and public sector modernization, and operationalize key strategies aligned with Botswana’s

upper-middle-income status. Strengthening the link between upstream frameworks and downstream delivery, while consolidating around fewer, scalable interventions, will be critical to sustaining UNDP's relevance and maximizing its development value in Botswana.

A renewed emphasis on governance as a strategic investment area – including anti-corruption, civic engagement, and the rule of law – will not only enhance national accountability but also reduce inequality and improve public service delivery. Programmatically, the new Country Programme should place emphasis in expanding solar and biogas initiatives, integrating robust drought and flood response systems, and strengthening institutional capacity for climate finance tracking. This should be complemented by promoting carbon market readiness, scaling nature-based solutions, and fostering private sector engagement in renewable energy and climate resilience investments. This dual-track, systems-oriented approach will deepen UNDP's credibility, unlock additional financing, and ensure visible, transformative impact at both national and community levels.

**Recommendation 2. Help Turn Policies into Tangible Results: UNDP should conduct a systematic review of policy implementation and establish an implementation acceleration framework to strengthen national execution capacity and help translate strategies and policies into tangible, sustained outcomes in the next programme cycle.** This requires enhancing end-to-end implementation support that extends beyond policy development to drive more effective delivery and long-term sustainability.

As Botswana enters a new phase of governance with rising demand for results, the persistent gap between policy development and implementation remains a critical challenge. To address this, UNDP should adopt a more integrated, full-cycle engagement model spanning diagnostic, planning, capacity development, execution, monitoring, and scaling rather than providing fragmented, one-off support. A practical entry point is a systematic review of major policies, strategies, and studies supported over the past two programme cycles to assess implementation status, identify bottlenecks, and recommend concrete steps for operationalization. These insights should feed into an implementation acceleration framework that sharpens policy support, scales effective interventions, and helps deliver outcomes to underserved populations. UNDP should also shift its focus from generating a proliferation of studies to investing in high-impact, actionable initiatives with clear delivery pathways.

**Recommendation 3. Make Youth Employment a Core Priority: UNDP's next Country Programme should position youth empowerment and tackling youth unemployment as a central, cross-cutting priority, integrated across all portfolios, to catalyse inclusive growth, expand job opportunities, and strengthen long-term resilience in Botswana's upper-middle-income context.**

UNDP should elevate youth employment as a flagship, cross-cutting priority in the next Country Programme by integrating economic, environmental, and governance interventions under a unified, systems-based agenda. Framing youth empowerment across the Prosperous, Green, and Justice portfolios will enable more coherent programming focused on entrepreneurship, green jobs, and digital innovation—especially in urban and rural areas. These efforts should be data-driven, gender-responsive, and aligned with national demographic and poverty dynamics.

To advance this agenda, UNDP should invest in joint planning, pooled funding mechanisms, and coordination platforms with other UN agencies. Building on its contributions to the AfCFTA National Implementation Strategy and the Integrated National Financial Framework (INFF), it should deepen support for investment promotion, private sector competitiveness, and regional trade readiness, particularly through targeted capacity-building and by linking youth and women entrepreneurs to value chains.

**Recommendation 4. Improve How UNDP Works with Government and Partners: To improve efficiency, financial opportunities, and programmatic delivery, UNDP should adopt a more transparent, collaborative, and impact-oriented approach that strengthens national ownership, improves coordination across systems, and unlocks new partnerships and financing opportunities aligned with Botswana’s development priorities.**

UNDP should institutionalize inclusive planning, transparent resource use, and joint accountability mechanisms, particularly with the Ministry of Finance, Ministry for State President, MoLGRD, sectoral ministries, and decentralized structures and non-government partners. This includes embedding structured joint planning, regular progress reviews, and shared decision-making from the outset of the programme cycle, including in selection of consultants. Given the reliance on the NIM and the country’s geographic disparities, sustained investment in local governance systems is essential to strengthen execution capacity, reduce inequality, and deliver responsive, community-driven outcomes.

UNDP should also fully operationalize a results-driven, integrated portfolio approach by embedding unified results frameworks, outcome-based collaboration, and joint monitoring among portfolios and with government counterparts. Interventions should be clustered around shared priorities to reduce fragmentation, pool resources, and drive cross-sectoral impact. Tracking downstream results – especially under cost-sharing and vertical funds – will enhance programme visibility and accountability. This should be reinforced by a narrative-driven communication approach featuring human-centred impact stories, recognition of government contributions, and regular visibility events. Early strategic engagement and targeted outreach to key ministries, including using social media channels, will be critical to sustain political buy-in, strengthen national ownership, and position UNDP as a credible partner for integrated, high-impact delivery.

**Recommendation 5. Secure and Diversify Funding for Long-Term Impact: UNDP Botswana should adopt a comprehensive partnership and resource mobilization strategy that safeguards Government Cost Sharing as a major enabler and model of national ownership, while at the same time broadening funding sources to stay relevant and effective.**

In Botswana’s upper-middle-income context, where access to traditional development finance is shrinking, UNDP should adopt a twin-track resource mobilization strategy to sustain its relevance and impact. This entails formalizing a renewed cost-sharing agreement with the government to ensure predictable, transparent financing and alignment of mutual expectations. The agreement should clearly set out financial commitments, disbursement timelines, and accountability mechanisms while addressing misalignments with national budget cycles. At the same time, UNDP must sharpen its focus on delivering measurable results that align with national priorities, as demonstrating tangible, cost-effective outcomes will be critical to sustaining GCS in a fiscally constrained environment.

Concurrently, UNDP should expand its financing base by deepening partnerships with both traditional and non-traditional partners. The existing MoU with SADC should be leveraged to co-create regional funding opportunities. While the private sector remains underdeveloped, at the corporate level UNDP should address rigid due diligence protocols – especially in the extractive sector – that hinder timely collaboration and funding access. UNDP should also accelerate support to operationalize the INFF and tap financing streams such as the Green Climate Fund, GEF and carbon markets, positioning itself as a catalyst for inclusive, green, and resilient development in a fiscally constrained environment. UNDP should deepen collaboration with UN agencies in areas of shared interest, such as environment and employment.

### 3.3 Key recommendations and management response

#### RECOMMENDATION 1.

**Better Support National Priorities:** UNDP should reposition itself to better support national priorities by co-developing a renewed engagement model focused on strengthening institutional capacity, accelerating delivery systems, and advancing high-impact reforms. The approach should prioritize Botswana-led, evidence-based solutions with visible results, especially those that drive systematic reforms and have the potential to address local development needs.

#### Management response: **Accepted.**

UNDP with Regional Bureau of Africa support is formulating a 5-year Country Programme that is informed by the Strategic Plan 2025–2029, the National Development Plan 12 (NDP 12) of Botswana, and the UN Sustainable Development Corporation Framework. The new CPD will be evidence-based, integrating systems thinking and foresight to guide strategic thinking of the programme while leveraging portfolio, AI, and innovation to deliver integrated solutions effectively and that are transformational, while contributing to achieving the SDGs and African Union’s Agenda 2063. The CPD delivery instruments through projects and portfolios will have strong alignment with the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme – the programme pipeline for the implementation of the NDP 12.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Formulate the new CPD 2026–2029 aligned with SP (2026–2029), NDP 12 and UNSDCF	30 September 2026	Resident Representative (RR), Deputy Resident Representative (DRR), all staff	The CO will solicit support from the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) and Regional Service Centre for Africa (RSCA) during the formulation and approval of the new CPD	
1.2 Formulate a much more agile communication strategy and Partnerships and Communications Strategy and Action Plan (PCAP) to enhance communication of results with partners	30 September 2026	RR, DRR, all staff	CO formulates PCAP with support from RSCA	

## RECOMMENDATION 2.



**Help Turn Policies into Tangible Results:** UNDP should conduct a systematic review of policy implementation and establish an implementation acceleration framework to strengthen national execution capacity and help translate strategies and policies into tangible, sustained outcomes in the next programme cycle. This requires enhancing end-to-end implementation support that extends beyond policy development to drive more effective delivery and long-term sustainability.

**Management response:** Accepted.



As part of the new CPD and leveraging AI and data analytics, UNDP Botswana will undertake a review of the policies established between 2015 and 2025, alignment with current NDP 12, and translate key strategies for expediting implementation in the National Planning Commission and the ministries of Finance, Trade, Youth & Gender, Environment and Tourism, among others. Moving forward, UNDP under its new CPD aims to support the capacity of several partners at both the national and subnational level for effective implementation of policies and strategies.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Develop a Policy Implementation Strategy with an accompanying Monitoring, Reporting and Communication Framework	31 December 2026	RR, DRR, relevant programme specialist	The CO will work with government departments and partners to formulate the strategy	
2.2 Integrate learnings in programme implementation through the mid-term review of the CPD	31 December 2028	RR, DRR, M&E specialist	The CO will integrate learnings into programmatic interventions	

## RECOMMENDATION 3.



**Make Youth Employment a Core Priority:** UNDP's next Country Programme should position youth empowerment and tackling youth unemployment as a central, cross-cutting priority, integrated across all portfolios, to catalyse inclusive growth, expand job opportunities, and strengthen long-term resilience in Botswana's upper-middle-income context.

**Management response:** Accepted.



The new CPD being formulated by the CO will align with the Strategic Plan 2026–2029, NDP 12 and UNSDCF, ensuring an integrated Youth Agenda across all the portfolios of the CPD with clear and measurable indicators that is also in line with the new National Youth Policy.

◀ Recommendation 3 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
3.1 See key action 1.1	September 2026	CO management		
3.2 Contribute to a UNSDCF Youth Thematic Evaluation	30 June 2028	CO management	The CO will work with UN Country Team for the conduct and communication of results in Youth thematic area	

**RECOMMENDATION 4.** 

**Improve How UNDP Works with Government and Partners: To improve efficiency, financial and programmatic delivery, UNDP should adopt a more transparent, collaborative, and impact-oriented approach that strengthens national ownership, improves coordination across systems, and unlocks new partnerships and financing opportunities aligned with Botswana's development priorities.**

**Management response: Accepted.** 

The CO acknowledges that operating in an upper-middle-income country context with a small private sector mainly anchored in the extractive industry and limited bilateral donor contribution poses significant challenges for in-country resource mobilization. The CO will develop a robust PCAP that will provide a coordinated approach to partnerships management and resource mobilization beyond traditional partners. The CO will also strengthen the existing Government Development Financing Model for more impact-oriented financing. The CO will expedite the implementation of the PCAP.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
4.1 In line with the implementation of the PCAP, generate project concepts in strategic focus areas in anticipation and response to call for funds applications	31 December 2026	RR, DRR, portfolio specialist and Operations	This is a continuous process with no definitive end date. These activities will be carried out for the entire programme cycle	

◀ Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
4.2 Prioritise joint programming and regional programming, especially leveraging the SADC MoU and other instruments	31 December 2028	RR, DRR, and portfolio specialist	This is a continuous process with no definitive end date. These activities will be carried out for the entire programme cycle	

**RECOMMENDATION 5.**



**Secure and Diversify Funding for Long-Term Impact: UNDP Botswana should adopt a comprehensive partnership and resource mobilization strategy that safeguards Government Cost Sharing as a major enabler and model of national ownership, while at the same time broadening funding sources to stay relevant and effective.**

**Management response: Accepted.**



The CO will prioritise cost savings and non-traditional partnerships, including the use of innovative financing instruments. Further emphasis will be placed on mainstreaming the Government Development Financing Model with the Government of Botswana; promote the uptake of the INFF, including its implementation; and move to secure a resource envelope that covers the CPD period.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Negotiate and secure Government of Botswana cost-sharing commitment that covers the CPD period	31 December 2026	RR, senior management, all staff	This is a continuous process with no definitive end date. These activities will be carried out for the entire CPD cycle	
5.2 Promote uptake of Government Development Financing model and implementation of INFF tools for a diversified, private sector targeted income stream for the CO	31 December 2026	RR, Senior Management Team, relevant Operations & programme staff	This is a continuous process with no definitive end date. These activities will be carried out for the entire CPD cycle	

\* 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/25228>

- Annex 1.** Terms of reference
- Annex 2.** Reconstructed theory of change for ICPE Botswana
- Annex 3.** Evaluation matrix
- Annex 4.** Country office at a glance
- Annex 5.** Project list
- Annex 6.** Status of country programme outcome & output indicators
- Annex 7.** Country programme performance rating
- Annex 8.** Documents consulted




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