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Independent Country Programme Evaluation

CHILE

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Acronyms

AGCID	Chilean Agency for International Development Cooperation
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America
CAPR	Rural Potable Water Committee
CASEN	National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITSEJ	Interministerial Committee for Socio-Ecological Just Transition
CMS	Community Management System
CO	Country Office
CPD	Country Programme Document
DIPRES	Budget Directorate
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ENTSEJ	National Strategy for Socio-Ecological Just Transition
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HDR	Human Development Report
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IECB	Economic Instruments for Conservation of Biodiversity
INE	National Institute of Statistics
INJUV	National Youth Institute
IRRF	Integrated Results and Resources Framework
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MDSF	Ministry of Social Development and Family
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINVU	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
MMA	Ministry of Environment
MOP	Ministry of Public Works

NCC	Net Contributing Country
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRAS	Environmental and Social Recovery Programmes
RBLAC	Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SBAP	Biodiversity and Protected Areas Service
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SENAPRED	National Disaster Prevention and Response Service
SERVEL	Electoral Service
SUBDERE	Undersecretariat of Regional Development
TSEJ	Just Socio-Ecological Transition
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

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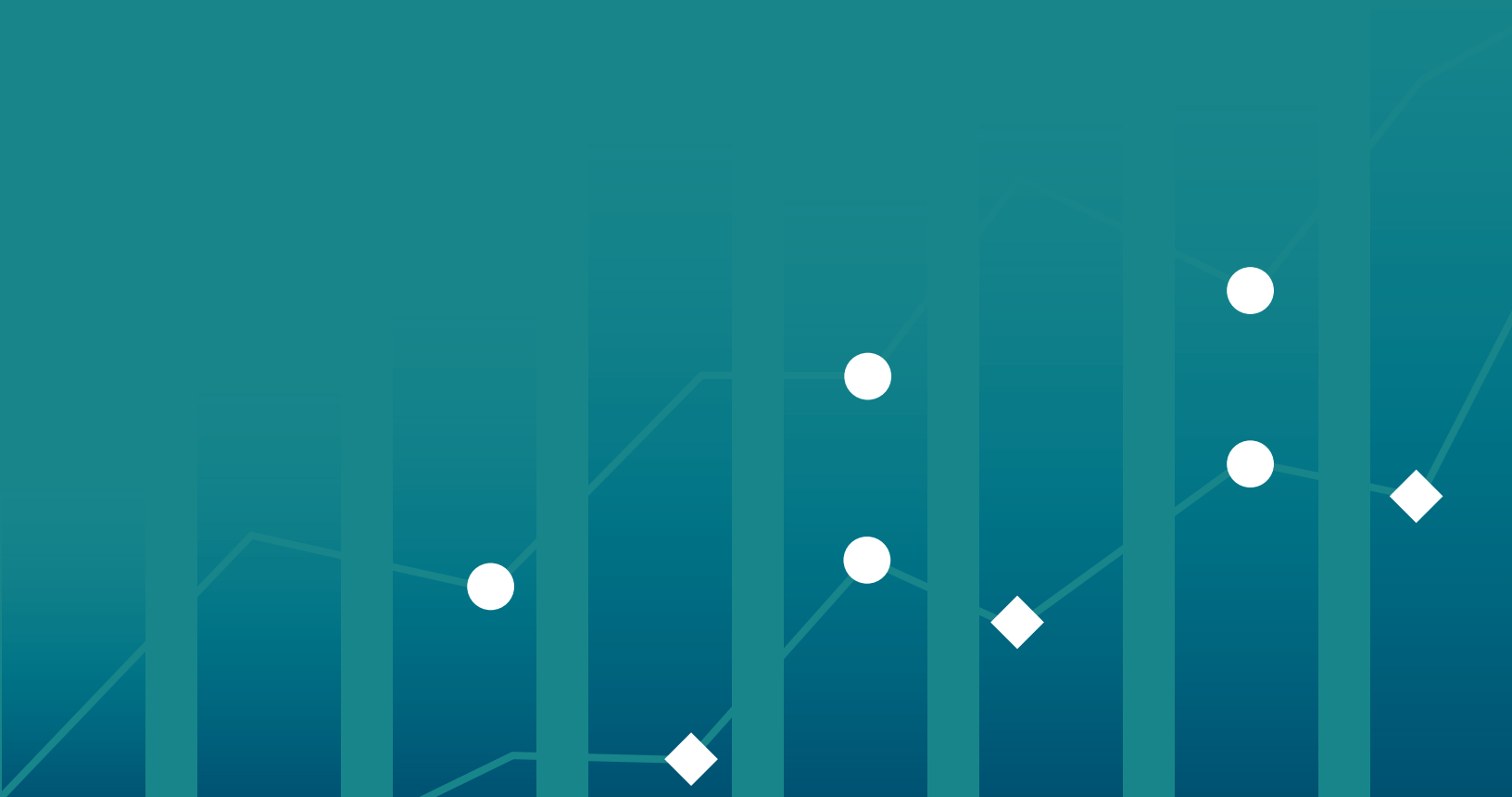
CHAPTER 1



CHAPTER 1.

Introduction, methodology and context

Objective and scope

Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) assess the contribution of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to development results at the country level. They offer evidence-based insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability of UNDP's work, examining how well its interventions align with and strengthen nationally led efforts to achieve sustainable development.

ICPEs are conducted by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), in accordance with the UNDP Evaluation Policy.[1] Their dual objective is to strengthen accountability–to both national stakeholders and to the Executive Board–and to promote learning that informs the design of the next Country Programme Document (CPD).

This was the third ICPE conducted by the IEO in Chile. It covered UNDP's work under the 2023-2026 CPD cycle as well as part of the previous cycle, with a focus on projects and initiatives underway in 2021 and 2022. As outlined in the evaluation terms of reference (see ToRs in Annex 1), the scope included the entire UNDP programme during this period, along with relevant interventions initiated in the previous programme cycle that continued into the current one (see project list in Annex 2).

Approach and questions

The ICPE was conducted in line with the established IEO process and adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.[2]

The evaluation addressed four overarching questions:

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

The evaluation assessed programme performance using internationally recognized evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (OECD-DAC, 2020).[3]

Methodology

Document review (Annex 3) and review of relevant contextual, programme and performance data.

84 stakeholder interviews.

Four site visits: Antofagasta, Copiapó, Puerto Montt, Valparaíso.

Office-wide focus group.

Triangulation of primary and secondary data; assessment against the evaluation matrix (Annex 4) and performance ratings (Annex 5).

Artificial intelligence tools used to support drafting, editing and translation.

Internal and external quality assurance; review by the Country Office, RBLAC and Government of Chile

Stakeholder debriefing and discussion of ways forward

Challenges and limitations

The evaluation faced two primary methodological constraints. Limited availability of project evaluations—due to government co-financed projects rarely undergoing formal evaluation and numerous small-scale projects falling below mandatory evaluation thresholds—was mitigated through triangulation of project reports and stakeholder interviews, although comprehensive project reporting was also scarce. Given Chile's December 2025 elections and the need to ensure government stakeholder availability, data collection was front-loaded several months prior to the elections, which required a compressed inception period and extended post-fieldwork analysis. This approach successfully secured participation from outgoing administration officials while enabling rigorous analysis, although it limited stakeholder validation during analysis.

Country context

Chile's high-income status and OECD membership masked profound inequalities and social exclusion that erupted in the October 2019 social crisis, revealing underlying tensions in the country's development model. With per capita income of US$16,709 in 2023[4] and OECD membership since 2010, Chile maintained high-income classification reinforcing its 'graduated' status under traditional cooperation schemes. However, the 2019 social uprising exposed deep fissures as widespread segments of society felt excluded from macroeconomic success, with public debate dominated by concerns about inadequate social protection systems, privatization of essential public services including education and healthcare, and high-income concentration.

The crisis catalysed demands for a new social contract through constitutional reform, yet two consecutive reform processes failed to achieve consensus, leaving fundamental tensions unresolved. Citizens elected a Constitutional Convention in 2021 featuring gender parity, reserved seats for Indigenous peoples, and spaces for persons with disabilities—itself a response to social unrest that also propelled the government to power. However, voters rejected the resulting proposal in September 2022, perceiving it as too radical in its scope of changes. A second attempt through an

Expert Commission and elected Constitutional Council produced a more conservative text, also rejected in December 2023 as too limited in addressing social demands. Constitutional change remained suspended without future plans, leaving Chile with unresolved tensions in its social contract.

Chile experienced important electoral years in 2024 and 2025, with regional and municipal elections in October 2024 electing 16 regional governors and council members, followed by presidential elections in December 2025. The presidential election resulted in fundamental policy changes across security, immigration and development priorities that could reshape UNDP's operating environment and strategic positioning in Chile.

Inequalities and Social Cohesion

Chile experienced one of Latin America's lowest poverty rates as well as one of OECD's highest inequality levels, revealing a development model that generated growth without equitable distribution. As the first Latin American country to join the OECD, Chile maintained one of the region's lowest poverty rates. However, its Gini index of 0.43 significantly exceeded the OECD average of 0.32,[5] with the top 20 percent of households earning 8.2 times more than the bottom 20 percent and concentrating more than half of the country's total income.[6] While the inequality index declined steadily from 2013 to 2022, structural disparities in income distribution persisted.

Territorial inequalities created pronounced development gaps between Chile's central macro-zone and extreme regions, with poverty rates revealing significant geographic disparities. Poverty increased from 8.6 percent in 2017 to 10.8 percent in 2020 due to pandemic impacts, but regional variations were stark: La Araucanía (17.4 percent), Ñuble (14.7 percent), Tarapacá (14 percent), and Biobío (13.25 percent) showed significantly higher poverty rates than the national average.[7] Rural-urban gaps persisted, with rural poverty historically exceeding urban rates despite recent urban increases. These territorial vulnerabilities correlated with precarious socioeconomic and environmental conditions, particularly affecting extreme regions such as Aysén, Tarapacá, and La Araucanía.[8]

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated inequalities across multiple dimensions, particularly affecting education and traditionally marginalized groups. School closures during 2020-2021 forced reliance on remote learning, yet 40.5 percent of households with school-age children lacked adequate technological tools for educational purposes. That percentage rose to 56 percent in lowest-income households and 47.2 percent for female-headed households.[9] The economic crisis and pandemic amplified pre-existing gaps between genders, urban-rural areas, Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, with children and adolescents the most affected group.[10]

The pandemic also underscored challenges faced by Chile's growing elderly population—including extensive waiting lists for public health system treatment[11] and differentiated access to care services[12] —with demographic transition demanding specific policies for elderly living alone and for accessible public services, challenges intensified by pandemic-related service disruptions.[13]

Labour market exclusion disproportionately affected women, Indigenous peoples, and youth, despite Chile having among the lowest informality rates in Latin America. Labour informality affected 26 percent of the workforce—one of the lowest levels in the region—yet disproportionately impacted vulnerable groups.[14] Unemployment stood at 8.7 percent, with youth and rural populations particularly affected.[15]

Chile's migrant population grew to more than 1.6 million people, mainly from Venezuela, Peru, Haiti and Colombia, achieving significant labour market integration although with marked occupational segregation by gender and skill level. Policy reforms facilitated access to regular status and labour markets, with foreign-born employment rates exceeding native-born rates post-pandemic.[16] However, male migrants were underrepresented in skilled occupations (6 percent versus 15 percent for native-born men) and overrepresented in personal and care services (11 percent versus 3 percent). Female migrants were concentrated in low-skilled domestic work, care services, and maintenance (47 percent versus 31 percent for native-born women).[17] This occupational segmentation reflected barriers to credential recognition and persistent discrimination despite formal employment integration.

Gender inequality remained a persistent challenge despite normative advances, with women's economic participation and unpaid care burdens significantly below OECD standards. Female labour participation

reached 52.7 percent,[18] well below the OECD average of 67 percent. Women faced a 24.4 percent salary gap[19] and dedicated two hours and five minutes more daily than men to unpaid care work.[20]

Gender-based violence figures remained persistently high despite Chile having among the lowest feminicide rates in the region.[21] Important normative advances included the comprehensive law against violence toward women and the National Care System (2024)—a central priority of the UN System Cooperation Framework 2023-2026. However, there were implementation challenges amid shifting political priorities, as the 2022-2026 administration's progressive agenda on equality issues encountered growing public debate about the pace and scope of social reforms.

Governance

Chile operated a consolidated presidential democracy with strong executive, legislative and judicial institutions supported by results-based management at the central level, although significant capacity gaps persisted at subnational levels. This asymmetry between central and regional/municipal governance created challenges for territorial development and service delivery, particularly affecting populations at risk of being left behind in underserved communities.

Chile's democratic system faced marked tensions characterized by political disaffection, particularly among young people, and ideological polarization following the failed constitutional reforms. Transparency International ranked Chile 32nd out of 180 countries in the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index, and 4th in the region, yet concerns persisted around political financing and accountability. The Government responded by strengthening anti-corruption measures and promoting participatory governance through its national integrity strategy.

Women's political representation advanced toward, but remained short of, gender parity, with women holding 35.5 percent of parliamentary seats in 2024 against Chile's commitments under international frameworks, including CEDAW and SDG 5.[22] This gap reflected broader challenges in achieving gender parity across governance institutions despite normative advances.

The ongoing decentralization process transferred competencies to subnational governments through regional governor elections beginning in 2021, but significant disparities in fiscal resources and administrative capacities constrained effective implementation. Despite efforts to redistribute power to regions and municipalities, pronounced gaps persisted in budget allocation and technical capacity between central government and subnational levels, particularly affecting lagged territories. Territorial inequalities in governance capacity limited regions' ability to respond to local needs, especially in territories with Indigenous peoples' presence where decision-making required cultural pertinence and meaningful consultation processes.

Sustainable Production and Environmental Transition

Chile faced complex challenges in operationalizing its commitments to decarbonize the economy and transform production models toward sustainability. The Government established key frameworks, including the Just Socio-Ecological Transition Strategy (launched 2025) and the Climate Change Framework Law, representing significant policy advances. However, implementation challenges persisted in multi-level governance coordination, meaningful community participation, inclusive productive reconversion that addressed affected workers and territories, and sustainable financing mechanisms.[23]

The country generated more than 45 percent of its electricity from renewable sources such as solar, wind and hydropower, supporting its commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.[24] Chile positioned itself as a regional leader in green hydrogen development, seeking to leverage its renewable energy capacity for export-oriented production.

The economy remained heavily dependent on extractive industries, particularly copper, which accounted for more than half of total goods exports.[25] The Government's National Lithium Strategy sought to promote diversification and ensure greater national benefit from resource extraction. Extractive industries generated environmental pressures in host territories, including water scarcity, local environmental degradation, and community health concerns, requiring supportive policies to address these impacts as part of the just socio-ecological transition.

Chile's material footprint has increased since the early 2000s, exceeding OECD averages and reflecting consumption patterns incompatible with circular economy objectives.[26] This was due to the reliance of the Chilean economy on metals extraction and exports. Advancing toward sustainable consumption and production required systemic changes in industrial processes, waste management systems, and consumption behaviours alongside the energy transition.

Protecting Ecosystems

Chile faced acute climate vulnerability, ranking 111th on the Global Climate Risk Index and meeting seven of nine UN Framework Convention on Climate Change vulnerability criteria. The country experienced a 14-year mega-drought affecting regions from Coquimbo to La Araucanía,[27] mega-fires such as the 2024 Valparaíso disaster, and five 'sacrifice zones' with severe environmental deterioration including Puchuncaví, Quintero, Coronel, Huasco, and Tocopilla—where inhabitants experienced serious health problems and diminished quality of life from decades of industrial pollution.[28]

GHG emissions continued growing and PM2.5 emissions were among OECD's highest. Nearly 99 percent of the population was exposed to these contaminants at levels exceeding WHO recommendations. The northern zone in particular showed high SO2 and NOx concentrations from industrial areas.[29]

Water management represented a critical challenge with water rights over-allocation (existing before 2022 water code reform), and insufficient or incomplete water quality norms. Over-demand for groundwater exceeded sustainable supply in most regions, requiring greater measures in efficient water use, wastewater reuse, and new sources such as desalinization. Chile's water management was among OECD's most fragmented, requiring more integrated watershed-level management with strengthened coordination and central water management authority establishment.

Conservation advances and institutional reforms progressed despite insufficient resourcing. Chile protected 22 percent of its territory and 44 percent of marine Economic and Ecological Zones, with key advances including the Climate Change Framework Law (2022), Biodiversity and Protected Areas Service establishment (SBAP, 2023), Escazú Agreement ratification (2022), and Extended Producer Responsibility Law implementation

(REP, 2021 onwards). However, State expenditure on biodiversity protection reached only 0.1 percent of GDP through 2024—significantly below the 0.6 percent OECD average—with new environmental institutions receiving insufficient resources to ensure compliance and requiring technical capacity improvements for environmental evaluation and integrated monitoring.[30]

UNDP in Chile

Two Country Programme Documents (CPDs), 2019-2022 and 2023-2026, were implemented during the period covered by this evaluation (2021-2025).

The 2019-2022 CPD was the first implemented by UNDP following the separation of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) function from the UNDP Resident Representative (RR) function in 2019. It marked the first CPD implemented after Chile's removal in January 2018 from the list of countries eligible to receive Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

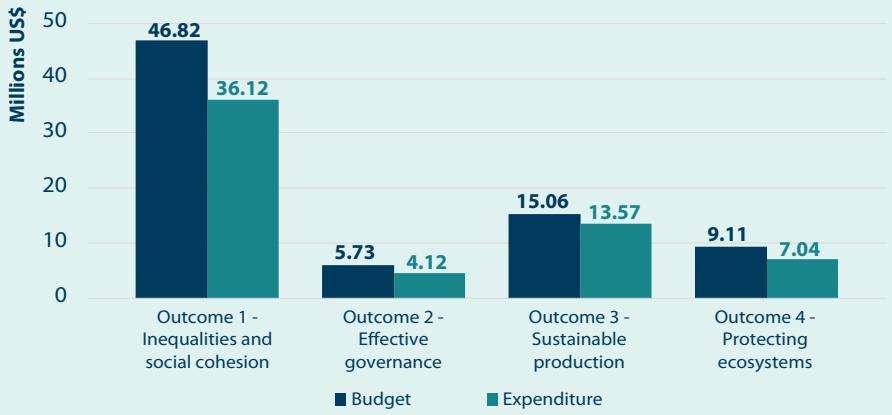
The 2023-2026 CPD was the first fully designed and implemented after UNDP's dissociation from the UN coordination role and Chile's transition to a net contributing country (NCC) in 2018.

UNDP has historically supported Chile in areas such as democratic governance, institutional strengthening, poverty reduction, disaster risk management, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Both the 2019-2022 and the 2023-2026 CPDs pursued similar priorities and built on long-standing partnerships with national actors. The theory of Change of the 2023-2026 CPD is presented in Annex 6.

Chile's NCC status fundamentally shaped UNDP's operational and financial model during the evaluated period. NCC designation requires the host country to finance the physical presence of the UNDP Country Office, meaning UNDP Chile no longer received non-core programmatic funds and operated as a fully self-sustaining office. The Country Office secured host government funding covering 80 percent of office infrastructure costs and approximately one-third of operational and core staffing costs. The CPD was operationalized into a four-year Project Document (PRODOC), ensuring stable funding essential for an NCC office without core resources.

The Country Office structured its programmatic work through three teams covering the CPD's four outcome areas. The poverty reduction team addressed inequalities and social cohesion (Outcome 1), the governance team addressed effective governance (Outcome 2), and the environment team addressed both sustainable production (Outcome 3) and ecosystems protection (Outcome 4). A research unit focused primarily on Human Development Reports and the production of complementary knowledge products, while gender, communications, operations, and monitoring and evaluation staff provided cross-cutting support.

Figure 1: Country programme budget and expenditure, 2021– 2025[31]



Poverty Reduction pillar	**Outcome 1. Inequalities and social cohesion:** People enjoy economic, social, cultural and environmental rights in a context of reduced poverty and inequality and enhanced social cohesion.
Governance pillar	**Outcome 2. Effective governance:** Institutions ensure gender parity and strengthen local development with increased levels of transparency, integrity, participation and representation.
Environment pillar	**Outcome 3. Sustainable production:** A just and socio-ecological transition to an inclusive and sustainable production and consumption model.
Environment pillar	**Outcome 4. Protecting ecosystems:** Sustainable use of natural resources, protection of ecosystems, biodiversity, and water resources.

UNDP's offer combined two complementary functions: development support services and technical advisory services. Development support services (also referred to as operation support in this report) addressed government's operational needs through procurement, recruitment and human resources management, and administration of government funds. Technical advisory services included expert advisory support through a network of national and international specialists, project implementation management, and knowledge generation through evidence-based products, inputs, and dialogue spaces to inform decision-making and policy formulation.

The five-year period evaluated included an estimated budget of $76.7 million, with actual expenditure amounting to $60.9 million, and an overall expenditure increase of 109 percent since 2021. Government cost-sharing accounted for 65 percent of total programme expenditure, with bilateral donors contributing 8.5 percent and vertical funds/UNDP core comprising the remainder.

Figure 2: Main country programme donors by expenditure, 2021–2025[32]

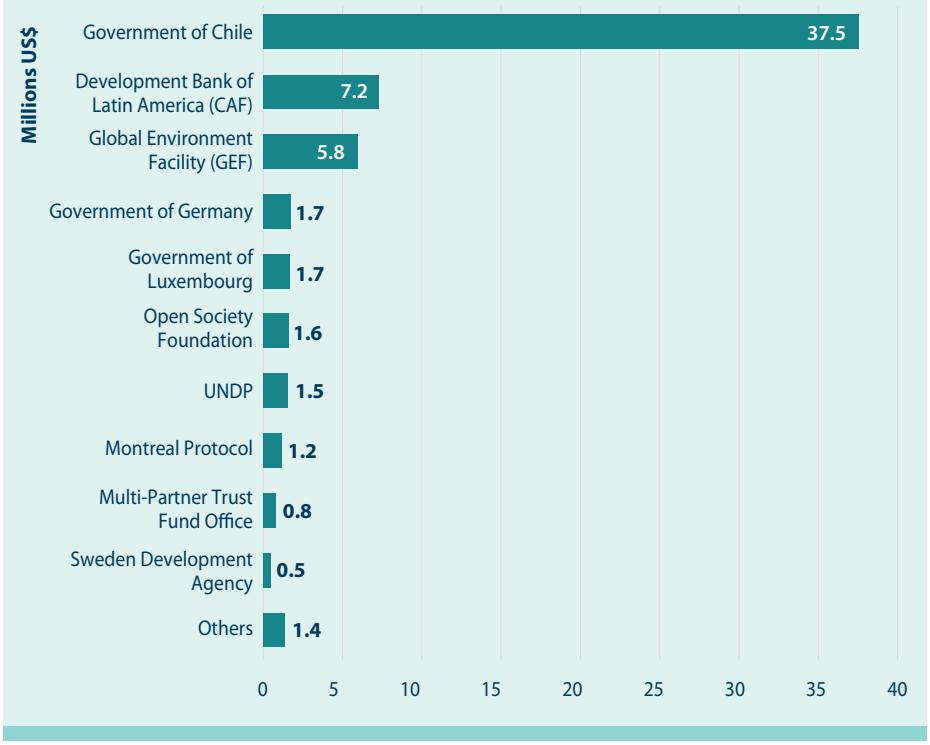
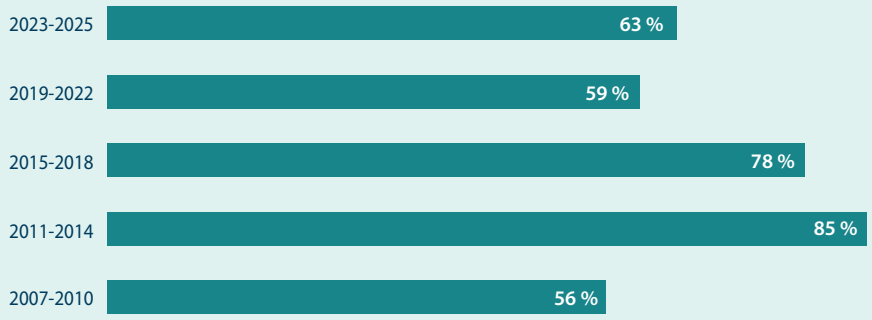
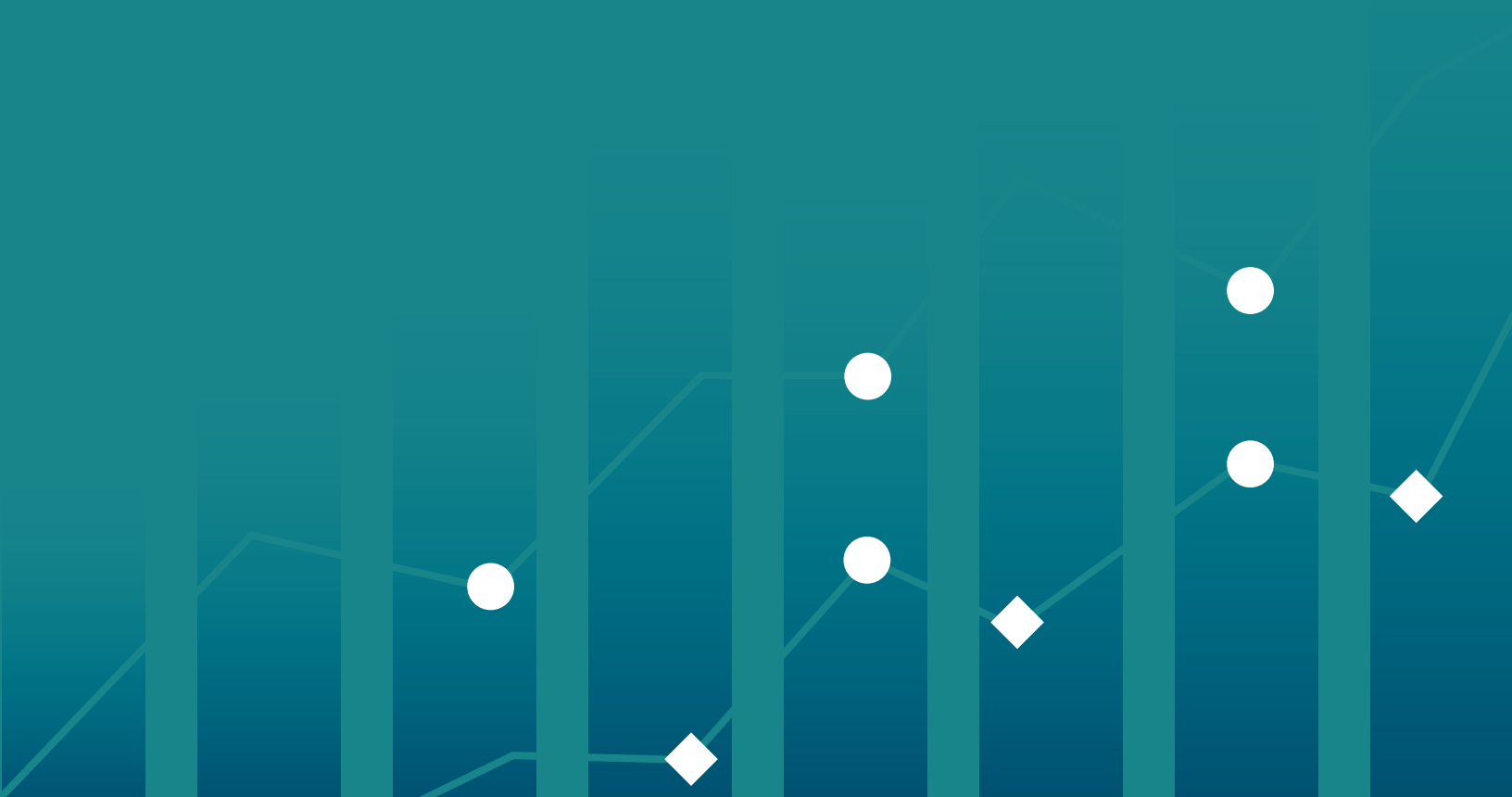


Figure 3: Proportion of government cost-sharing across CPDs, 2007-2025



Government cost-sharing has consistently been the cornerstone of UNDP Chile's financial model since at least 2007. While government financing trends show a moderate decline over time—dropping from an annual average of 85 percent during 2011-2018, to 59 percent between 2019-2022—it remained the predominant source of funding during the current cycle through 2025.[33]

CHAPTER 2



CHAPTER 2.

Findings

Strategic Findings

Finding 1: **Business Model and Financial Sustainability**

UNDP Chile successfully maintained its business model based on government cost-sharing arrangements, achieving financial sustainability and 109 percent expenditure growth between 2021 and 2024 despite Chile's graduation to Net Contributor Country status. This strategic adaptation enabled the Country Office to remain relevant through major sociopolitical disruptions, the COVID-19 pandemic, and shifts in the development cooperation landscape.

Partnership Model and Financial Architecture

Government cost-sharing has characterized UNDP Chile's financial model since at least 2007, with 65 percent of programme expenditure during the evaluated period derived primarily from four longstanding institutional partnerships spanning between 14 and 24 years. Partnerships with the National Youth Institute (INJUV, since 2001), Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, since 2003), Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MINVU, since 2010), and Chilean Agency for International Development Cooperation

(AGCID) for the Chile Fund (since 2011) constituted the vast majority of government cost-sharing arrangements, representing sustained institutional relationships, trust and mutual value recognition spanning multiple political cycles. The depth and longevity of these partnerships distinguished UNDP Chile's financial model from shorter-term project-based funding, enabling alignment with national priorities while ensuring stronger national ownership of interventions. Government partners contributed both financial resources and institutional commitment to sustaining results, providing UNDP with financial stability across multiple administrations and legitimacy to its work.

The programme's financial architecture reflected distinct strategic choices across four outcome areas with different funding models that enabled complementary functions. The Poverty Pillar served as financial anchor with 96 percent government funding from the four core partnerships (INJUV, MINEDUC, MINVU, AGCID), cross-subsidizing other areas through operational service delivery that generated high cost recovery. The Environment Pillar maintained critical donor diversification with 80 percent external funding from GEF, Montreal Protocol, Germany, Luxembourg, and CAF, enabling Chile's access to vertical environmental funds and bilateral channels unavailable through government cost-sharing. The Governance Pillar relied substantially on UNDP core resources (45 percent of the $1.9 million pillar) for sensitive constitutional and electoral work requiring independence from government financing, as government cost-sharing was not available for politically contested priorities. The research unit was strategically financed through overall programme budget allocation as a deliberate design choice, enabling evidence generation across thematic areas without the potential distortions that external resource mobilization pressures might create.

Partnership concentration within the Poverty Pillar created programmatic constraints and vulnerability to shifts in institutional priorities among the four core partners. The allocation of 75-90 percent of Poverty Pillar resources ($29.5M total) to development support services for INJUV, MINEDUC, MINVU, and AGCID reflected sustained government demand for integrated policy implementation though operational support—including human resources management, procurement, financial administration, and project management that enabled public policy execution and institutional strengthening. Group discussions with programme staff indicated that delivery of such services consumed significant time and capacity, limiting staff availability for engagement with other government entities, emerging priorities outside these established relationships,

or longer-term strategic policy development work requiring sustained attention beyond operational delivery demands. The concentration of government cost-sharing within the Poverty Pillar and limited funding diversification beyond the Environment Pillar meant changes in the four core partners' needs or institutional restructuring could affect significant portions of the portfolio.

Resource Mobilization and Financial Resilience

Government cost-sharing demonstrated significant volatility when analysing data beyond the evaluated period, declining from an average of $15 million annually during 2015-2018 to approximately $7 million annually during 2021-2024. This reduction reflected Chile's deliberate fiscal prioritization following macroeconomic shocks. Pandemic stimulus equivalent to 18 percent of GDP necessitated structural consolidation that returned real government spending to pre-pandemic levels by 2022, forcing ministries to operate within severely restricted budget envelopes. Two constitutional reform processes (2022 and 2023) absorbed substantial political and administrative attention while creating prolonged institutional uncertainty. Social unrest beginning in October 2019 and persistent inflation required emergency resource allocation to vulnerable populations. Congressional fragmentation prevented tax reforms needed to generate permanent revenue for new spending commitments.[34] This volatility exemplified the financial risks inherent in UNDP's reliance on government cost-sharing and government-based funding,[35] particularly during political transitions when government payment commitments could be delayed or suspended—as occurred during certain administrations when contractual dues were not fulfilled, creating uncertainty for core CO functions.

Despite these compounding pressures on government programming capacity and fiscal space, the four core partnerships remained stable across multiple administrations and political orientations. This demonstrated resilient institutional relationships that persisted through both extraordinary political volatility and budget reallocation. The 109 percent expenditure programme-wide growth between 2021 and 2024 demonstrated that national partners perceived continued value in working with and through UNDP. UNDP's reputation as a trusted partner of successive governments enabled continuous adaptation despite political transitions, with the alignment of CPD cycles with four-year presidential mandates providing implementation predictability.

Territorial expansion and operational adaptations

UNDP achieved initial territorial expansion through partnerships with two regional governments, representing important opportunities for institutional strengthening and decentralized programme implementation despite legal and institutional constraints. Chile's national legal framework required that each project document be treated as an international treaty, hampering direct engagement with regional governments legally unqualified to sign such agreements. Even so, UNDP successfully established agreements with Los Ríos and Valparaíso regions after nearly 18 months of negotiations (see finding 5), while other regions, including Metropolitana, O'Higgins, and Biobío, expressed interest in partnering with UNDP. Broader subnational engagement remained limited despite mutual interest and UNDP's efforts to develop these partnerships**.** Limited institutional capacities at the subnational level further constrained engagement with regional governments, although this simultaneously represented an opportunity for UNDP to support improved service delivery by regional governments. The absence of seed funding to help mobilize resources from regional partners compounded these barriers, limiting UNDP's ability to target underserved populations and further accompany decentralization processes.

Administrative systems transitions posed implementation challenges during the evaluation period, although UNDP maintained its reputation for technical excellence among key stakeholders. The delinking of the Resident Representative role from UN Resident Coordinator function required institutional restructuring after 2019, while Quantum ERP system rollout required operational adjustments in 2023. Despite these constraints, interviews with key stakeholders confirmed UNDP maintained its reputation for technical excellence, innovative methodologies, and efficient processes.

Finding 2: Strategic Positioning and Comparative Advantage

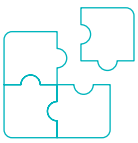
UNDP occupied a unique strategic position in Chile as the Government's primary interlocutor within the UN System on development cooperation, leveraging its historic Resident Coordinator legacy, multidisciplinary capacity, and ability to generate credible evidence. This positioning enabled UNDP to complement specialized UN agencies by providing integrated, multidisciplinary support across diverse government entities.

Institutional Positioning and Government Relationships

UNDP's strategic positioning exhibited its ability to build on its previous Resident Coordinator role and partnerships established between 2001-2011, predating both the current and previous CPD cycles. The Government perceived UNDP as its primary UN interlocutor on development cooperation, reflecting not only this historic legacy but also UNDP's substantial operational delivery capacity (such as staff recruitment and contract administration) and mandate to strengthen institutional systems across sectors. The four core partnerships (detailed in Finding 1) demonstrated programmatic relevance and enduring mutual value across multiple administrations. This positioning enabled UNDP to work with government entities in education, childhood, youth and housing—sectors where specialized UN agencies maintained their own direct relationships with line ministries—by providing integrated operational support and institutional strengthening that cut across traditional sectoral boundaries. The foundation of trust and credibility and these longstanding partnerships positioned UNDP to engage on increasingly strategic issues, as demonstrated by Ministry of Finance's selection of UNDP to support the National Climate Financial Strategy (Finding 8)—a high-level partnership reflecting confidence in UNDP's technical capacity on complex financial governance challenges.

Comparative Advantage and Value Addition

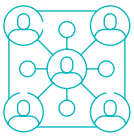
UNDP's distinctive value derived from four mutually reinforcing capabilities that differentiated it from other development actors: multidisciplinary expertise, strategic policy advisory support, convening power, and evidence generation. These capabilities positioned UNDP uniquely within Chile's development cooperation landscape, enabling engagement across diverse sectors and levels of government while maintaining relevance in a graduated country context where traditional development partnerships had evolved.



UNDP's broad development portfolio spanning social inclusion, climate change, governance, and sustainable development enabled integrated approaches to complex, interconnected challenges. This contrasted with specialized UN agencies focused on deepening technical capacity in specific fields (UNESCO on education, UNICEF on childhood, FAO on agri-food systems), positioning UNDP to provide institutional strengthening that cut across traditional sectoral

boundaries. This multidisciplinary capacity enabled UNDP to address interconnected development challenges requiring coordinated responses across sectors, providing versatility particularly valued by government partners where few international alternatives existed with comparable integrated programming capacity.

UNDP supported development and launch of 17 national and regional policies during the CPD period across diverse strategic areas, demonstrating systematic engagement in high-level policy formulation. Policy support spanned climate finance (National Climate Financing Strategy), governance (decentralization strategy, public integrity strategy, citizen participation), social protection (childhood and adolescent policy, care system, multidimensional poverty measurement), environment (socio-ecological transition framework, revised NDC, biodiversity strategy, long-term climate strategy), foreign policy (feminist foreign policy), and territorial development (urban development strategy, regional strategies for Los Ríos and Valparaíso). This policy advisory capacity, combined with operational versatility, differentiated UNDP from specialized agencies focused on technical depth in specific sectors, positioning UNDP as a strategic partner in policy formulation aligned with government priorities.



UNDP's convening ability bridged public institutions, civil society, academia, and private sector, facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue on complex development challenges. This convening power directly supported UNDP's strategic policy advisory role by enabling participatory processes in policy design and formulation. UNDP leveraged its position as a neutral space to implement and incentivize participatory approaches across multiple policy initiatives, ensuring diverse stakeholder voices informed national strategies—a methodology particularly valuable in Chile's polarized political environment where inclusive processes strengthened policy legitimacy. UNDP's engagement in both constitutional processes (2020-2023) demonstrated this trusted position for sensitive democratic work: five projects totalling $1.28 million supported democratic dialogue, inclusive participation of marginalized groups, and evidence generation despite ultimate rejection of both constitutional proposals. This engagement in politically contested processes reflected government trust in UNDP's neutrality and technical capacity, although notably required UNDP core funding as government cost-sharing was not available for these sensitive political processes.

Evidence generation reinforced UNDP's strategic relevance and thought leadership in Chile's data-driven policy environment. The country's strong appetite for reliable, evidence-based policy support was consistently met through credible studies, evaluations, and analytical recommendations. The 2024 Human Development Report *'¿Por qué nos cuesta cambiar?'* (Why Is It So Hard for Us to Change?)—the first since the country's graduation—was frequently cited by counterparts as one of the Country Office's most visible contributions, reaffirming UNDP's role as thought leader in areas requiring analytical rigour and policy relevance. The report achieved exceptional reach through Presidential engagement, more than 700 media mentions, and cross-spectrum stakeholder presentations, demonstrating UNDP's capacity to amplify evidence-based analysis in a polarized political environment (see Box 1). This evidence generation capability underpinned UNDP's positioning beyond operational service delivery, informing policy debates and government decision-making processes.

BOX 1:

Human Development Report 2024 *'¿Por qué nos cuesta cambiar?'* (Why Is It So Hard For Us to Change?) - Public Engagement and Government Receptivity

UNDP Chile's 2024 Human Development Report—the first in nearly a decade—achieved notable public visibility and high-level government engagement through a strategic dissemination campaign spanning political, academic, private sector, and civil society spheres.

High-Level Government Engagement

The report was officially launched on August 14, 2024, with Chile's President participating in a public panel discussion. The President subsequently referenced the report's conclusions publicly, advocating for "structural changes with gradualism" informed by the HDR's analysis. The Minister of the Interior convened a major presentation attended by approximately 200 high-level officials including all government ministers, undersecretaries, and chiefs of staff. Dedicated presentations were conducted for the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality, Ministry of Social Development and Family, Ministry of Education, and Central Bank Council, demonstrating government receptivity to UNDP's analytical contributions across multiple sectors.

BOX 1 (cont.):

Media Coverage and Public Dissemination

The report generated more than 700 mentions across television, radio, print and digital media, inspiring more than 120 independent opinion pieces and editorials in major national outlets, including *El Mercurio, La Tercera, CiperChile, and El Mostrador*. Within months of its release, the report was downloaded more than 32,500 times from the UNDP website and received more than 115,000 social media views. Some think tanks characterized it as "the father of all reports," reinforcing UNDP's strategic positioning as knowledge producer for Chile's development.

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

The dissemination strategy demonstrated political transversality, reaching diverse ideological perspectives through presentations to both opposition think tanks (Libertad y Desarrollo, IES, Horizontal, Fundación Jaime Guzmán) and pro-government groups (Nodo XXI, Rumbo Colectivo, Horizonte Ciudadano). Academic engagement included presentations to the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities (CRUCH), Association of Regional Universities, and seminars at Universidad de Chile, Pontificia Universidad Católica, Universidad de Concepción, and Universidad Austral. Private sector outreach encompassed the Chamber of Commerce, corporate presentations, and regional business summits, while civil society engagement included the Foundation for Overcoming Poverty, Fondo Esperanza, and the National Assembly of Public Health Professionals. The UNDP team conducted more than 50 high-level presentations within three months, reaching diverse audiences across the country.

Stakeholder Reception

Interviews with government counterparts and civil society representatives frequently cited the report as one of UNDP's most visible contributions during the CPD period. Stakeholders valued its analytical rigor and policy relevance for understanding Chile's paradox: broad social consensus on needed reforms with persistent difficulty implementing change. The report's framing question—'why is change so difficult for us?'—resonated across political divides in a country experiencing constitutional reform failures, social unrest, and polarized debate about development pathways.

Positioning Dynamics Across Development Sectors

The environmental sector presented different positioning dynamics where multiple development actors created opportunities for both specialization and collaboration. The presence of specialized UN agencies with strong mandates in climate, biodiversity and natural resource management, alongside development banks and international NGOs implementing multilateral donor funds, meant government partners had access to multiple specialized alternatives offering deep technical expertise in specific environmental domains. UNDP's share of environmental programming declined during the evaluation period as national partners increasingly engaged these specialized entities for technical depth in particular environmental areas. This development cooperation landscape created opportunities for UNDP to focus its environmental engagement where its distinctive capabilities—integrated multidisciplinary approaches, multi-stakeholder convening, and evidence generation linking environment to broader development challenges—offered unique value. The environmental sector's density of specialized actors contrasted with social and governance sectors where UNDP maintained stronger positioning through limited international presence and its unique combination of operational capacity, institutional strengthening expertise, and integrated approaches across interconnected development challenges.

Adaptive Capacity and Value Proposition

UNDP demonstrated adaptive capacity by pivoting to support Chile's constitutional process, establishing virtual service delivery mechanisms during COVID-19, and providing emergency response during the 2024 Valparaíso wildfires. During the 2019 social uprising and subsequent constitutional processes, UNDP repositioned its work to support democratic dialogue with a Leave No One Behind perspective. The pandemic necessitated immediate operational adaptation across multiple fronts. When mobility was restricted, rather than shifting directly to online modalities, the PPP-DRR project implemented surveys to assess feasibility of online participation by municipalities and local actors, identified stakeholders with limited internet access and unfamiliarity with video conference applications, then conducted short trainings to ensure wide participation.[36] UNDP supported deployment of the *Nodo Emergencia* platform for the National Service for Older Adults (SENAMA),

enabling georeferencing of critical cases and ensuring emotional support and access to social benefits through the '*Fono Mayor*' service. In response to increased domestic violence during confinements, UNDP assisted the National Women's Service (SERNAMEG) in deploying a WhatsApp-based tool enabling silent messaging for women in danger. These responses reflected the Country Office's ability to read context and respond to emerging priorities while maintaining government trust across political transitions.

UNDP's demonstrated excellence and government satisfaction in service delivery created a foundation for potential strategic evolution toward higher-value policy engagement and partnership diversification. UNDP's status as one of the few UN agencies operating as a national Country Office—while most resident agencies operated as regional or subregional offices (ECLAC, FAO, ILO, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, UNESCO) with substantially different operational models—enabled country-level engagement and operational capacity distinct from those entities. This foundation of proven capacity and unique operational presence established trust and credibility with government partners across multiple administrations and political orientations, positioning UNDP to evolve partnerships in multiple directions. These included deepening engagement toward more strategic technical assistance and policy innovation where UNDP's distinctive capabilities in evidence generation, multi-stakeholder convening, and systems thinking create unique value; diversifying the partnership base beyond the four core relationships to engage emerging government priorities and underserved populations; or balancing operational delivery with higher-value advisory roles that might better align with Chile's OECD member status and advanced institutional capacities.

Outcome 1:
People enjoy economic, social, cultural and environmental rights in a context of reduced poverty and inequality, and enhanced social cohesion

OUTCOME 1

The Chilean State adopts international frameworks, designs, strengthens, and implements national regulatory frameworks and public policies—including fiscal ones—to guarantee access and effective enjoyment of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights in the country; to reduce poverty; narrow gaps and inequalities, including regional inequalities, to strengthen resilience; and to increase well-being and social cohesion, with an integrated approach (an 'integrated approach' comprises the application of five principles: human rights, gender, intergenerational, intersectional, and territorial).

OUTPUT 1.1

Public institutions, at national and sub-national levels, strengthen their capacities in sustainable development planning, and the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies for increased inter-institutional integration and coordination.

OUTPUT 1.2

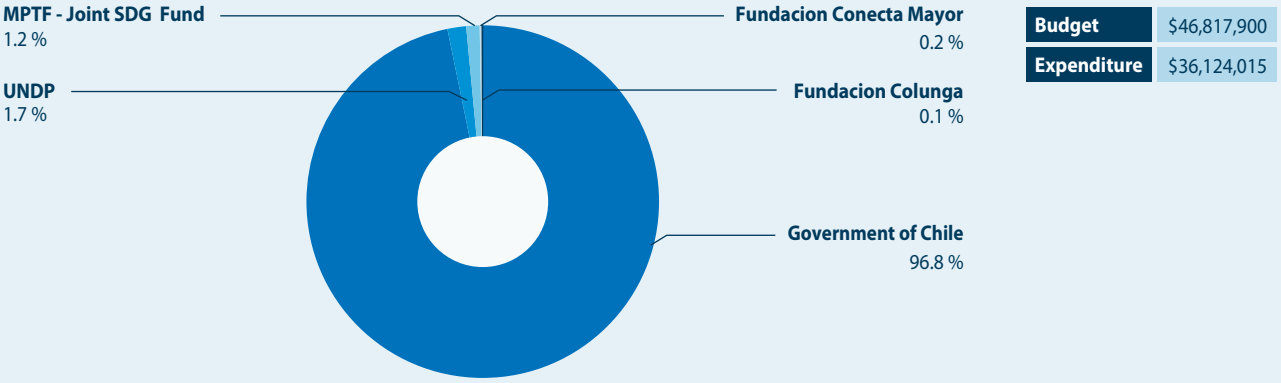
State institutions incorporate instruments, measures, digital tools and strategies to strengthen the social protection of people, including the care system, with a focus on women and other groups left behind.

OUTPUT 1.3

Institutions improve their capacities and knowledge to design and implement inclusive policies and solutions that promote cohesion and exercise the rights of vulnerable groups, including migrants and women.

Budget	Expenditure
$46,817,900	$36,124,015

Figure 4: Donor contributions Outcome 1



Finding 3: **Evidence-Based Policy Development**

UNDP strengthened public policies oriented towards social protection, poverty reduction, and inclusion through support for monitoring, evaluation and policy learning. Partnerships integrating operational support with evaluation and evidence generation—exemplified with the Ministry of Education—enabled direct policy influence, with evaluations and monitoring systems informing key decisions within ministerial partners.

Supporting Educational Policy Reform Through Monitoring and Evaluation

UNDP's evaluation of the Professional Teaching Development System directly influenced the National Teaching Plan presented in May 2024. At the Ministry of Education's (MINEDUC) request, UNDP conducted a comprehensive evaluation of Law 20.903, fulfilling the legal requirement for international organizations to conduct evaluations every six years to guarantee impartiality. Conducted in collaboration with UNESCO and discussed with the Center for Pedagogical Improvement, Experimentation and Research (CPEIP), the evaluation's recommendations were incorporated into the National Teaching Plan, including expanding coverage of the induction and mentoring system, eliminating contracted hours caps requirements, diversifying support strategies, and implementing dissemination actions.

School attendance rates increased by 1.9 percentage points through UNDP's support for MINEDUC's School Reactivation Plan, demonstrating how operational capacity enabled substantive contributions. The deployment of 42 professionals across 41 provinces contributed to attendance rising from 85.2 percent in 2023 to 87.1 percent in 2024. Beyond operational support, co-created monitoring instruments tracked attendance and school disengagement with a gender dimension. MINEDUC authorities recognized UNDP's growing strategic focus and expressed interest in deepening evaluation and evidence-based policy development.

Strengthening Social Protection Through Evidence Generation

UNDP's evidence generation during the pandemic was used to target the Emergency Family Income and employment subsidies, with special attention given to women. Together with Ministry of Social Development and Family (MDSF) and the National Institute of Statistics (INE), UNDP developed the COVID-19 Social Survey and the report 'Socioeconomic Impacts of the Pandemic on Chilean Households,' which informed these critical social protection measures.

UNDP supported the development of a methodology for targeting social programmes that addressed critical coordination challenges in Chile's atomized public offering. It assisted the Social Evaluation Subsecretariat (SES) in developing a methodology for targeting social and non-social programmes for annual ex-ante evaluation in budget allocation. According to government counterparts, this work had high projection potential given Chile's atomized public offering with low inter-ministerial coordination.

UNDP enhanced multidimensional poverty analysis capabilities through comprehensive technical inputs. UNDP conducted an updated diagnosis of the Securities and Opportunities Subsystem including interviews with central, regional and municipal teams, user families, and review of international experiences. MDSF received technical inputs including multidimensional poverty analysis with gender focus in the CASEN 2022 Survey, a communal-level human development index based on administrative data, and a critical review of the multidimensional poverty index.

UNDP enabled advancement toward integrated social programme evaluation mechanisms that facilitated a systemic view of public action. These initiatives increased potential efficiency and effectiveness of public programmes. A government counterpart highlighted that "work in systems evaluation has the potential to change state coordination toward an integrated perspective, a profound and necessary change." The integrated approach was highly valued by consulted stakeholders as transformative in its potential impact on state coordination mechanisms.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite recognition of UNDP's contribution to evidence-based policies, institutional learning and lesson-sharing components showed opportunities for growth. Consulted stakeholders noted that lesson-sharing components could be strengthened, particularly given UNDP's positioning as a central actor for facilitating institutional learning processes and disseminating national and international advances. Given UNDP's strategic positioning supporting countries in policy learning and design, strategic stakeholders expressed how it could have provided support for more extensive international exchange of experiences.

Finding 4: Blending Administrative Support with Policy Contributions

UNDP's longstanding operational partnerships with government institutions enabled programme implementation while contributing to policy development and institutional strengthening in most cases, although one partnership remained predominantly administrative without comparable capacity development outcomes after more than two decades of collaboration.

Facilitating South-South Cooperation Through Technical and Administrative Support

UNDP facilitated Chile's South-South cooperation strategy through administration of the Chile Fund Against Hunger and Poverty, also providing technical evaluation, methodological design, and governance functions beyond operational management. Since 2011, UNDP served as the legally mandated administrator, channelling approximately $10.4 million through 63 projects and 31 humanitarian donations during Phase II and III (2015-2022, 2023-2026). UNDP's role extended to methodological design of calls for proposals, technical evaluation of project submissions, and governance through two representatives on the Fund's steering committee aligned with Chile's foreign policy priorities.

The Phase II evaluation found the Fund strengthened civil society organizations and public bodies. Phase III (2023-2026) began with a $12 million budget financing education projects in Peru, Argentina and Paraguay, demonstrating UNDP's capacity to blend administrative efficiency with strategic technical inputs, although knowledge management systems and gender integration required strengthening (only 10 percent of projects included explicit gender objectives). During 2023 the Fund supported three projects prioritizing a focus on gender equality and human rights.

Operational Support as Platform for Strategic Policy Contributions

UNDP's 15-year partnership with MINVU evolved from project support to strategic contributions in urban policy development, territorial governance and gender mainstreaming. The collaboration progressed toward strategic interventions influencing both national and subnational management, contributing to development and implementation of the Housing Emergency Plan, Just Cities Plan, and National Urban Parks Policy. UNDP strengthened territorial governance through creation and reactivation of the National Territorial Development Council (CNDT) and Regional Commissions for Cities, Housing and Territory (CORECIVYT), achieving 51 percent women's participation in CORECIVYT.

Gender and care perspectives were integrated through development of methodological guides and a ministerial gender policy. The Training, Dialogue and Citizen Participation Centre (CFDPC) strengthened ministry relationships with civil society. Support for the online DOM platform modernized municipal processes and reduced inter-communal gaps.

Youth Empowerment Outputs Enabled Through Operational Support

UNDP's administrative partnership with INJUV enabled the institute to deliver significant programmatic outputs across mental health, local governance and digital education. The operational support—recruitment, HR management across 16 regional offices, procurement, and financial administration—facilitated INJUV's expansion of the '*Hablemos de Todo*' (Let's Talk About Everything) mental health programme to 87.2 percent of municipalities, benefiting people through psychosocial support services and safe dialogue spaces on issues including bullying and school harassment. The partnership supported INJUV's 'Youth Engagement' **(***Compromiso Joven***)** programme expansion to 89 municipalities in 2024, with 70 developing Local Youth Action Plans and 35 advancing to implementation. Administrative infrastructure enabled the Youth Observatory's research outputs, including the 2023 *Juventudes Cuidadoras* (Youth Engagement) study informing policy design for young caregivers, and digital training initiatives reaching 20,000 young people through the Campus Virtual platform.

Challenges and Opportunities

INJUV's partnership remained predominantly focused on recruitment, human resources management and administrative services without comparable institutional capacity development or technical contributions to youth policy after more than two decades of collaboration. INJUV's strategic counterparts reported no significant direct technical or substantive contributions from UNDP, and the project's annual reports indicate no outcome level contributions since 2021.[37]

Significant management challenges affected implementation, including payment delays, labour conflicts without clear protocols for resolution, and confusion among staff regarding employment status and reporting lines. New legislation on workplace harassment exposed weaknesses in addressing labour conflicts under this contractual scheme in which INJUV personnel hold UNDP contracts. The absence of a clear exit

strategy or institutional capacity development framework raised questions about whether the partnership was building institutional autonomy or creating ongoing dependency, contrasting with other partnerships where operational support served as platform for strategic policy contributions.

Sustainability and national ownership of methodologies developed through partnerships required attention and transition planning. MINVU partnerships faced challenges regarding sustainability and appropriation of developed methodologies, with needs for more active coordination between ministry divisions and UNDP to advance toward comprehensive vision. Some planned MINVU deliverables were not implemented or were adapted, including audiovisual products and new CORECIVYT creation affected by electoral context. These challenges suggested a need for clearer frameworks ensuring government capacity to maintain and evolve innovations beyond UNDP support.

Knowledge management and systematic learning mechanisms required strengthening across operational partnerships. The Chile Fund lacked mechanisms for systematizing lessons learned and integrating into subsequent phase planning, preventing capitalization of accumulated learning and impact expansion. Gender integration remained weak, with only 10 percent of Phase II projects including explicit gender objectives. Without systematic knowledge management frameworks, operational partnerships risked not fully leveraging accumulated experience for institutional strengthening or policy influence.

Finding 5: Pilot Initiatives for Vulnerable Groups

UNDP designed and implemented pilot initiatives that reduced access barriers to rights and narrowed inequality gaps for marginalized groups by connecting people with fragmented public services and strengthening state action at the territorial level. These efforts remained limited in scope within the broader programme.

Strengthening Networks for Elderly People

The Nodo joint project with ILO and FAO strengthened support networks for elderly people through interventions in 12 neighbourhoods nationwide.[38] The strategy combined individual and community interventions—supported by a mobile application—with local governance models to strengthen both community and institutional networks. These models brought available public services closer to beneficiaries and facilitated information flows between elderly people, their caregivers and service providers, including municipalities and health centres.

UNDP successfully connected elderly people with essential services and organizations. The project resulted in elderly people feeling more connected with municipalities, health centres, and social organizations. This enhanced their access to services, strengthened social networks, and facilitated the exercise of their rights.[39] The service platforms were subsequently adopted by the Ministry of Social Development and the National Disability Service (SENADIS) for use with persons with disabilities.[40]

At the time of the project's 2022 final evaluation, substantial institutional commitments suggested promising sustainability prospects. SENAMA had secured budget allocations to integrate the *Nodo Territorio* (Territory Node) platform into the *Centros Día* (Day Centres) programme, piloting in 10 centres with plans to scale across more than 100 facilities. The *Me Cuido Te Cuido* (I Take Care of Myself, I Take Care of You) platform obtained approximately $250,000 from the Ministry of Finance's State Modernization fund for continuation, with the National Care System expressing interest in further scaling.[41] However, this evaluation found no evidence that the *Nodo Emergencia* (Emergency Node) platform, established to promptly respond to urgent requests and referrals involving older adults, remains operational in 2025, highlighting the gap between initial institutional commitments and sustained implementation beyond pilot phases.

Piloting Microenterprise Development for Vulnerable Groups

The *En Marcha* (On the Move) project piloted a comprehensive methodology that began strengthening microenterprises led by women, elderly people, migrants, and other vulnerable groups in Puerto Montt's Puerto neighbourhood. The governance model coordinated multiple stakeholders, including the municipality, a local Business Centre, academic institutions, private sector representatives, trade organizations, and other relevant territorial actors, to enhance selected microenterprises' business models.

Project beneficiaries recognized significant value in the methodology and support provided. They acknowledged substantial assistance in strengthening their brands, developing business plans, and building connections with other territorial actors, including fellow entrepreneurs, public entities and related organizations.[42]

Challenges and Opportunities

Multi-stakeholder coordination proved essential but challenging. Given Chile's extensive productive development programming and the risk of duplicating efforts, governance models and multi-actor coordination spaces were fundamental for identifying synergies, articulating stakeholders, coordinating available services, and facilitating communication strategies. The governance model with several territorial actors included was highly valued, however, maintaining active participation and a permanent information flow to ensure alignment and collaboration of territorial actors proved challenging.

Articulating UNDP's distinctive value proposition proved challenging in entrepreneurship programming where extensive government services already existed. SERCOTEC and other public programmes offered comprehensive micro- and small enterprise support.[43] *En Marcha* provided multidimensional business strengthening through marketing, finance, family integration, legal formalization, and administration pillars—with university students delivering advisory services. However, UNDP's differentiated approach was not clearly communicated, creating ambiguity about added value where Chile's institutional capacities already provided comprehensive entrepreneurship support.

Cross-cutting approaches showed limited translation into concrete action despite widespread recognition. While gender, human rights, and inclusive approaches were key to promoting transformative public action, their operationalization remained challenging. Effective implementation demanded not only focusing on priority groups (as the *En Marcha* project did) but also closing gaps and addressing structural drivers of inequality (which the Nodo project partially achieved).

Systematic knowledge management and clear pathways for scaling successful interventions were generally missing. The Nodo project was one of the few evaluated under this outcome, and the lack of more systematic evaluation prevented the broader identification of good practices and transformation of isolated pilots into sustainable models for broader implementation.

Outcome 2:
Institutions ensure gender parity and strengthen local development with increased levels of transparency, integrity, participation and representation

OUTCOME 2

The Chilean state carries out institutional reforms that strengthen democracy, transparency, increase trust and representativeness of the institutions; ensure gender parity; and advance towards inclusive and decentralized territorial development.

OUTPUT 2.1

Public institutions, at national and sub-national levels, improve their capacities, knowledge, and processes to guarantee participation, transparency and integrity, responding to citizen demands with a gender focus and to leave no one behind.

OUTPUT 2.2

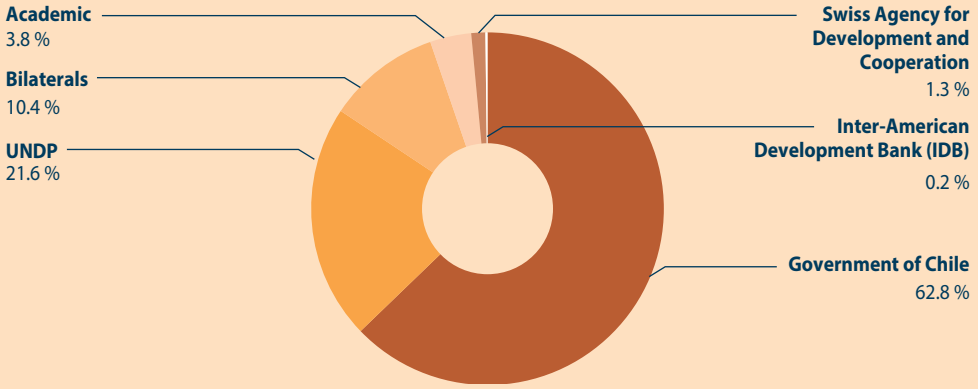
Citizens have access to spaces for dialogue, digital tools and capacities for inclusive and informed participation in the public affairs of interest to them.

OUTPUT 2.3

Executive, legislative and judicial branches are supported in implementing political reforms to strengthen the democratic system and advance the representation of women and other vulnerable groups.

Budget	Expenditure
$5,731,103	$4,118,168

Figure 5: Outcome 2 donor contributions



Finding 6: Democratic Processes and Electoral Support

UNDP was a key actor in accompanying Chile's democratic processes, especially electoral and constitutional cycles, supporting the Electoral Service in strengthening capacities for more inclusive electoral processes and addressing emerging challenges such as disinformation and electoral contamination.

Supporting Constitutional Processes and Inclusive Participation

UNDP actively contributed to the two consecutive constitutional conventions, which responded to the institutional political crisis since 2019. UNDP implemented five projects with a total budget of $1,280,677 between 2020 and 2022, contributing to the preparation of the 'Safe Plebiscite' with briefs containing recommendations and best practices. Voter participation reached its highest level since voluntary voting was established, with 50.9 percent turnout achieved during the pandemic-affected 2020 plebiscite.

Female electoral participation was strengthened through targeted campaigns and multi-actor collaboration. UNDP launched the '*Vota por Todas*' (Vote for All) campaign, which garnered more than 1.7 million views, and coordinated the '*Constituidas*' (Established) initiative with UN Women,

involving more than 1,000 women nationwide. UNDP also conducted analysis on gender parity's impact in the Constitutional Convention and its role in approving key issues.

Marginalized groups gained enhanced access to electoral information and participation opportunities. UNDP supported translation of electoral guides into Indigenous languages (Aymara, Quechua, Rapa Nui, Mapudungun) and Creole; financed consultancies for reserved seats for Indigenous peoples; and conducted consultation exercises with Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations.

Nationwide citizen engagement was achieved through innovative dissemination strategies despite constitutional proposal rejections. UNDP implemented '*La Once Constituyente*' (The Eleventh Constituent Assembly) campaign with civil society partners, creating 200 in-person spaces for content dissemination. Despite rejection of both constitutional projects, UNDP sustained democratic dialogue at both elected constituent and community levels through inclusive communication across diverse messages, channels, languages and participation spaces.

Evidence generation continued despite constitutional setbacks, contributing to more inclusive public debate. After the first constitutional proposal rejection, UNDP implemented 'Constitutional Listening Sessions' with academia. This longitudinal survey collected opinions focused on migrants and Indigenous peoples through three survey waves (July-December 2023) with four differentiated samples: national, politically disaffected, migrants, and Indigenous peoples. Political polarization and disinformation required significant adaptation of campaign strategies. Projected campaigns had to be reduced to avoid accusations of bias, such as when dissemination of Indigenous rights was misinterpreted as promoting privileges.

Combating Electoral Disinformation and Strengthening Electoral Integrity

Electoral disinformation monitoring capabilities were established and institutionalized within Chile's Electoral Service (SERVEL) through innovative multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms. Since 2024, UNDP strengthened collaboration with SERVEL by adapting the E-Monitor+ tool to monitor 'information contamination' and training SERVEL to respond

proactively. An innovative governance strategy with representatives from public institutions, civil society, academia, and digital platform representatives was highly valued and shared as good practice by SERVEL in international forums, setting a precedent for social media platform involvement in democratic integrity efforts.[44]

The trust established between UNDP and SERVEL enabled deepening alliances focused on electoral inclusion and integrity, including translating electoral materials into Mapudungun and Creole and providing internal training on inclusion for SERVEL staff.

Challenges and Opportunities

Limited resources constrained the scope of some initiatives despite demonstrated effectiveness. While innovative methodologies showed success in engaging diverse communities, resource limitations required strategic prioritization and leveraging of civil society and academic partnerships.

Finding 7: Participatory Policy Design and Territorial Development

UNDP contributed to more inclusive and territorially responsive public policies through participatory processes that systematically incorporated diverse stakeholders, left-behind groups, and cross-cutting approaches at national and subnational levels.

Participatory Policy Development Across Multiple Sectors

UNDP supported participatory policy development processes that produced concrete strategic frameworks at national and regional levels. During 2021-2024, UNDP assisted the Undersecretariats of Regional Development, Childhood, and Tourism to develop inclusive national policies through comprehensive citizen participation. At the regional level, UNDP's technical support enabled the Valparaíso Regional Government to develop its Regional Development Strategy 2025-2035—the first elaborated by a

democratically elected regional government in Valparaíso—and supported Los Ríos Regional Government in formulating its Regional Action for children and adolescents, demonstrating UNDP's capacity to accompany subnational governments in strategic territorial planning.

UNDP's participatory methodology emphasized territorial reach and inclusive stakeholder engagement across diverse geographic and demographic contexts. For Valparaíso's Regional Development Strategy, UNDP supported a two-year process (2022-2024) including 16 workshops across 8 provinces, 2 insular workshops in Rapa Nui and Juan Fernández, and sectoral seminars with academia, private sector and civil society, engaging more than 1,600 participants.[45] For Chile's National Decentralization Policy, UNDP co-designed 28 participation instances spanning 16 regional dialogues, macro-regional meetings, virtual seminars for Indigenous peoples, online citizen consultation, dialogues for extreme zones, and engagement with SUBDERE's Civil Society Council. These processes demonstrated UNDP's capacity to orchestrate large-scale participatory processes ensuring territorial representation and inclusive voice in strategic policy formulation.

UNDP contributed to the National Tourism Strategy through deliberate inclusion of diverse territorial actors including Indigenous peoples, isolated territories representatives, trade associations, academia, and civil society. According to an interviewed stakeholder, the participatory work "set a new standard for how to conduct these processes," particularly highlighting the importance of providing feedback on results to participants.

Operationalizing Leave No One Behind Through Policy Design

UNDP initiated strategic approaches to indigenous development planning through the *Buen Vivir* (Good Life) Plan for territories with high indigenous populations and the Ercilla Plan as a pilot for integral development. These initiatives demonstrated UNDP's commitment to culturally pertinent territorial development addressing Indigenous peoples' exclusion. UNDP's support contributed to establishing dialogue processes and territorial planning frameworks that informed subsequent government investment commitments, including the Ministry of Public Works' 10-year infrastructure plan for rural and indigenous sectors in the Biobío, La Araucanía, Los Ríos, and Los Lagos regions announced in January 2025,[46] with other public investment in productive development and cultural revitalization progressing.[47]

UNDP supported development of the National Childhood and Adolescence Policy (approved April 2024) through direct participation of children and adolescents as protagonists. Using the Lundy Model, UNDP ensured safe spaces, accessible information, and consideration of young people's opinions—marking a milestone in incorporating excluded voices into political processes. In a parallel process in Los Ríos region, UNDP enabled creation of a governance structures, including a Consultative Council and Advisory Council for Children and Adolescents (CANNA), and a Regional Action Plan with 21 lines and 44 initiatives reflecting problems identified by and proposals received from children themselves.[48]

UNDP systematically incorporated gender equality, interculturality, territorial pertinence, and sustainable development principles across all policy initiatives to operationalize leaving no one behind commitments. These approaches were embedded in process design, stakeholder engagement and expected policy outcomes. The decentralization policy explicitly incorporated agreed principles with SUBDERE, including participation and direct democracy, inclusion of disadvantaged groups, and environmental protection.

Challenges and Opportunities

The demonstrated success in participatory methodologies created opportunities for replication and scaling across additional policy domains. Participatory processes led to more informed, legitimate and relevant public policies by capturing voices of final beneficiaries, marginalized groups and territorial actors. The established methodologies across decentralization, tourism, childhood and regional planning provided proven models for other strategic planning exercises. However, sustaining the impact of these participatory processes depends on continued political commitment to implementation and institutional change beyond process design.

Finding 8: Gender Equality Seal

UNDP's Gender Equality Seal implementation enabled organizational transformation in public institutions through comprehensive gender mainstreaming processes that achieved concrete regulatory, structural and service delivery changes beyond certification itself. UNDP pioneered a Gender Equality Seal certification model for universities, testing it in two regional entities.

Organizational Transformation Through Certification Processes

UNDP supported six public institutions to achieve Gender Equality Seal certification with documented changes in organizational practices and service delivery. Six public institutions obtained certification: Senate (Silver), Ministry of Justice and Human Rights with two undersecretariats (Gold), Municipalities of Ñuñoa (Silver) and Peñalolén (Gold), Undersecretariat of Foreign Relations (Gold), and Agricultural and Livestock Service (Gold).

UNDP facilitated some organizational changes that extended beyond internal processes to public service delivery and vulnerable populations. The Ministry of Justice eliminated births in prisons through intersectoral coordination—a problem previously considered intractable—and strengthened improvement plans for women's prison conditions. The Ministry also operationalized the National Registry of Alimony Debts in collaboration with the Civil Registry and Ministry of Women, generating significant increases in alimony payment compliance. The Senate incorporated gender equality as a strategic objective, created specialized gender roles, and became Chile's first legislative chamber to implement UNDP's gender seal.

UNDP supported two regional universities in obtaining the Gender Seal certification through a pilot model for higher education institutions. Building on lessons learned from a previous experience with the University of Chile and implementing a model developed by UNDP's Regional Office, UNDP worked with the Universities of Concepción and La Frontera, which achieved Gold and Silver certifications, respectively.

UNDP's methodology required organizations to implement transformations across multiple dimensions, including institutional frameworks, organizational culture, service delivery, and monitoring systems. The University of Concepción institutionalized previously informal good practices

including psychological support services, dedicated gender units reporting to the rector, and mandatory competency profiles for directive positions. These systematic changes ensured transformations were embedded in organizational structures rather than remaining project-dependent adjustments.

Inter-institutional Learning Networks

UNDP established knowledge exchange spaces that multiplied effectiveness beyond individual organizations. Some stakeholders consulted specifically highlighted peer learning as the strategy's main contribution. The close technical accompaniment through weekly or biweekly meetings with UNDP focal points, combined with inter-institutional workshops, created support systems that sustained momentum beyond direct accompaniment. This peer network proved particularly valuable given the diverse organizational contexts—from century-old justice institutions to eight-year-old human rights bodies—requiring continuous methodology adaptation.

UNDP's international experience and transnational knowledge transfer strengthened implementation quality and legitimacy. Participants emphasized that UNDP's gender seal carried greater prestige and institutional weight than national alternatives such as Chilean Standard 3262, with this international backing proving crucial for overcoming internal resistance and securing leadership buy-in. The incorporation of global best practices and regional experiences enriched methodological approaches while maintaining adaptation to Chilean contexts. Partners unanimously recognized the strong expertise of UNDP's gender team.

Challenges and Opportunities

Insufficient documentation of methodology adaptations constituted a lost opportunity for knowledge management. Complex implementations—such as the Ministry of Justice's dual-undersecretary process, the Senate's legislative adaptation, and university-specific approaches—generated valuable lessons that remained uncaptured for systematic replication. This documentation gap limited UNDP's capacity to transfer proven methodologies to new contexts.

There were capacity and infrastructure constraints to scaling the Gender Seal despite growing institutional demand. UNDP's small team size relative to demand created overload particularly during evaluation phases when support needs intensified. The platform's technical limitations and evaluation guidelines required updates to meet increasing institutional interest. Opportunities existed to complement UNDP's valued expert support through train-the-trainer approaches and strengthened documented methodologies enabling more autonomous organizational problem-solving.

UNDP's ability to demonstrate broader societal impact remained limited by absence of follow-up indicators tracking the Gender Seal's contribution to gender equality outcomes beyond organizational practice. While the Seal supported institutional capacity for results-based evaluation—exemplified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' commitment to evaluate its Feminist Foreign Policy with UNDP technical support[49]—and concrete service delivery improvements occurred (prison visitation protocols, alimony systems, violence prevention mechanisms), systematic tracking of downstream gender equality impacts across participating institutions remained undeveloped.

Sustainability challenges reflected broader institutional realities beyond UNDP's direct control. Organizations struggled to maintain momentum post-certification without dedicated gender budgets or continued technical support. While the Ministry of Justice secured specific cost units for gender initiatives, most organizations lacked ring-fenced resources, creating risks of regression without sustained leadership commitment.

Outcome 3:
A just and socio-ecological transition to an inclusive and sustainable production and consumption model

OUTCOME 3

By 2025, the State of Chile strengthens its policies, strategies and programmes that promote mitigation and adaptation to climate change; the governance of territories, natural resources, and ecosystems; and the improvement of the comprehensive management of environmental, climatic, health, hydrological, and geodynamic risks, with an integrated approach. It guarantees the sustainable use and management of natural resources, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable population groups and territories.

OUTPUT 3.1

Public institutions at national and subnational levels develop instruments, strategies and actions for planning, monitoring, budgeting/spending/verification measures regarding mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction goals and targets.

OUTPUT 3.2

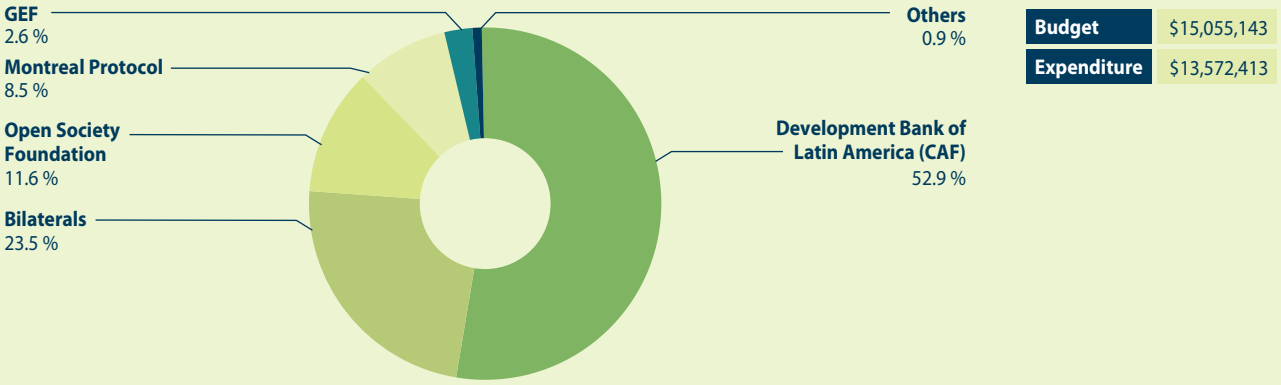
Public and private institutions and local communities at national and subnational levels promote tools, including digital, instruments, and initiatives to apply the principles of the circular economy with a focus on gender and leaving no one behind.

OUTPUT 3.3

Public and private institutions, and local communities, at national and sub-national levels, have access to solutions, dialogue mechanisms, knowledge and inputs for addressing environmental inequalities at the territorial level.

Budget	Expenditure
$15,055,143	$13,572,413

FIGURE 6: Outcome 3 donor contributions



Finding 9: Socio-Ecological Just Transition

Chile became one of the first countries in Latin America to adopt a nationally integrated Socio-Ecological Just Transition framework, advancing NDC commitments through multi-sectoral governance. UNDP's technical and operational assistance supported operationalization of this framework through governance mechanisms and territorial implementation, although internal coordination gaps and limited inclusion of marginalized groups constrained effectiveness.

Establishing the Framework for a Socio-Ecological Just Transition

UNDP technical, administrative and logistical support helped develop the National Strategy for Socio-Ecological Just Transition 2025-2035 (ENTSEJ), a foundational policy to realize Chile's 2025–2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).[50] Since 2023, a team of 17 professionals (15 hired by UNDP and embedded in the TSEJ Office) assisted in designing the strategy, including development of the action plan operationalizing the ENTSEJ through 48 measures in five designated transition territories.[51] Their work was performed under the framework of the Interministerial Committee for Socio-Ecological Just Transition (CITSEJ), created in 2023 to formalize coordination among nine ministries, with UNDP supporting CITSEJ's operations through logistical and technical assistance, and documentation.[52]

BOX 2:

Just Socio-ecological Transition

"It is the process of transformation and/or adaptation of socio-cultural systems toward ecosystem balance, people's well-being, and sustainable productive models, within the framework of the triple crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution, ensuring a focus on human rights, gender equality, and decent work."

Interministerial Committee for a Just Socio-Ecological Transition, Chile (2023)

Operationalizing the Transition in Key Territories

UNDP supported design and implementation of a multi-tiered governance model ensuring effective operationalization at national and local levels through participatory structures in transition territories (local Councils for Environmental and Social Recovery (CRAS) and/or TSEJ committees). UNDP collaborated with local actors and the Ministry of Environment to establish regional TSEJ working groups in transition territories, aligning regional priorities with national strategy goals. UNDP also supported updates of existing Social and Environmental Recovery Plans (PRAS) in Coronel, Huasco, and Quintero–Puchuncaví,[53] and design of local TSEJ plans for Tocopilla[54] and Mejillones.[55] A total of 914 stakeholders participated in consultations during the Strategic Environment Assessment process, with Tocopilla's process incorporating civil society representatives into regional working groups where they raised environmental, public health and productivity concerns.

UNDP advanced water governance through establishing Strategic Water Resources Roundtables in 12 watersheds with supporting secretariats in four pilot regions. This effort contributed to obtaining a $250 million loan from the World Bank in 2024 to fund the Chile's Just Water Transition Programme under the ENTSEJ framework, with technical support from the TSEJ Office. The specific relationship between UNDP's water governance work and this financing mobilization remains unclear from available evidence.

Challenges and opportunities

Opportunities for internal coordination and knowledge exchange across UNDP initiatives remained underutilized. Potential synergies between the GEF IECB project and the TSEJ office were not fully leveraged during the evaluated period. While UNDP identified connections among IECB, BIOFIN, and the Nature Hub, stakeholders noted that strengthened communication and systematic coordination mechanisms could enhance integration of complementary environmental initiatives in future programming.

Progress on human rights, gender and indigenous dimensions of the just socio-ecological transition remained incipient, with challenges in translating principles into actionable policies in territories experiencing institutional distrust. UNDP's limited engagement with the Escazú Regional Agreement—although ECLAC serves as the agreement's secretariat—represented a missed opportunity for collaboration on environmental governance, human rights and participatory decision-making integral to just transitions. The absence of UNDP as a designated partner in the Escazú national action plan suggests opportunity for strategic engagement with emerging regional environmental governance mechanisms to maintain relevance in areas where UNDP is perceived as a strong actor.

Long-term implementation faced risks related to transition planning and infrastructure limitations. The planned departure of 15 UNDP project-related professionals embedded in the Ministry of Environment's TSEJ office in 2026 required careful transition management, as similar past initiatives struggled to retain trained personnel once external support ended. The Ministry of Environment included continuation of the TSEJ office in the 2026 national budget law and opened three to four professional positions in 2025, demonstrating commitment to sustaining the office. However, ensuring full transition of technical capacities developed through the UNDP project to a smaller permanent government team will require strategic knowledge transfer mechanisms and prioritization of core functions.

Finding 10: Climate Change Governance

UNDP supported implementation of Chile's Framework Law on Climate Change through the development of national financial strategies, enhanced monitoring systems for climate-related expenditures, and strengthened institutional capacities for international climate commitments. Opportunities exist to further engage on planning and implementation at regional and municipal levels.

Developing and Supporting Climate Financial Strategies

UNDP's collaboration with the Ministry of Finance—a strategic actor which aligns public financing plans with environmental policy networks—represented a significant institutional achievement that enabled integrating climate considerations into core fiscal planning processes. Working with the Ministry of Finance rather than solely with environmental authorities positioned climate action within budgetary decision-making structures, fundamentally shifting how climate commitments were resourced and prioritized.

Chile's National Climate Financial Strategy was updated and finalized, providing a sustainable framework to align national budgets with decarbonization goals and international commitments through 2050. UNDP worked closely with the Ministry of Finance to update an initial version prepared by the Inter-American Development Bank in 2019, developing a refined version during 2020-2022 that, according to interviews, better aligned with the Ministry's priorities and Chile's climate goals.[56] The strategy, which at the time of this evaluation was pending approval by the competent authority, included analysis estimating costs of meeting Chile's climate pledges under international agreements.[57] This framework enabled systematic tracking of climate-related expenditures across government agencies and provided the analytical foundation for aligning fiscal policy with climate objectives.

An official methodology developed by UNDP to classify climate-related fiscal spending and investments was institutionalized into the National Investment System, enabling standardized tracking and reporting across public institutions. UNDP provided technical assistance for adapting and implementing this methodology, which enabled preparation of

three annual official reports (2022–2024) by the Budget Directorate (DIPRES). These reports, as established in the article 38 of the Climate Framework Law, became important tools for evidence-based decision-making within Chile's Financial Strategy for Climate Change and served as inputs for congressional debates on the Annual National Budget. UNDP's methodology (CPEIR/CBT) was adopted by DIPRES and used in official budget instructions, with more than 100 public officials trained in its application.

Engaging Public and Private Sector in Climate Action

UNDP helped institutionalize processes to ensure that climate investments and expenditure plans were financially sustainable and transparent,[58] aligning efforts to harmonize climate spending across public, private and international funding sources.

More than 2,000 public and private institutions registered in the 'Chile Footprint' programme, with nearly 50 percent joining between 2021 and 2025.[59] UNDP supported development of methodologies and training programmes to engage small- and medium-sized enterprises in voluntary reporting of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and MRV (Measurement, Reporting, and Verification) activities. UNDP facilitated pilots with private companies applying new methodologies to measure climate-related expenditures, and organized events, webinars and discussions to disseminate knowledge and build consensus around decarbonization goals.

Greenhouse gas inventories were updated across Chile's 16 regions, providing comprehensive understanding of local emissions as the foundation for climate action planning and progress tracking. UNDP played a central role in updating these inventories, enhancing compliance with international climate agreements. UNDP also contributed to preparation of reports for the Montreal Protocol on consumption and elimination of ozone-depleting substances, supporting Chile's commitments, including phase-out of HCFC-141b and implementation of the National Plan for Cooling. Through technical assistance, co-financing, and training for companies undergoing conversion to non-HCFC technologies, a total of 181.86 metric tons of HCFC-141b was eliminated.

Challenges and Opportunities

UNDP developed a national guide for municipal climate change plans (PACCCs) that was distributed nationwide, used in certain municipalities, and created a foundation for expanded subnational engagement. However, opportunities remained to deepen involvement in the elaboration and implementation of regional and municipal climate action plans—mandatory under the framework law of climate change—where UNDP's technical capacity could strengthen environmental policy influence at subnational levels where climate action implementation occurs.

Building on demonstrated effectiveness, the climate expenditure tracking approach and training programmes offered opportunities for expansion to additional institutions and regions. Integration with the National Investment System provided a solid foundation for continued government ownership and sustainability of climate expenditure tracking systems.

More broadly, limited incentives constrained broader private sector engagement despite successful awareness-building efforts. With more than one million SMEs operating in Chile, the voluntary nature of activities for measuring carbon footprint and MRV systems, combined with limited incentives, will require additional support to ensure broader adoption beyond the 2,000 institutions reached.

Regional implementation capacity varied significantly across Chile's 16 regions, affecting consistency and quality of climate action planning. While greenhouse gas inventories were successfully updated across all regions, varying institutional capacities at subnational levels will require UNDP's continued technical and methodological support to ensure climate policy consistency across the country.

Finding 11: Disaster Risk Reduction

UNDP advanced disaster risk prevention and management models in Chile through the *AdaptaClima* project, which set a new standard for innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Progress beyond this initiative remained limited due to challenges in scaling, funding and municipal engagement.

Piloting Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Early Warning Systems

Climate-resilient infrastructure with 100-year durability was constructed in Antofagasta, integrating hydraulic design with climate change variables to address landslide and flooding vulnerabilities.[60] The *AdaptaClima* project focused on Antofagasta, Taltal, and Mejillones—municipalities severely impacted by catastrophic landslides in 1991 and 2015. Construction of Quebrada Bonilla No. 11 represented the project's central achievement, marking the first instance of UNDP Chile overseeing major civil works.[61] The infrastructure adaptation enhanced rainwater storage capacity and increased projected durability.

Comprehensive risk planning tools were developed and transferred to the Ministry of Public Works for future use. Through an updated Rainwater Master Plan, the project projected risk scenarios for 2035–2065, including a risk matrix for informal settlements. This institutional transfer was solidified by a memorandum of understanding with UNDP, ensuring continuity as Ministry of Public Works assumed subsequent phases.

Early warning systems were advanced through installation of storm detectors and mass removal sirens in coordination with SENAPRED. *AdaptaClima* installed eight sensors and sirens in Mejillones and Tocopilla, set up an advanced alert system in Antofagasta, and developed a pioneering guide on sirens for mass removal events.

Community Engagement and Gender Inclusion

Local capacity was built, particularly among women, with some trained female leaders securing regional funds to replicate disaster risk management initiatives. The project organized risk management workshops,

paramedic training, emergency simulations, and distributed emergency kits. Community storytellers helped preserve collective memories of landslides in Tocoplilla and Taltal (2015) and Antogasta (1991), through cultural activities and educational campaigns. Partnerships with local foundations such as '*Descubre Más*' (Discover More) and '*Color Habitante*' (Color Resident) introduced artistic and educational programmes connecting climate change risks with actionable community responses.

Challenges and Opportunities

There are operational risks related to inter-institutional coordination for long-term maintenance of disaster risk infrastructure. UNDP developed a detailed hydraulic design methodology and comprehensive methodological guides for Ministry of Public Works' use with potential for national replication. However, while MOP retains responsibility for flood-control infrastructure construction and maintenance, municipalities hold legal responsibility for maintaining ravines free of obstructions, debris and waste. Early evidence showed some municipalities struggling to fulfill these complementary maintenance requirements, requiring MOP to redirect resources allocated for infrastructure work toward site clearing. Ensuring effective coordination between MOP's infrastructure investments and municipal compliance with ravine maintenance responsibilities will be critical for sustaining infrastructure protective function over time.

UNDP's disaster risk management work produced concrete technical outputs but translating deliverables into sustained implementation and capacity remained a work in progress. Three municipal disaster risk management plans were completed and approved by SENAPRED on first submission, leading the Valparaíso Regional Government to request UNDP support for remaining regional municipalities through a 2026 agreement. However, evidence of sustained impact tracking remained limited. Stakeholder interviews revealed gaps in municipal awareness of projects, departure of trained personnel, and insufficient documentation of how technical outputs translated into operational improvements. While UNDP delivered training to municipal teams nationwide, there were challenges demonstrating how capacity-building efforts enhanced emergency response capabilities when tested by actual disasters,

suggesting a need for strengthened follow-through mechanisms linking technical assistance to operational preparedness.

Gaps in Chile's disaster risk management framework limited scaling potential. Although most municipalities had Emergency Response Plans, nearly 50 percent lacked Disaster Risk Reduction plans, with national disaster readiness heavily oriented toward emergency response, while preventive and post-disaster recovery strategies remained underdeveloped.[62] This imbalance constrained UNDP's ability to support comprehensive risk management approaches.

Funding mechanisms created barriers to implementing disaster risk management planning outputs. UNDP's support to 21 municipalities in central-southern Chile to develop investment plans following the 2023 wildfires encountered implementation setbacks due to lack of pre-allocated funding and limited municipal capacity to secure resources from regional governments.[63] Similarly, investment plans and activities developed under the PPP-DRR initiative in Chacabuco and Quillota provinces could not be implemented due to funding disruptions, local political conflicts, and shifts in national priorities following the 2019 social unrest and COVID-19 pandemic.[64]

Municipal staff turnover and capacity constraints limited continuity of disaster risk management capacities developed through UNDP interventions. Departures of trained personnel and limited institutional memory at municipal level—compounded by Chile's decentralized governance structure where municipalities have varying technical capacities—posed challenges to sustaining risk management improvements beyond project cycles.

Outcome 4:
Sustainable use of natural resources, protection of ecosystems, biodiversity, and water resources

OUTCOME 4

Chile is moving towards a new development model based on the sustainable use of natural resources and environmental services, the restoration and conservation of natural heritage, ecosystems and biodiversity, the management of water resources, oceans, and the protection and guarantee of access rights established in the Escazú agreement, with attention to indigenous peoples, with an integrated approach that promotes equity and job creation for all.

OUTPUT 4.1

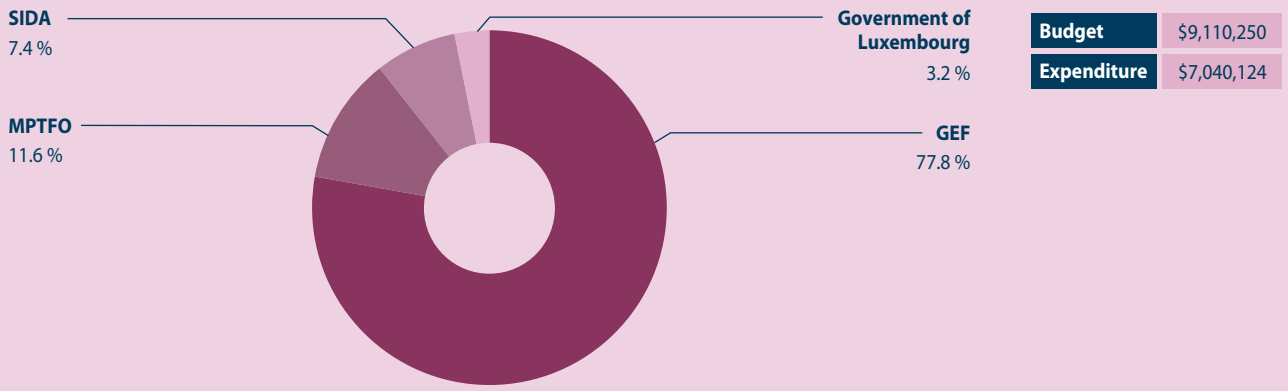
Public institutions and local communities develop instruments, including digital tools, and strategies for planning, implementing, and monitoring biodiversity targets with a gender approach.

OUTPUT 4.2

Public and private institutions and local communities at national and sub-national levels develop nature-based solutions for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystem services and water resources.

Budget	Expenditure
$9,110,250	$7,040,124

FIGURE 7: Outcome 4 donor contributions



Finding 12: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Governance

UNDP strengthened Chile's biodiversity governance by developing economic instruments for conservation, supporting regulatory frameworks for the new Biodiversity and Protected Areas Service, and updating national strategies aligned with global commitments, although implementation faced delays and coordination gaps.

Economic Instruments and Institutional Frameworks

UNDP supported development of four economic instruments for biodiversity management through the IECB project, contributing to the regulatory foundation for Chile's Biodiversity and Protected Areas Service (SBAP) established in 2023. The instruments—Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), Biodiversity Offsets, Real Conservation Rights, and a Certification System for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services—were approved by the Council for Sustainability and Climate Change in 2025.[65] UNDP's technical support included formulation of regulations enabling SBAP's operationalization. UNDP applied its BIOFIN methodology to assess Chile's biodiversity-related fiscal frameworks, contributing to improved alignment with post-2020 global biodiversity objectives and providing an analytical foundation for economic instrument design.[66]

National Framework Alignment with Global Commitments

UNDP contributed to aligning Chile's national frameworks with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) through implementation of a GEF-funded project supporting the 2024 update of Chile's National Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan, and Seventh National Report. UNDP facilitated stakeholder engagement processes that convened more than 400 conservation actors—including scientists, youth advocates, grassroots organizations, environmental NGOs, and public institutions—across participatory dialogues organized with the Ministry of Environment.[67] The engagement process included 37 encounters with central-level public services, consultations with more than 300 local actors across Chile's 16 regions, and six meetings with more than 100 participants from conservation organizations, social movements, youth groups, research centres, and universities.

Binational Cooperation and Territorial Challenges

A Binational Scientific Technical Committee was established with Peru through the Humboldt II project, establishing five working groups focused on oceanographic modeling, fisheries biology, stock assessments, and bioeconomics. However, there were significant challenges to implementation. In the project's midterm review, implementation was rated as 'moderately unsatisfactory' due to delays, limited coordination, and weak articulation between national and territorial levels. Stakeholders described governance as generally positive but noted institutional distance and infrequent engagement with local actors.

Challenges and Opportunities

Institutional transitions within the Ministry of Environment affected project implementation. Changes in division leadership led to reorganization of the IECB Project Management Unit and replacement of the coordinator based on performance considerations. Government transition following SBAP's 2023 establishment also affected formation timelines for governance structures.

Private sector integration into biodiversity governance remained limited despite UNDP's promotional efforts. Although initiatives such as the 'Business Action Plan on Biodiversity' and 'Natural Capital Committee' were launched, meaningful private sector participation in decision-making processes remained underdeveloped.

Finding 13: Local Demonstrative Initiatives

UNDP advanced local biodiversity and resource management through demonstration initiatives integrating conservation with community priorities and piloting innovative tools, although simplified governance structures, limited coordination, and gaps in financial sustainability constrained scalability and long-term outcomes.

Conservation Approaches at Local Scale

UNDP successfully piloted innovative conservation instruments and achieved measurable landscape improvements through community-based approaches in selected territories. In Los Ríos Region, collaboration with Rural Potable Water Committees (CAPRs) in Liquiñe and Mashue resulted in 5,634 hectares of landscapes being managed with improved conservation practices, establishing these organizations as Conservation Guarantors with developed baselines, protected water sources, and pilot metrics for monitoring ecosystem services.[68] The GEF-CMS project mobilized 678 people from 77 organizations across 38 community projects in 7 regions, demonstrating UNDP's capacity to engage diverse stakeholders in conservation activities at territorial level.[69]

UNDP introduced innovative marine conservation instruments, including marine refuges in four coastal communities. The IECB project conducted activities in Puchuncaví, Ventanas, Chepu (Isla de Chiloé), and Caleta Huellelhue (Río Negro), applying conservation instruments at territorial level. Marine Spatial Planning approaches were piloted through the Humboldt II binational initiative, testing territorial implementation methodologies for marine-coastal ecosystem management.

UNDP piloted water resource management instruments with Rural Potable Water Committees in the Los Ríos Region, achieving landscape-level conservation improvements. The CAPRs experience demonstrated potential for community-based organizations to serve as Conservation Guarantors, establishing baselines, protecting water sources, and developing pilot metrics for monitoring ecosystem services.

Informing National Policy Frameworks

Local pilot experiences provided practical learning that informed national-level economic instrument design and regulatory frameworks. The implementation of demonstration initiatives allowed testing of governance mechanisms that supported SBAP law implementation, piloted conservation instruments supporting environmental regulations, and achieved measurable GHG mitigation results. While pilot experiences revealed difficulties achieving biodiversity benefit indicators at project scale, they successfully demonstrated governance mechanisms and tested conservation instruments. These experiences also highlighted opportunities for private sector involvement

to ensure financial sustainability through communities' strengthened value chains, although this potential remained largely unrealized during the evaluation period. The initiatives demonstrated UNDP's capacity to connect territorial innovation with national policy formulation.

Challenges and Opportunities

Coordination challenges between national project frameworks and territorial implementation significantly hindered progress across multiple initiatives. Marine Spatial Planning pilots encountered difficulties translating governance frameworks into effective local action, with limited community-level engagement affecting outcomes. There were similar gaps for water governance initiatives, with weak coordination with sectoral agencies such as INDAP and CONAF contributing to fragmented implementation.

Replication and horizontal learning remained constrained by limited network engagement and weak coordination with sectoral public agencies. The limited engagement of Chile's broader network of CAPRs (191 in total) constrained peer exchange and scalability.[70] Stakeholders raised concerns regarding weak coordination with agencies such as INDAP and CONAF contributing to fragmented implementation.

Payment-for-ecosystem-services mechanisms faced resistance and legal barriers, with water governance agreements remaining in draft form. Private sector engagement opportunities identified through pilot experiences—particularly involving communities' strengthened value chains—could address sustainability gaps but remained undeveloped. Achieving biodiversity outcome indicators proved challenging at project scale despite success in GHG mitigation and governance strengthening. Future programming could address gaps in governance consolidation, inclusive participation, and financial sustainability, including systematic private sector engagement strategies, with enhanced coordination mechanisms to improve scalability potential.[71]

Strategic and Programme-level Findings

The following findings address strategic issues spanning the entire programme, including interagency coherence and internal programme integration.

Finding 14: UN System Collaboration and Coordination

UNDP engaged in substantial interagency collaboration during the CPD period through project-based partnerships, technical cooperation, and UNSDCF co-leadership, although Chile's Net Contributor Country context and limited joint funding opportunities constrained systematic integration mechanisms.

Interagency Collaboration Modalities

UNDP collaborated with multiple UN agencies through diverse modalities including UN-to-UN agreements, joint technical assistance, co-led initiatives, and strategic division of responsibilities in multi-agency projects. During the CPD period, UNDP signed three UN-to-UN agreements and collaborated with eight UN agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO, ILO, OHCHR, UN Women, UNFPA, PAHO/WHO, UNEP) across constitutional processes, education policy, childhood and adolescence policy, labour market inclusion, indigenous development, Kigali Plan implementation, and HIV programming. UNDP co-led UNSDCF Pillar 2 with OHCHR for two years and also co-led Pillar 3 with UNEP, demonstrating engagement in Cooperation Framework governance structures. Because several UN resident agencies in Chile lack a host government agreement, they must operate under UNDP's or ECLAC's legal umbrella, leading UNDP to administer an additional $17 million on their behalf over 2023–2025.

Strategic division of responsibilities emerged in environment sector projects where complementary UN agency roles were clearly delineated. The GEF-UNDP Humboldt II and GEF-FAO Coastal Marine Governance projects in La Higuera-Freirina demonstrated UNDP's capacity to orchestrate multi-agency arrangements, with UNDP focusing on spatial planning and FAO on governance aspects. UNDP's collaboration intensified during critical junctures requiring rapid collective response, including on constitutional processes, pandemic response and emergency situations, demonstrating the UN System's adaptive capacity to mobilize coordinated support when government demand and operational necessity aligned.

Structural Constraints on Joint Programming

Chile's NCC context created structural barriers limiting joint programming and joint resource mobilization. Limited external donor funding—a key incentive and facilitator for interagency collaboration at country level—reduced opportunities for joint programme modalities and pooled funding mechanisms. UNDP's financial sustainability requirements necessitated prioritizing government cost-sharing partnerships that reinforced bilateral engagement. Differences in operational frameworks across UN agencies (national vs. regional offices, varying financial models, distinct mandates) complicated joint planning and resource-sharing. Four joint proposals developed since 2022 with UN Women, IOM, UNHCR, ILO, UNESCO, and ITU were not approved, reflecting limited appetite for joint funding in Chile's development cooperation landscape.

Coordination Mechanisms and Strategic Integration

UNDP maintained alignment with UNSDCF outcomes and participated in interagency working groups. While UNDP's bilateral relationships across multiple ministries positioned it to facilitate broader UN System engagement with the Government, these partnerships functioned primarily as bilateral channels rather than platforms for integrated UN delivery. The lack of clear definition regarding UNDP's role as 'integrator and backbone of the UN System' under UN Reform affected UNDP's relationships within the UN agencies and its strategic participation in the Cooperation Framework. This created ambiguity about expectations and accountability for UN System coherence in contexts where traditional integrator mechanisms (joint programming, pooled funding) faced structural barriers. The diversity of UN agency operational models in Chile—ranging from regional and subregional offices to resident agencies with varying legal frameworks and non-resident agencies—complicated systematic integration across the UN system. This structural complexity meant collaboration remained largely opportunity-driven.

Financial Model and Collaboration Incentives

UNDP's NCC financial constraints fundamentally shaped collaboration possibilities. Unlike countries where external donor funding creates incentives for joint programming, UNDP Chile's dependence on government cost-sharing for operational sustainability meant the Country Office lacked

financial flexibility to subsidize or co-finance interagency initiatives. This financial reality influenced both UNDP's capacity to engage in resource-intensive coordination and other agencies' perceptions of UNDP as a potential collaboration partner. Recognizing these constraints, the substantial interagency collaboration achieved—particularly technical cooperation, co-leadership of UNSDCF pillars, and rapid emergency mobilization—demonstrated commitment to UN System coherence within available resources.

Finding 15: Internal Coherence and Integrated Programming

The programme-level theory of change for the 2023-2026 CPD lacked coherent integration mechanisms to enable portfolio-based approaches for addressing interconnected development challenges, while implementation structures and incentive systems reinforced siloed operations that limited cross-thematic collaboration.

Theory of Change Design and Integration Gaps

The programme-level theory of change lacked clear impact pathways for implementing systemic, integrated development approaches. The 2023-2026 CPD included four narrative theories of change articulating distinctive assumptions and expected results for each outcome area.[72] It was accompanied by a programme-level theory of change outlining the overarching objective, four outcomes underpinned by four solutions, and shared enablers, approaches, risks and assumptions (see Annex 6). The evaluation did not identify clear complementarities or embedment between programme-level and individual outcome-level theories of change, or pathways for fostering synergies or connecting thematic workstreams.

The conceptualization of 'just socio-ecological transition' as a separate outcome missed an opportunity for unifying the programme.[73] Outcome 3, conceptualized around this high-level, holistic, long-term objective that inherently encompassed elements addressed in the other three outcomes, was framed as an independent outcome rather than a unifying mechanism. This limited potential to use the just socio-ecological transition as a guiding framework for achieving greater coherence and integration across CPD outcomes. Less emphasis was placed on integrated governance, adaptive social protection, and other dimensions central to achieving this transition.

Operational Structures and Siloed Implementation

Three programmatic teams and a research team operated independently along thematic lines, limiting realization of synergies despite obvious benefits of integration. While specialized team structure was effective in addressing sector-specific issues, it hampered potential for coherent and integrated approaches to tackling interconnected challenges. Only Outcomes 3 and 4 benefited from integration, as both were managed by the environment and sustainable development team, addressing core environmental issues including climate resilience, territorial focus on sacrifice zones, sustainable resource use, and gender empowerment.

Structural barriers embedded in operational and management systems reinforced siloed operations. Programme teams had distinct objectives, funding sources, counterparts, and budgets, creating fragmented operational logic. For instance, for vertical funds such as GEF and GCF, budgets and resources had to be allocated to each specific project as required by the donors, leaving little flexibility for cross-thematic collaboration or integrated initiatives. The research team worked primarily on the Human Development Report and complimentary knowledge products with limited engagement with other pillars. Monitoring and reporting systems focused on individual products and outputs rather than portfolio or integrated results, reinforcing siloed accountability.

The mismatch between programme-level ambitions for systemic approaches and operational structures designed for siloed delivery undermined integrated programming potential. While the CPD articulated systemic vision and shared enablers, implementation structures incentivized vertical rather than horizontal collaboration. This revealed a strategic design gap where theory of change ambitions were not matched by operational architecture to enable their realization.

Resource allocation and monitoring systems created perverse incentives against integration. Project-specific budgeting left little flexibility for cross-thematic work, while output-focused metrics reinforced individual team accountability rather than collective portfolio results. These embedded structural features made integration dependent on voluntary coordination rather than systematic requirement.

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 3.

Insights and conclusions

Insights

Four strategic questions emerged from this evaluation that merit attention as UNDP Chile continues operating in a graduated country context. These questions reflect structural tensions in the Country Office's partnership model, programmatic architecture, and positioning within the UN System.

Trade-off 1: Partnership's depth, concentration and policy influence

UNDP Chile's government cost-sharing model has remained anchored by four institutional partnerships for two decades. Partnerships with INJUV (since 2001), MINEDUC (since 2003), MINVU (since 2010), and AGCID (since 2011) provided financial stability and survived multiple political transitions. However, government cost-sharing declined from $15 million annually (2015-2018) to $7 million annually (2021-2024)—a 50 percent reduction. Despite this resource decline, UNDP maintained the same partnership model, with 75 to 90 percent of Poverty Pillar resources allocated to operational and development support services for these four partners.

Partnership concentration created both advantages and constraints. Government-financed projects ensured stronger national ownership and sustainability compared to externally-funded work, with partnerships demonstrating resilience through political transitions. However, the model shaped

UNDP's programmatic focus toward these partners' sectoral priorities and operational needs. Government cost-sharing was not available for sensitive work. The Governance Pillar's constitutional and electoral engagement required 45 percent self-funding, as politically contested topics could not be financed through cost-sharing arrangements. The partnerships evolved along divergent pathways. MINEDUC's 22-year relationship progressed toward strategic policy influence; and MINVU evolved toward strategic contributions in urban policy; while INJUV's 24-year partnership remained predominantly administrative.

The persistence of the same model through 50 percent resource decline raises strategic questions. UNDP faces choices about whether and how to diversify partnerships beyond the four core relationships, whether existing partnerships can be deliberately transformed toward deeper policy engagement, and whether such shifts are financially viable given resource constraints. These choices shape UNDP's sectoral focus, its ability to engage on sensitive priorities, and its value proposition in Chile's graduated country context.

The strategic question: How can UNDP balance partnership diversification, qualitative transformation of existing relationships, and financial sustainability when the model that provided stability for two decades now yields 50 percent fewer resources?

Trade-off 2: Integrated systems thinking and specialized expertise

Development challenges demand systemic solutions that integrate diverse areas, yet UNDP's operational architecture incentivized siloed delivery. The programme-level theory of change did not establish clear complementarities between outcome areas or pathways for cross-thematic collaboration. The socio-ecological just transition, conceptualized as requiring integration across governance, poverty reduction and environmental dimensions, was framed as a separate outcome rather than a unifying framework.

Structural barriers to portfolio operationalization. Programme teams operated with distinct objectives, funding sources, counterparts, and budgets, while monitoring systems focused on individual outputs rather than portfolio results. Project-specific budgeting left little flexibility for cross-thematic work, making integration dependent on voluntary coordination rather than systematic requirement. The government cost-sharing model reinforced this fragmentation. Each of the four core partnerships operated within its institutional mandate, with resources allocated to respond to individual partner institutions and more limited opportunities to generate portfolio-level synergies.

UNDP faces questions about whether integrated approaches are achievable within current operational constraints. The financial model allocates resources to specific projects with distinct government counterparts, creating structural pressures toward projectized delivery. Whether portfolio-based, systems-thinking approaches can be pursued within this model—or whether they require different financing modalities or programmatic architectures—has implications for UNDP's ability to address complex, interconnected development challenges that transcend individual sectoral institutions' mandates.

The strategic question: Does the financial sustainability model, which allocates resources to specific projects with distinct government counterparts, inherently preclude the portfolio-based, systems-thinking approaches UNDP advocates?

Trade-off 3: Territorial engagement versus central government focus

The most significant development challenges manifest at territorial and local levels, but operational, legal and local capacity constraints limited territorial expansion. UNDP maintained meaningful engagement only in Valparaíso, Los Ríos, and Araucanía (Ercilla), while regions such as Metropolitana, O'Higgins, and Biobío were increasingly interested in potentially partnering with UNDP. Systematic subnational operations beyond the three regions where UNDP worked was constrained by regional governments' limited familiarity with UNDP's role and international organization working modalities, absence of seed funding to mobilize subnational resources, and costs of sustained presence.

Consolidated national-level partnerships demonstrated financial sustainability but offered limited pathways for systematic territorial work. The Poverty Pillar's $29.5 million delivery through four core partnerships provided resources that cross-subsidized other programme areas while ensuring fiscal stability. However, those partnerships operated primarily through central government institutions with limited subnational implementation mechanisms. The INJUV partnership represented a partial exception—while predominantly supporting operational service delivery, it enabled INJUV to implement its mandate at local levels, demonstrating how national partnerships could facilitate territorial reach when institutional structures permitted.

Where territorial engagement occurred, UNDP demonstrated capacity to address populations at greatest risk of exclusion. The *Buen Vivir* (Good Living) Plan and Ercilla Plan, conceived as culturally pertinent strategies

for indigenous territorial development, strengthened local capabilities and contributed to unlocking significant public infrastructure investments for indigenous and rural sectors. These initiatives established intercultural public management models that could inform future interventions. However, such territorial work remained exceptional rather than systematic, constrained by the financial and operational architecture designed around national-level partnerships. Populations at greatest risk—Indigenous peoples in territories such as Ercilla, communities in 'sacrifice zones'—required precisely the type of localized engagement that the dominant partnership model did not structurally enable.

The strategic question: Can UNDP develop territorial engagement mechanisms that complement its financially sustainable national partnerships, or does subnational expansion require additional resources and operational models beyond current structures?

Trade-off 4: Interagency coordination and competitive advantage

UNDP's approach to interagency collaboration was diverse, responding to current opportunities and government demands. During CPD implementation, UNDP collaborated with other UN agencies though different modalities, including ad-hoc collaborations on specific initiatives of shared interest (coordination with UNICEF on childhood policy), through one joint programme (the NODO project with FAO and ILO on elderly digital inclusion) and through strategic division of responsibilities across agencies projects (with FAO in La Higuera-Freirina working on governance and UNDP on spatial planning). UNDP maintained strong alignment with UNSDCF outcomes, participated in interagency working groups, and collaboration instances remained agile, seizing emerging opportunities.

Structural barriers in Chile's NCC context shaped interagency coordination dynamics. Unlike many UN agencies that receive core funding, UNDP's financial sustainability depended on government cost-sharing and securing additional resources. This dependence on government financing with four specific institutions reinforced bilateral relationship prioritization. Seven UN agencies currently lack Standard Basic Assistance Agreements to operate in Chile, positioning UNDP as one of the few viable actors able to provide certain types of support the Government requires. The Government's valuing of

UNDP's on-the-ground presence and tailored support from a highly qualified team responding directly to needs and priorities further reinforced bilateral engagement over interagency modalities.

UNDP's strong positioning with the national Government creates potential for facilitating UN System coherence, although interagency coordination remains the Resident Coordinator Office's primary responsibility. UNDP's bilateral relationships across multiple ministries and government perception of UNDP as a primary UN interlocutor position it to enable broader UN collaboration. UNDP demonstrated capacity to orchestrate complementary UN agency roles in specific projects but lacked a systematic approach to identify where its ministerial access could facilitate interagency coordination beyond what its own programmes require.

The strategic question: Should UNDP use its strong government positioning to actively facilitate UN System coordination, accepting potential trade-offs with bilateral visibility and resource allocation, or should it focus primarily on bilateral partnerships while participating in interagency work when operationally necessary?

Conclusions

Evaluation Question 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?

UNDP demonstrated strong alignment with national development priorities, consolidating its strategic positioning as a technically relevant partner. The programme strengthened evidence-based policy development, with evaluations and monitoring systems directly informing government decision-making across education, social protection and poverty reduction. UNDP maintained credibility as a neutral, trusted actor enabling engagement in highly sensitive democratic processes, including constitutional conventions and electoral disinformation monitoring, while participatory policy development set new standards for inclusive engagement.

In climate and environment, UNDP's collaboration with the Ministry of Finance positioned climate action within fiscal planning structures, producing the National Climate Financial Strategy and integrating climate expenditure tracking into budgetary systems. Support for operationalizing the socio-ecological just transition framework advanced Chile's NDC commitments through multi-sectoral governance. However, UNDP's environmental positioning showed decline, with its share of vertical funding declining as specialized agencies gained prominence.

Both achievements and constraints were demonstrated with regard to reaching populations at risk of being left behind. UNDP's support to the *Buen Vivir* (Good Living) and Ercilla Plans contributed to securing significant government infrastructure investments for rural and indigenous sectors. Territorial engagement with Los Ríos and Ercilla demonstrated UNDP's capacity for subnational partnerships—a strategic advantage in Chile's NCC context where regional governments represent opportunities for resource mobilization. However, systematic territorial expansion remained limited due to legal barriers, and pilot initiatives lacked scaling pathways. Gender mainstreaming advanced through the Gender Equality Seal, although transformative approaches and impact measurement remained challenging.

Evaluation Question 2: How well has UNDP been able to adapt its strategic positioning and programmatic response to shifts in context and other changes in the operating environment, leveraging its comparative strengths?

UNDP demonstrated adaptive capacity responding to major disruptions—social crisis, pandemic, wildfires—while maintaining government trust across political transitions. The Country Office effectively leveraged comparative advantages in evidence generation, convening ability in polarized environments, and trusted positioning for sensitive processes. Key strategic positioning remained shaped by partnerships established prior to RC delinking, with four core relationships originating in 2001-2011 predating the current strategic context. UNDP maintained the same partnership model without diversification or innovation, reflecting operational continuity rather than strategic repositioning aligned with Chile's graduated country status.

Internal programme architecture was maintained with siloed delivery through distinct team objectives, funding sources, and project-specific budgeting, leaving minimal flexibility for integration. Interagency coherence was largely positive given the adverse landscape for joint resource mobilization, although UNDP's extensive government partnerships functioned as bilateral channels rather than as platforms for UN System coordination.

Evaluation Question 3: How successful were UNDP approaches and initiatives in achieving the intended objectives of the country programme and contributing to broader, longer-term national development goals?

UNDP demonstrated differentiated effectiveness across levels, achieving significant results in strategic policy development while local-level outcomes remained more limited—a pattern aligned with Chile's high-income status and advanced institutional capacities. Longstanding operational partnerships with government institutions enabled programme implementation while contributing to policy development and institutional strengthening in most cases, although partnership evolution was uneven—some progressed toward strategic policy influence while others remained predominantly administrative after two decades. Evidence-based policy development showed strong results where operational support was integrated with rigorous evaluation, directly influencing national plans and strengthening government capabilities for monitoring and systems thinking. Democratic process and electoral support positioned UNDP as key actor accompanying sensitive transitions, with disinformation monitoring becoming institutionalized and participatory processes establishing new standards for inclusive engagement. Gender Equality Seal implementation enabled organizational transformation with concrete regulatory and structural changes, although sustainability challenges emerged post-certification.

Environmental and climate outcomes showed significant achievements alongside implementation challenges. UNDP advanced climate change governance through financial strategies and climate-related expenditures systems, strengthened national biodiversity frameworks, and piloted climate-resilient infrastructure through disaster risk reduction work. However, local demonstrative initiatives effectiveness was at times hampered by coordination challenges, limited stakeholder inclusivity, and activities disconnected from intended ecosystem outcomes. Local demonstrative initiatives

advanced conservation approaches but remained limited in scale without replication mechanisms. Programme-level integration remained constrained, with socio-ecological just transition framed as a separate outcome rather than a unifying framework, and teams operated in silos. Assessing contributions proved challenging due to the lack of decentralized evaluations, performance indicators focused on 'delivery' rather than changes produced, and limited use of theories of change.

Evaluation Question 4: How have internal and external factors influenced UNDP's efficiency to deliver its programme and maximize contributions?

Strategic adaptation and financial sustainability through government cost-sharing enabled continuity, with four longstanding partnerships providing stability across political transitions. However, this model created structural trade-offs. High dependence on operational service delivery consumed capacity, limiting staff availability for expanded strategic policy work. The resource decline over the past decade, combined with an unchanged partnership model despite fundamental shifts in the global multilateral development system, suggests a need for strategic assessment of UNDP's business model sustainability and positioning. There was minimal evaluation practice of government cost-sharing projects constituting 65 percent of expenditure, which constituted an area for improvement.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4.

Recommendations and management response

Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to help strengthen UNDP's contribution to Chile's development priorities. They address key aspects of UNDP's performance under the current programme cycle that could be improved and highlight changes in the external context that should be considered in designing the next country programme.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen strategic positioning through enhanced policy influence and capacity development.

Strategic positioning in high-income countries offers opportunities to leverage operational excellence as a platform for deeper policy influence and substantive capacity development with government partners.

The Country Office should develop explicit criteria for determining where to engage based on comparative advantage, prioritizing work where UNDP's distinctive capabilities in policy innovation, systems thinking, evidence generation, and multi-stakeholder convening create unique value. While maintaining strong operational partnerships, UNDP should ensure that all operational support explicitly integrates capacity development objectives and creates pathways for substantive technical engagement. This would require UNDP to:

- Assess how operational services contribute to long-term capacity strengthening, policy influence, and government autonomy, with targets for increasing the proportion of resources allocated to mandate-driven priorities (gender equality, climate action, leaving no one behind);
- Design all operational support arrangements to include explicit capacity development components, knowledge transfer mechanisms, and planned transitions to full government ownership;
- Negotiate with government partners to use operational reliability as entry point for deeper policy engagement on complex development challenges where UNDP's multidisciplinary expertise adds distinctive value; and
- Develop clear value propositions for each thematic area that articulate how UNDP's engagement strengthens government capabilities and enables sustainable results beyond project cycles.

This approach should ensure financial sustainability through government partnerships while positioning UNDP as a strategic development partner that empowers rather than substitutes for government capacity.

Recommendation 2: Operationalize portfolio-based approaches using just socio-ecological transition as integrating framework.

The just socio-ecological transition concept should be repositioned as an overarching framework guiding all outcomes rather than a standalone result area, enabling integrated programming that matches the complexity of interconnected development challenges.

The next CPD should redesign programme architecture to enable integration. The redesign should:

- Reposition just socio-ecological transition as the programme's unifying objective, with all outcomes contributing to this broader goal;
- Create formal coordination mechanisms (quarterly cross-pillar planning sessions, joint counterpart engagements) that make integration a systematic requirement rather than voluntary coordination;
- Develop theories of change that explicitly articulate complementarities and pathways for synergy across thematic areas;

- Introduce portfolio-level performance indicators measuring integrated results rather than only individual project outputs;
- Explore flexible funding mechanisms or multi-partner projects that enable systematic cross-thematic work.

This requires accompanying changes to resource allocation, monitoring systems, and team incentive structures that currently reinforce siloed operations.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen evaluation practice and adopt developmental evaluation approaches to strengthen adaptive learning and evidence-based decision-making.

In contexts where traditional evaluations are rarely conducted, developmental evaluation offers agile, real-time learning mechanisms that support adaptive management and strengthen accountability.

The Country Office should establish systematic evaluation approaches:

- Pilot developmental evaluation for complex initiatives such as socio-ecological just transition, enabling real-time learning and adaptive management;
- Establish learning infrastructure through annual participatory evaluation sessions, communities of practice, and horizontal exchanges with government counterparts;
- Use government-funded projects to demonstrate solid MEL practices, showing partners how evaluation strengthens transparency and accountability—creating demand for evaluation as a value-added service; and
- Build government evaluation capacity by co-developing monitoring systems serving both project management and institutional learning needs.

This addresses UNDP's evaluation gap while leveraging government partnerships to demonstrate evaluation value for both UNDP accountability and government evidence-based management.

Recommendation 4: Expand territorial engagement through strategic partnerships with regional governments.

Strengthening presence and partnerships with regional governments is critical for serving populations at risk of being left behind, diversifying the funding base, and accompanying Chile's decentralization process.

The Country Office should develop a territorial expansion strategy addressing legal, operational, and capacity constraints. To do so it should:

- Prioritize regions with greatest needs (sacrifice zones such as Quintero-Puchuncaví, territories with Indigenous populations, extreme regions) and demonstrated government interest (Los Ríos, Valparaíso, Metropolitana, O'Higgins, Biobío and Araucanía);
- Develop co-financing mechanisms with regional governments that enable sustainable territorial presence beyond project cycles; and
- Build on successful models such as *AdaptaClima* by embedding territorial innovations within existing national and regional programmes rather than implementing isolated demonstrative pilots.

This expansion should be phased, starting with two or three strategic regions where UNDP can demonstrate value and establish replicable models for broader scaling.

Recommendation 5: Diversify environmental and climate partnerships beyond ministry of environment.

Maintaining and strengthening UNDP's positioning in environment and climate change requires deepening cross-sectoral integration and diversifying financing sources, as Chile's graduation status limits access to vertical funds.

The Country Office should broaden its environmental portfolio. It should:

- Systematize cross-sectoral environmental governance engagement building on existing partnerships. While maintaining the essential partnership with the Ministry of Environment, formalize mechanisms for coordinated engagement across sector ministries whose operations drive environmental impacts (Energy, Mining, Agriculture, Public Works, Finance). This requires developing explicit theories of change showing how UNDP's work with individual ministries contributes to integrated environmental outcomes, and creating inter-ministerial platforms where UNDP's convening capacity enables policy coherence across sectors—positioning UNDP on governance and coordination challenges where multidisciplinary expertise creates value beyond what specialized environmental agencies provide.

- Expand development bank partnerships for climate and environment co-financing. Build on successful models such as *AdaptaClima* to access resources beyond traditional vertical funds while leveraging UNDP's capacity to integrate climate finance with governance, territorial development, and social protection—dimensions essential for just transitions that development banks increasingly prioritize.
- Strengthen internal coordination between environment and governance teams through joint planning and resource allocation. Establish formal mechanisms (joint project design, shared performance indicators, integrated budgeting) enabling systematic collaboration on issues requiring both environmental and governance expertise—water governance, circular economy, environmental justice, territorial climate planning—rather than relying on ad hoc coordination.
- Explore opportunities with state-owned enterprises and private sector actors for environmental programming. Given growing demand for corporate sustainability and Chile's sophisticated private sector, develop engagement modalities enabling UNDP to support public-private environmental governance where government demand exists.

This approach maintains the Ministry of Environment as essential anchor partner and positions UNDP for the cross-sectoral environmental work that just transitions require.

Recommendation 6: Advance transformative gender equality through strategic partnerships and promote institutional demand.

While UNDP has achieved recognized success in gender mainstreaming, advancing toward transformative approaches that address structural inequality requires strategic focus on high-impact opportunities and responding to growing institutional demand in a resource-constrained environment.

The Country Office should concentrate gender efforts to:

- Leverage the four core partnerships (INJUV, MINEDUC, MINVU, AGCID) as platforms for transformative gender work, prioritizing partners where operational relationships create entry points for addressing structural barriers in policy design and service delivery;

- Respond strategically to institutional demand from government entities, state enterprises, regional governments, and municipalities seeking gender equality support, particularly given absence of dedicated gender offices in many institutions—positioning UNDP's gender expertise as value-added service within broader partnerships;
- Develop practical methodologies for intersectional analysis in specific programming contexts (territorial work with Indigenous communities, engagement with 'sacrifice zones,' youth policy with INJUV), moving from conceptual frameworks to operational tools that teams can apply;
- Measure gender transformative results through indicators tracking changes in decision-making authority, resource control, and discriminatory norms rather than only participation metrics—demonstrating value of this approach to government partners through concrete examples.

This requires selective investment in specialized gender expertise and willingness to engage politically sensitive dimensions of gender equality but concentrates efforts where institutional appetite and partnership platforms create realistic opportunities for transformative change within resource constraints.

Management Response

Recommendation 1. Strengthen strategic positioning through enhanced policy influence and capacity development.

Strategic positioning in high-income countries offers opportunities to leverage operational excellence as a platform for deeper policy influence and substantive capacity development with government partners.

The Country Office should develop explicit criteria for determining where to engage based on comparative advantage, prioritizing work where UNDP's distinctive capabilities in policy innovation, systems thinking, evidence generation, and multi-stakeholder convening create unique value. While maintaining strong operational partnerships, UNDP should ensure that all operational support explicitly integrates capacity development objectives and creates pathways for substantive technical engagement.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: PARTIALLY ACCEPTED

The Country Office recognizes the need to further strengthen its strategic positioning in Chile as a high-income country context, leveraging its strong operational delivery as an entry point for deeper policy engagement and capacity development. Over the years, UNDP has built strong partnerships with government counterparts in policy innovation, systems thinking, evidence and knowledge generation, and multi-stakeholder convening. There is room to advance to a more integrated model that combines operational excellence with substantive technical engagement, by adopting a more intentional approach in the design stage, integrating capacity development into all areas of work, and using its operational credibility to negotiate deeper involvement in policy processes.

In the context of a new Government and the formulation of a new CPD, the CO´s programmatic offer will be reviewed to ensure these considerations are taken into account.

Recommendation 1

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Conduct a structured portfolio review to: - assess and systematize how operational services also contribute and have contributed to long-term capacity strengthening, policy influence, and government autonomy. - assess how the proposal of the current projects could be reformulated to match the Government´s priorities. - define value propositions for each thematic area, articulating UNDP's programmatic and operational comparative advantages and their contribution to strengthening government capabilities and achieving sustainable results beyond project cycles. - use these value propositions to guide CPD design, partnership negotiations, and resource mobilization.	July 2026	SMT, Programme Team, M&E Unit		

Recommendation 1

1.2 Review project design templates and quality assurance processes to ensure all interventions include: - explicit capacity development objectives, knowledge transfer mechanisms, and institutional strengthening components - inclusion of clear transition and exit strategies towards full government ownership in all new projects. - these issues are reviewed and acknowledged in the PAC.	September 2026	M&E Unit, Programme Team		
1.3 Strengthening monitoring of policy influence and capacity development by: - integrating indicators related to capacity development, policy influence, and institutional strengthening into programme monitoring frameworks (MEL System) in the design phase. - tracking progress against defined targets, including shifts in resource allocation toward strategic priorities, collecting lessons and improving the system.	September 2026	M&E Unit, Programme Team		

Recommendation 2. Operationalize portfolio-based approaches using just socio-ecological transition as integrating framework.

The just socio-ecological transition concept should be repositioned as an overarching framework guiding all outcomes rather than a standalone result area, enabling integrated programming that matches the complexity of interconnected development challenges.

The next CPD should redesign programme architecture to enable integration.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: REJECTED

The CO acknowledges the importance of strengthening integrated, portfolio-based approaches to address the interconnected nature of development challenges. However, the repositioning of the just socio-ecological transition (JSET) as an overarching programme framework is not considered fully feasible under the new administration, as it is not aligned with the priorities and policy framework of the new government. As such, adopting JSET as the unifying objective of the next Country Programme Document (CPD) will limit strategic alignment and partnership opportunities.

The intent or purpose to guide the next cycle and serve as an overarching principle to advance integrated programming by strengthening portfolio-based approaches will be defined over the following months in the negotiation process of the new CPD with the Government. Currently, the Government is promoting exclusively an energetic transition as well as adapting and implementing the National Strategy developed by the previous administration.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Define an alternative intent/framework (distinct from JSET) aligned with the new government's priorities to guide the next programming cycle with a portfolio-based approach to enable articulation across projects (stakeholder mapping, integrated theory of change).	July 2026	SMT, Programme Team, M&E Unit		

Recommendation 3. Strengthen evaluation practice and adopt developmental evaluation approaches to strengthen adaptive learning and evidence-based decision-making.

The just socio-ecological transition concept should be repositioned as an overarching framework guiding all outcomes rather than a standalone result area, enabling integrated programming that matches the complexity of interconnected development challenges.

The next CPD should redesign programme architecture to enable integration.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: FULLY ACCEPTED

The CO agrees on the importance of strengthening evaluation practices to support adaptive learning, evidence-based decision-making, and accountability. In an NCC context, the use of developmental evaluation approaches could be of potential value and use and its application could be explored and piloted in specific complex initiatives as an alternative to traditional evaluations.

The Country Office is in the process of consolidating a MEL Group within the Programme Team, led by the M&E Unit, with the objective of strengthening monitoring, evaluation and learning systems. In parallel, the Country Office is strengthening collaboration with government counterparts to support the development of institutional monitoring and evaluation capacities, fostering a culture of learning, evidence-based decision-making and adaptive management.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Pilot developmental evaluation approaches by: - Identifying one or two initiatives (e.g., cross-sectoral or innovative programmes) where developmental evaluation approaches can be tested. - Implementing a developmental evaluation for at least one project. - Collecting lessons and assessing feasibility, resource requirements, and added value before scaling.	September 2027	M&E Unit, Programme Team		

Recommendation 3

3.2 Strengthen the MEL Group and consolidate a MEL COP (Community of Practice) **-** Define a roadmap to strengthen this practice. - Develop and implement an internal and external capacity-building plan. - Develop MEL System for a set of specific projects. - Strengthen the MEL System. - Establish regular learning spaces (e.g., annual reflection sessions, thematic reviews, communities of practice). - Promote internal knowledge exchange across teams and thematic areas.	Ongoing	M&E Unit, MEL Group, Programme Team		

Recommendation 4. Expand territorial engagement through strategic partnerships with regional governments.

Strengthening presence and partnerships with regional governments is critical for serving populations at risk of being left behind, diversifying the funding base, and accompanying Chile's decentralization process.

The Country Office should develop a territorial expansion strategy addressing legal, operational and capacity constraints.

Recommendation 4

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: FULLY ACCEPTED

The CO recognizes the importance of further strengthening its territorial engagement to better address subnational inequalities, support the decentralization process, and reach populations at risk of being left behind. Considering that the first democratic election of Regional Governments took place only in 2020, the Country Office has already signed PRODOCs with two of them, marking an important step in establishing these partnerships. It nonetheless agrees on the need to further expand strategic partnerships with regional governments in a phased and targeted manner, taking into account operational, legal and capacity considerations. Building on existing experiences and partnerships, UNDP will prioritize selected regions where there is both clear development need and demonstrated institutional demand.

The CO acknowledges the territorial gap and has prioritized its work with subnational governments since 2022, engaging several governments on key and successful initiatives despite the need of seed funding to promote the work at this level. In this regard, additional efforts are required to build stronger partnerships to advocate for the closure of the inequality gap at the territorial level across different dimensions.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Generate an inter-area working model aimed at subnational governments based on: - Prioritization of territories with potential and interest in engaging with UNDP - Analysis of territorial needs and alignment with successful UNDP experiences at the national and regional/global levels - Development of 'digital notebooks' with territorial data and a tailored value proposition for prioritized territories	December 2026	SMT, Programme Team		

Recommendation 4

4.2 Promote a COP (Community of Practice) focused on sharing best practices among subnational governments on critical topics with proven UNDP experience (gender, resilient infrastructure, data for development), based on existing partnerships (ACHM, Valparaíso, Los Ríos)		SMT, Programme Team		

Recommendation 5. Diversify environmental and climate partnerships beyond ministry of environment.

Maintaining and strengthening UNDP's positioning in environment and climate change requires deepening cross-sectoral integration and diversifying financing sources as Chile's graduation status limits access to vertical funds.

The Country Office should broaden its environmental portfolio.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: PARTIALLY ACCEPTED

During the current programme cycle, UNDP has anchored its work around the Just Socio-Ecological Transition (JSET). This strategic focus has enabled the Country Office (CO) to deepen its engagement across a whole-of-government approach, through its support to the development of the National JSET Strategy. This process catalysed the establishment of an Interministerial Committee, which played a central role in coordinating and leading the formulation of the strategy, thereby strengthening institutional coherence and policy alignment.

At the same time, the CO has successfully leveraged its longstanding work on climate expenditure tracking to position it within a broader environmental and sustainable development agenda. This has contributed to strengthening Chile's leadership in climate finance, consolidating its reputation as one of the most advanced countries in the region in integrating fiscal policy with climate and environmental objectives.

Looking ahead, the CO recognizes the importance of sustaining and scaling up its contributions in these areas. However, in light of the evolving priorities and approaches of the new Government regarding environmental priorities, partnerships and finance, the CO will need to adapt its strategy accordingly to balance the protection of the environment and economic growth and investment. This will require a renewed institutional set-up, enhanced intersectoral coordination, and the adoption of innovative policy, financing and partnership approaches to effectively advance the environmental agenda and maintain its relevance and impact.

Recommendation 5

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Map and analyse best practices and innovative initiatives across UNDP to identify new and effective ways of engaging counterparts across the political spectrum on environmental issues and linkages to other dimensions of development.	December 2026	SMT, Programme Team		
5.2 Facilitate an internal strategic brainstorming process to define tailored approaches and engagement pathways with the new Government on development priorities for the formulation of the next CPD and the strategic intent according to the priorities of the new Government.	June 2026	SMT, Programme Team		
5.3 Seek targeted support from BPPS and RBLAC to refine proposals with an integrated approach in the formulation of new initiatives to vertical funds, expand strategic positioning, and engage new and non-traditional actors in advancing the environmental agenda.	June 2026	SMT, Programme Team		

Recommendation 5

5.4 Identify and leverage collaboration opportunities within the UN System, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and the private sector to strengthen partnerships and scale impact on environmental issues.	December 2026	SMT, Programme Team		

Recommendation 6. Advance transformative gender equality through strategic partnerships and promote institutional demand.

While UNDP has achieved recognized success in gender mainstreaming, advancing toward transformative approaches that address structural inequality requires strategic focus on high-impact opportunities and responding to growing institutional demand in a resource-constrained environment.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: FULLY ACCEPTED

While gender equality is a cross-cutting principle underpinning UNDP's mandate, engagement with the new Government will require a reformulation of the strategy to continue addressing gender challenges through innovative approaches aligned with the Government's narrative and priorities in order to maintain relevance and strategic positioning in this area. This will entail reframing gender equality not only as a rights-based priority, but also as a key enabler of inclusive growth, institutional effectiveness and sustainable development outcomes.

In this context, the CO will need to strengthen its value proposition by demonstrating the tangible contributions of policies and programmes that deal with the gaps affecting women across sectors such as economic development, climate action, governance and social protection. It will also require leveraging data, evidence and impact measurement to highlight persistent gaps and inform decision-making, while promoting integrated and intersectional approaches that address the differentiated needs of women and diverse population groups.

Furthermore, advancing this agenda will depend on building strategic alliances with key government counterparts, the UN system, civil society, and the private sector, as well as enhancing internal capacities to ensure the systematic integration of gender equality across portfolios and throughout the programme cycle.

Recommendation 6

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Strengthen the gender perspective at the design stage of the Programme and projects, ensuring the application of gender analysis and other corporate tools.	September 2026	Gender Advisor, SMT		
6.2 Review and adapt the CO´s narratives to align to the new Government´s approaches, highlighting the need to address women´s gaps across different development dimensions. This action will be supported by an external advisory committee that will contribute to the strategic review of the CO´s approach on these issues.	December 2026	Gender Advisor, SMT		
6.3 Systematize and disseminate the CO´s experience on mainstreaming gender equality at the institutional level through the implementation of the Gender Seal.	December 2026	Gender Advisor, SMT		
6.4 Develop a capacity-building roadmap for Programme teams and counterparts to systematically apply the gender approach across the project cycle with a focus on measuring and reporting transformative gender results.	December 2027	Gender Advisor, SMT		

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Center database (ERC).

Annexes

Annexes to the report (listed below) are available here: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/25833

ANNEX 1: Terms of reference

ANNEX 2: Evaluation framework

ANNEX 3: People consulted

ANNEX 4: Documents consulted

ANNEX 5: Status of country programme action plan (CPAP) outcome indicators

ANNEX 6: CPD Theory of Change

Notes

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