

**OUTCOME EVALUATION:**

**UNDP SURINAME ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

**FINAL REPORT**

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**A. Executive Summary**

This report presents the findings of the outcome evaluation of UNDP Suriname's Energy and Environment Programme for the period 2008 – 2011 undertaken by an independent evaluator over the period 19 November to 18 December 2012. The evaluation was commissioned by the UNDP Suriname country office supported by the Regional Service Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, in line with UNDP corporate policy to evaluate its development cooperation with the host government.

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the programme performance and identify good practices and lessons based on which recommendations would be made to improve implementation of the Energy and Environment programme and its contribution to the Outcomes under the UNDAF/UNDAP 2012 – 2016. The evaluation was undertaken through a review of background and programme documents, and an 8-day data collection mission to Suriname. Interviews were conducted with more than 25 individuals from a cross-section of 10 government and civil society institutions and agencies.

***Findings***

The evaluation found that the programme was consistent with the country's legal framework as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname, Section 6, which stated that: *"the social objective of the state is directed towards the creation and stimulation of conditions, necessary for the protection of nature and the maintenance of ecological balance"*. In addition, principles of sustainable development were fully recognised in the main national planning

instruments (Multi Annual Development Plan 2006-2011 and Government Policy Declaration 2005-2010).

The evaluation noted however, that the country office did not design a specific and integrated energy and environment programme, but undertook several projects, which although relevant individually, did not constitute a holistic programme; thereby failing to attain the collective impact necessary to achieve the outcome. In addition, the lack of integrated programme design also made the programme evaluability difficult due to lack of specific indicators and performance benchmarks at the output and outcome levels. In addition, the articulation of the outcome statement was not consistent with the principles of results-based management and consequently the outcome was not amenable to measurement of results at the outcome level.

Many of the interventions were aimed at enhancing the institutional capacity of duty-bearers, but they were not preceded by a comprehensive capacity needs assessment. Consequently, the capacity development efforts did not adequately address the strategic capacity gaps, such as for example developing capacity for mainstreaming of environment in sector policies through establishment of a specific institution or department as custodian and champion of environmental policy. This strategic omission also somewhat affected the programmes capabilities to holistically address issues at both the policy and downstream levels. Many of the interventions were fundamentally enabling activities targeted at the policy level with minimal engagement at individual and community level.

Overall UNDP budget delivery for the programme period (2008-2011) was satisfactory at 75%, but project implementation was generally characterized by slow start and long inception periods. This was due to multiple factors, among which the status of UNDP as a sub-office of Trinidad and Tobago until 2009 was one contributing factor; and the constant changes in senior management in the civil service was another. In addition, the government had not developed a specific environment policy, which did not make it easy for development partners to coordinate their efforts around a single, integrated programme. This also contributed to the lack of a clear mainstreaming strategy for sustainable environmental management into sectoral policies, firstly because there was no policy to mainstream, and secondly because there was no one institution taking on the role and function for mainstreaming.

UNDP had implemented eight projects under the energy and environment portfolio. Many of them had delivered quite significant outputs as enabling activities for establishing the policy framework and institutional framework for sustainable environmental management. However, some of the projects (notably the Suriname Conservation and Sustainable Land Management) did not fully achieve their objectives due to a variety of factors. Most importantly however, the projects did not fully achieve the desired level of contribution to the outcome at both levels of (i) strengthening the legal and policy frameworks, and (ii) changing community behaviours and practices. However, there was better impact achieved at the policy level than at

the community and grassroots level. This was partly due to the limited capacity within the UNDP country office as well as ineffective partnership strategy.

The absence of a clear strategy at the programme level was not amenable to development of a comprehensive programme sustainability and exit strategy. There were several critical gaps, including (i) lack of strategic institutional development plan, and (ii) inadequate community engagement that raised questions about the sustainability of the programme processes and results.

## **Conclusions**

The energy and environment sector is an important sector for Suriname, and its importance is also underscored by its inclusion in the Constitution, and consistently in the 5-year national development plans. However, the emphasis and prioritization of sustainable environment in broad government policies, was not sufficiently demonstrated at the action level as evidenced by the absence of National Environment Policy.

The programme focus on policy level interventions to the exclusion of downstream interventions meant that there was insufficient ownership of the programme processes and results by the broader populace. Consequently, the interventions will not lead to behaviour change at the individual and community levels, which is a necessary condition for sustainable environmental management.

UNDP's external partners did not place sufficient importance on sustainable environmental management. This is a risk that was not identified through a comprehensive Risks and Assumptions analysis at the planning and design phase.

The absence of an integrated programme approach made it difficult for UNDP to develop a clear implementation strategy that enabled (i) better communication, (ii) better coordination, (iii) better data-collection, and (iv) a better balance between policy and community-level interventions. The CO did not have sufficient results-based management (RBM) capacity which led to a lack of appropriate output and outcome indicators, as well as inadequate application of programming principles of human-rights approaches, gender equality and participatory approaches.

The programme was not likely to be sustainable in the long term because of (i) the limited focus on community-level interventions leading to behaviour change, (ii) limited institutional capacity development, which in turn limits the capacities of national actors to upscale and replicate the initiatives introduced by UNDP. In addition, UNDP did not develop an exit strategy that clearly articulated what UNDP intended to leave behind and who would have the responsibility to continue with the programme processes and maintain its results.

## **Good practices:**

- 1) Developing Annual Work Plans jointly between UNDP and implementing partners.
- 2) Establishment of cluster coordination system for key development clusters, including the environment cluster which is chaired by the Ministry of Labour, Technology Development and Environment.
- 3) Establishment of joint UN/Government oversight mechanisms, including (a) Programme Coordinating Group, and (b) Joint Steering Committee at Permanent Secretary level.

#### **Lessons Learned:**

- 1) A project approach is not very amenable to evaluability of a programme at the outcome level.
- 2) Without a clear national policy and effective mainstreaming strategy, interventions tend to be fragmented resulting in reduced effectiveness of development aid.
- 3) Result orientation and focus tends to be elusive if planning is not based on a clear results framework.
- 4) Progress reporting is a key component of project monitoring.

#### **Recommendations**

Based on the foregoing analysis and lessons learned, the evaluation recommended that UNDP should continue to support government's efforts towards sustainable environmental management, and particularly design future programmes with heavy emphasis on poverty-environment linkages. The evaluation also made nine specific recommendations:

- ① **Recommendation One:** The CO should adopt a Programme-based Approach and support the development of a strategic programme framework for the Energy and Environment portfolio that clearly articulates (a) the programme logic model and strategy, (b) short and medium term objectives, and (c) specific performance benchmarks and indicators for each component.
- ② **Recommendation Two:** The CO should undertake a comprehensive Assumptions and Risk Analysis during programme design to ensure that appropriate risk mitigation strategies are in place and appropriate action is taken timely when the programme goes off-track.
- ③ **Recommendation Three:** UNDP should support and lead the establishment of a (development partner) Coordination Forum for the EE sector in line with the principles of Aid Effectiveness. This should include participation by development partners in the Sector Clusters.
- ④ **Recommendation Four:** UNDP should support the Government to develop and articulate a clear Environment Policy for Suriname to enable development partners to identify specific entry points for coordinating support towards sustainable environmental management.

- ⑤ **Recommendation Five:** UNDP should integrate an effective monitoring and reporting plan in its programme design for the EE portfolio, including the development of specific RME Framework with SMART objectives, specific performance benchmarks and output/outcome indicators.
- ⑥ **Recommendation Six:** The CO should institutionalize RBM and develop capacities of staff and partners in the application of RBM and other programming principles, including human-rights approaches, gender equality and participatory approaches.
- ⑦ **Recommendation Seven:** UNDP should focus its capacity development activities towards strengthening institutional capacity for mainstreaming sustainable environmental management into sectoral policies and planning, including by helping the government identify the lead “champion” agency that will act as custodian, referent, backstopper and enforcer of the Suriname Sustainable Environment Policy.
- ⑧ **Recommendation Eight:** UNDP should support more interventions at the community and grassroots level aimed at changing behaviours and practices in sustainable environmental management, including through strengthening partnerships with other development partners (Conservation International, SGP, etc.) working on livelihood opportunities for the poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.
- ⑨ **Recommendation Nine:** UNDP should develop an exit strategy that clearly articulates what will be left behind when the programme closes, by who and how the programme processes and results would be continued and maintained.