

**UNDP SWAZILAND GOVERNANCE OUTCOME (2011-2015)**

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In line with its corporate policy, UNDP engaged an independent consultant to undertake an evaluation of its Governance outcome over a period of 25 days from 2 September to 7 November 2014.

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the achievements and contributions made towards the outcome during the first three years of programme implementation, including identifying relevant lessons and make recommendations for future programming strategies. The evaluation process included review of official UNDP programme documents, interviews with key programme stakeholders in Government, UNDP, civil society and development partners.

Overall, the evaluation found that key stakeholders agreed that the ‘governance’ programme was both relevant and important; but they also had different expectations and perhaps even different understanding of what should be included in a governance programme. In addition, UNDP’s interventions covered a wide range of governance areas, including support to constitutionalism, civil and political rights, public administration, human rights, public service delivery, judiciary services and democratic governance. Some of these areas did not quite fit together under one programme in a meaningful way.

The evaluation made 12 specific findings with respect to the programme’s design, implementation and delivery of results.

* UNDP interventions were aligned to needs of beneficiary constituents, including government and civil society.
* The programme was also aligned to the priorities articulated in national development frameworks and programmes, as well as UNDP’s corporate strategy and comparative strength.
* However, the programme lacked specific strategic design and therefore interventions lacked internal coherence. Consequently, there was limited complementarity or synergy between individual interventions.
* The programme also covered many areas of good governance and lacked strategic focus. UNDP supported three major areas of governance – political governance, human and civil rights, and economic governance.
* UNDP did not deliver on planned outputs, but its interventions contributed towards the expected outcomes. Evidence suggests that planned outputs were not delivered as per the defined indicators, although the efficacy of some of the indicators was questionable. However, some of the interventions strengthened capacity of critical institutions for good governance, which have huge influence on legal and policy issues.
* Effective contribution was affected by the programme’s lack of a strategy and plan to identify, monitor and mitigate risks and assumptions, and
* There was no formal coordination with other partners’ interventions. While UNDP planned to ‘…utilise its limited core resources as catalytic funding to leverage resources from (other) bilateral and multilateral partners…’ evidence suggests that most of the times, UNDP acted as sole benefactor.
* Programme interventions contributed to highlight critical gaps in the country’s legal and policy frameworks, especially the inconsistences of some of the statutory and customary laws in relation to the constitution.
* Although the planned budget was delivered, expenditures deviated from the programme’s priorities to support transparency, accountability and voice towards supporting policy and legal framework.
* In addition, even though the interventions were of limited scale, most of them still experienced implementation delays.
* The programme’s processes were likely to be sustainable due to strong national ownership combined with UNDP’s capacity building approach, but
* There was no clear exit strategy and sustainability plan for continuing the programme’s results at the level of public services.

Based on analysis of the evidence, the evaluation identified five key lessons that have emerged from programme implementation so far.

**Lesson # 1**. Good governance entails mutual responsibility and accountability between providers and users of the services. If the governance programme is understood as a means to an end, then national ownership should also be defined from the perspective of both providers and users of services.

**Lesson # 2**. In spite of the good intentions of all stakeholders and partners, there may arise events that could prevent the programme from progressing as planned, or from successful completion. The negative impact of risk, can only be mitigated if a comprehensive assessment of the risks and assumptions is done at the time of programme planning, combined with continual monitoring during implementation.

**Lesson # 3**. Principles of results-based management are a critical factor in designing the programme. These principles entail that a programme should be based on a clear logic model with well-defined theory of change; and also that formulation of expected results (outcomes and outputs) as well as their associated indicators will impact on the programme’s capability for effective monitoring and evaluation.

**Lesson # 4**. Building partnerships provide UNDP with an opportunity to improve its effectiveness. Partners not only help expand the resource base, but will also increase the scope and depth of the governance programme through increased scale, and wider reach to intended beneficiaries. This can create the critical mass required to achieve developmental impact, and in that regard can also be a powerful tool for advocacy.

**Lesson # 5**. Sustainability of programme results cannot occur in a vacuum. There has to be a well-thought out plan that clearly defines what needs to be sustained, how and by whom it will be done. This structured approach will help UNDP to make an objective assessment of the additional resources, capacities and partnerships that should be developed to sustain the programme results.

On the whole, the programme’s interventions were relevant and contributed to the broader outcome to ‘strengthen national capacities for promotion and protection of rights’; and UNDP should therefore continue its support for good governance in Swaziland. However, in order to enhance its impact in the governance sector, UNDP should consider the following six specific recommendations.

**Recommendation 1.** UNDP should focus its governance programme on areas where it has the greatest comparative advantage to achieve the greatest impact. In order to do this, UNDP should develop a programme with strategic focus informed by a comprehensive assessment of the governance issues and challenges in Swaziland, and a thorough audit of its comparative advantages, including mapping the strengths and focus of development partners.

**Recommendation 2.** UNDP should develop independent programme document for the integrated governance programme. A focused governance programme with multiple interventions spanning across several sectors (public service, justice, human rights, elections, etc.) would require that there should be a dedicated programme document that serves as its specific road map. The programme document should contain a clear articulation of the programme’s theory of change, including critical risks and assumptions for the programme’s success.

**Recommendation 3.** UNDP should strengthen capacity and practice of results-based management in programme design and implementation. UNDP may also consider engaging an external consultant to review its programme monitoring and evaluation framework, including appropriates and efficacy of its performance indicators.

**Recommendation 4.** UNDP should adopt the strategic capacity development approach in designing and developing interventions. While UNDP had developed a good practice that included supporting development of strategic plans and policy implementation frameworks, it was apparent that many interventions were not based on a comprehensive capacity needs assessment.

**Recommendation 5.** UNDP should develop and strengthen strategic partnerships with other actors in the governance sector. At global level, UNDP expects increasing difficulty in accessing funding in the future, thereby making partnerships even more critical.

**Recommendation 6.** UNDP should develop and implement an exit strategy and sustainability plan for all interventions. Although UNDP’s interventions hade delivered good outputs, including strategic action plans, etc. many of them lacked implementation. UNDP should therefore develop an exit strategy and sustainability plan based on systematic assessment of potential risks and specific risk mitigation strategy that will ensure sustainability of results.