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Thematic Evaluation of UNV Contribution to Volunteer Infrastructures

FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

In the decade which has passed since the International Year of the Volunteer in 2001, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) has made the promotion of national/regional volunteering and national and regional volunteering schemes one of its priorities. In 2004 UNV launched a Guidance Note entitled 'Developing a Volunteer Infrastructure', which marked a milestone in the organisational approach to supporting volunteer infrastructure in the field. The Guidance Notes defines Volunteer Infrastructure as: "... the systems, mechanisms and instruments needed to ensure an environment where volunteerism can flourish", and for the purpose of this evaluation this was refined into an operational definition of volunteer infrastructure (known henceforth as VI) as follows: a UNV supported plan, design, project, or programme for establishing volunteerism at national or regional levels as an ongoing resource to address specific peace and development objectives.

Since that time, UNV has been engaging in projects that have been designed to contribute to one of the four following objectives:

- Reaching a common understanding of volunteerism and a shared understanding of its value;
- Establishing and nurturing an enabling environment;
- Adopting a diversity of approaches to mobilising and facilitating volunteerism;
- Ensuring sustainability.

However UNV has never commissioned a broad corporate evaluation to study the impact, results, best practices and limitations in its approach and support to volunteer schemes. Hence this evaluation was endorsed by UNV Senior Management Team (SMT) in 2012 as an important corporate thematic evaluation, with findings and recommendations of this evaluation intended to contribute to charting and prioritising the course that UNV interventions take from 2014 onwards.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The scope of this corporate thematic evaluation was identified at three inter-connected levels of society that UNV projects commonly address: volunteer, volunteer-involving organisation and public policy levels. The geographical scope of the evaluation included 19 countries and 2 regional programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The evaluation methods included desk review, interviews, focus groups and eight country missions to Peru, Nicaragua, Nepal, Vietnam, Cape Verde, Liberia, Togo and Burkina Faso; overall 22 projects were reviewed. A total of 220 respondents were interviewed and 23 focus groups were conducted; 281 documents were also reviewed. The result of the evaluation is this detailed report covering approach, impact and sustainability of UNV support to volunteer schemes since 2004, supported by eight country mission reports, an initial Inception Report and an interim Synthesis Report.

III. MAIN FINDINGS

In the analysis of trends and characteristics within the eight year period, four categories of UNV-supported volunteer infrastructure (VI) projects were identified:

Volunteer Schemes are national schemes facilitating formal, usually long-term volunteering placements across a wide range of sectors.

Coordinating Body projects establish or strengthen a coordinating body to in turn strengthen the capacity of Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs)/Volunteers to perform their activities more effectively and efficiently across various sectors, and/or mobilising volunteers around particular themes.

National Network projects look to establish or strengthen existing networks of VIOs across sectors.

Nested Projects are those projects which build capacity of volunteers and/or volunteer managers in a particular area or sector, as part of a wider (non-UNV) project.

Regional Volunteer Programmes facilitate formal, usually long-term volunteering between countries.

UNV-supported project objectives fell within four broad areas: *Influencing volunteer-enabling legislation or policy; Building capacity for effective volunteerism; Volunteer mobilisation (recruitment and deployment); Promotion, recognition and public discussion of volunteerism.*

Relevance

One of UNV's greatest achievements is its consistency in ensuring objectives of VI projects are aligned with priorities and policies of host nations and local stakeholders and partners. UNV has a record of extensive consultation prior to the start of project implementation; building on existing relationships in-country and understanding of context through previous projects; and undertaking work that is relevant to both global development and the volunteerism sector.

To date, the UNV VI portfolio of work has not been directed by an overall corporate strategy to guide/direct UNV's engagement with VI against a specific theory of change. However, whilst the activities and outputs of VI projects vary considerably across this cluster of UNV's work, in most instances there is considerable alignment with UNV's mandate as determined by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and to the four 'pillars' of the Developing Volunteer Infrastructure Guidance Note 2004, particularly: 'Reaching a Common Understanding of Volunteerism and a Shared Appreciation of its Value'; and 'Establishing a Nurturing and Enabling Environment'. Less explicit attention is paid to 'Adopting a Diversity of Approaches to Mobilising and Facilitating Volunteerism' (within a given country) and 'Ensuring Sustainable Funding' – particularly with regard to the early development of resource mobilisation strategies.

The variety of VI projects, (including national volunteer schemes, coordinating bodies, national networks, nested projects and regional schemes) precludes analysis of the validity of VI project objectives en masse; however, individual project activities and outputs have been mostly relevant and consistent with intended impacts and effects. That said, objectives, activities and outputs have not always been appropriate to project timeframes, and have in some cases been highly ambitious.

Effectiveness

In terms of the effectiveness of VI projects, the evaluation team conclude that there are notable achievements in the areas of: influencing volunteer-enabling legislation (often building on years of previous work and/or achieved through collaboration with others); policy and the promotion, recognition and public discussion of volunteerism (a well-established component of UNV's wider work); and volunteer mobilisation (although downward target revision and demand that outstripped targets were commonplace). Factors contributing to these achievements include high levels of political good will and support, national government ownership and good collaboration with other international VIOs (in both resource mobilisation and project implementation) and other project partners.

Objectives relating to the building of capacity for effective volunteerism saw mixed levels of achievement, although assessment of this was complicated by weak Monitoring and Evaluation of the area. Whereas numbers of volunteers/VIOs trained appear high, a lack of formal capacity building strategies for coordinating bodies/host Ministries is recognised as a weakness of UNV-supported VI projects and a major factor in cases where project objectives were not achieved.

Overall, UNV have taken a successful participatory approach to involving stakeholders in the early stages of project design and consultation, but the diversity, roles and responsibilities of partners tends to fade over the course of implementation. Strategies used to engage and involve partners tend to be limited to multi-stakeholder meetings and workshops, but tools for project-driven civic

engagement have included public festivals and awareness raising events, media coverage, web-based communication and social media. Whilst these seemed to have a positive effect on the achievement of results, there is less evidence of reaching more marginalised populations.

Efficiency

The evaluation team concludes that VI projects were often able to achieve considerable results with minimal financial and human resources at their disposal. However there are also examples of projects where UNV investment did not generate the desired results, resource allocation was not well-aligned with project objectives, and there were considerable project budget variations between projects which implemented similar sets of activities in similar contexts. Furthermore, aims and objectives have often been ambitious for short project timeframes.

The deployment of UN Volunteers in a service capacity to VI projects represents a part of the unique UNV offer and a cost-effective means of project support. However the high turnover of UNV Field Unit staff and international UN Volunteers can act as a barrier to successful implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) requires significant improvement across the breadth of UNV's VI engagement: project documents lack M&E frameworks; project baselines are rare, and project progress often poorly monitored. There is scope for clarification of *what* is to be monitored, *how* and *for what purpose* at project level. In addition, knowledge generated and capacity developed is not well maintained at the end of VI projects.

Impact and Results

There is evidence across the UNV cluster of VI projects of impact and results at all three of the inter-connected levels within the evaluation scope - individual, organisational and policy level. UNV have undoubtedly played an important role (in conjunction with others) in: the promotion of a better understanding of volunteerism and appreciation of its value, both to the individual and local/national peace and development goals; increasing mobilisation of volunteers within and between nations; influencing policies and regulatory frameworks at local and national level; and, to some degree, building capacity at individual, organisational and national levels.

UNV makes a distinctive contribution through its legitimacy and neutrality, to act as a catalyst and facilitator for VI and in the promotion of and fostering the environment for volunteerism more broadly. This is particularly crucial for garnering high level political support, which is essential for the sustainability of VI.

Gender and Social Inclusion

Gender dynamics and gender issues have not been well promoted within VI projects; certainly gender has not been mainstreamed. Gender within VI projects, most commonly understood as the ratio of female to male volunteers/trainees, is not consistently integrated into basic programming. There are only a very few examples of specific outreach efforts to target women amongst the VI projects or gender training, and little formal consideration of how the gender dimension affects the process of volunteer recruitment, deployment and management.

The vast majority of beneficiaries of VI projects are youth (18-35 years), through targeting (e.g. Liberia, Peru, Nepal) or by default due to the demographics of developing countries. However there was little evidence of special efforts to widen access to volunteer schemes beyond graduates/students or target particular sub-sectors of youth, such as marginalised ethnic groups, youth with disabilities or street youth.

Sustainability

Half of the 22 projects within the scope of this evaluation ended in 2012 or are ongoing (with a further 5 finishing in 2011), and so a discussion of long term sustainability of project results is

somewhat premature. There are strong flourishing sustainable programmes in some countries such as Togo, where Government taken full ownership of the volunteer scheme. Whilst strong project results and partnerships were achieved within the project life-time across remaining projects; results, partnerships and activities tend to wane once UNV support ceased and the VI was handed over to full national implementation.

The experience of UNV-supported projects proves that national ownership and political commitment is insufficient without investment: where governments do not fully embed VIs within planning and budgeting systems, projects are not sustainable. Despite being a key tenant of UNV's philosophy of VI, the intention to ensure something permanent is in place at the end of the project is not typically well-articulated in project design. Rather than an inherent inability of these projects to yield sustainable results, the key challenge to sustainability is the lack of consideration paid to incorporating exit or phase out strategies in the project documents. Whilst UNV has been successful in mobilising funds and brokering partnerships for project start-up, success in supporting project resource mobilisation as part of an exit/sustainability strategy for VI projects appears to have been more limited (either absent from design, or included as an objective that is not achieved).

However the impact of UNV engagement in volunteer schemes on its own business model has been considerable and is reflected in the new 2014 – 2017 Strategic Framework, where volunteer schemes are identified as one of five strategic priorities, which ensures sustainability of support for this modality institutionally.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The strengths of UNV's cluster of infrastructure work include the strategic use of UN Volunteers (national and international) to support VI projects and the creation of an 'enabling environment' through support to drafting and/or implementing volunteer-enabling legislation or policy. One of the strongest attributes of UNV VI projects is their relevance to local, national and regional priorities and timely introduction. UNV's broad definition of VI allows for projects to be shaped to meet particular needs within a specific cultural context, and UNV's ability to respond to demand is recognised and valued by national stakeholders. Three highly valued attributes of UNV are its neutrality, legitimacy and convening power as a UN organisation, which facilitate high level political commitment, disparate stakeholders and tap the wider UN resources.

Best practices or success in UNV-supported VI projects are identified as:

Volunteer schemes: the well-organised management processes and systems; formal protocols; transparent and efficient mechanisms for volunteer assessment and recruitment of the PROVONAT project in Togo. The scheme saw particularly high demand from potential volunteers, and has one of the lowest costs per volunteer of those analysed. UNV's initial project investment catalysed a sustainable state-supported a programme.

Coordinating bodies: the development of a comprehensive internationally recognised approach to capacity building in China; achieving autonomy and/or statutory recognition of the coordinating body in Vietnam and Cape Verde; successful promotion and recognition of volunteerism through a wide-ranging programme of events that reach wide audiences in China and Vietnam; and the volunteer passport introduced in Cape Verde.

Networks: the low costs and high benefits of networks in Peru and Nicaragua demonstrated how leadership from civil society can be fostered in a manner that is highly participatory and sustainable.

Nested Projects: the clear demarcation of UNV's role and responsibility (and that of the volunteers it deployed) within the UNDP Local Governance and Community Development Programme in Nepal, enabled UNV to utilise its experience and expertise and enhance the outcomes of the programme, whilst also allowing UNV to meet its own strategic objectives.

A number of lessons learnt have also been identified in respect of UNV's engagement on VI. There are certain similarities in design weaknesses across many of the project documents, including overly ambitious aims and objectives within short project timeframes, and failure to take into account certain key risks or reliance on mistaken assumptions. In many of the Government-led national volunteer schemes, there is weak representation from civil society and few cases of private sector[1] and academic institutional partnership working. Organisational capacity building has been identified as the 'weak link' in the UNV results chain; the assumption that capacity will be built indirectly, through working with/exposure to UNV personnel and UN volunteers is risky.

These are a number of interesting examples of innovation within VI projects, which are prime for replication and showcasing. However project documents do not conceptualise VI projects through a learning lens, in a way that generates evidence and tests innovation.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.) UNV may wish to **clarify its terminology** within this thematic area, as the term "volunteer infrastructure" is agreed by most stakeholders to be outdated and imprecise[2].

There is no 'one size fits all' approach for UNV's VI engagement. However there are a number of factors which are conducive to successful UNV-supported VI projects, which occur at different stages around the project cycle:

2.) Project Scoping

New VI projects should build upon a pre-existing, consolidated UNV presence in country in order to capitalise on reputation and relationships built over a number of years. Engagement can be incremental, for example new projects can build upon a foundation laid by a prior UNV project[3]. UNV should identify strong cross-sector national ownership before investing heavily at the country level and negotiate strongly for government commitment of financial/in-kind resources to the project from the outset. UNV should maintain its current practice of a significant lead-in period prior to project inception, during which substantial stakeholder consultation and partnership building is carried out to develop the way forward and build national ownership.

3.) Project Design

UNV should conduct strong situation analysis and intervention modalities should be selected according to the region/context, selecting from the 'menu' of successful interventions within the UNV portfolio[4]. Resources are best targeted to utilise and support existing structures and entities (be it government or non-government coordinating bodies, agencies or institutions with the mandate to support volunteerism etc), rather than establishing new structures – particularly where projects are of a limited timeframe (i.e. two years).

There is a notable gap in research in the field of VI which UNV is well-placed to address, given its international mandate to lead the volunteer sector. UNV support to the production of high quality

[1] The private sector is mostly absent altogether from both documentation and practice and the potential for placements or volunteer career opportunities through the private sector has not been explored.

[2] It is noted that volunteer infrastructure has been replaced by "volunteer schemes" in the UNV Strategic Framework 2014-2017 which is a welcome development.

[3] For example a capacity building project is undertaken which targets VIOs, this is then followed by a project which supports the establishment of a coordinating body.

[4] These include: establish/strengthen volunteer schemes, coordinating bodies, VIO/volunteer networks, support to policy/legislation development, promotion and research in volunteerism.

research outputs and the dissemination of research products (through channels which will stimulate interest), would represent a 'quick win' in the influencing of the VI modality.

4.) Project Design/Implementation: Capacity Development

UNV should build clear strategies and outputs on capacity development into all VI projects, articulating the logical chain of activities and results which will allow the required knowledge, skills and processes to be institutionalised by the volunteer coordinating body. To fulfil UNV's vision of sustainable VI, an explicit component to build capacity of host agencies or coordinating bodies must be a key objective of every project. Indeed capacity development may need to precede the establishment of a volunteer programme (rather than running concurrently).

UNV could capitalise on a decade of support to VI projects, to more explicitly facilitate lesson learning and more widely offer technical assistance to build national capacity for VI initiatives. Mechanisms could include support to national/regional conferences and seminars, continued support to study visits between countries to observe good practices in VI and introduction of designated regional advisory services on VI development and implementation.

Some UNV staff (HQ and Field Unit) may require professional development in order to support VI project design or implementation. UNV should undertake a capacity needs assessment exercise in-house, in order to identify any capacity gap. This could be addressed through study visits of UNV personnel to successful VI projects, learning chats by consultants who designed the VI projects or other means.

5.) Project Design/Implementation - Partnership

UNV should convene and collaborate with bi-lateral VIOs and other agencies present at the country level, to add value by identifying synergies and preventing duplication of national efforts (share capacity, best practices and established systems, maximise resources etc). Within partnerships of the UN system to deliver VI projects, UNV should ensure clearly defined roles and devolved responsibility are identified through MoUs (with UNDP, for example).

UNV-supported projects should include a partnership strategy in Project Documents or develop this during the inception period. All sectors - Government, civil society, academia (and where relevant private sector) - should be represented in VI project management or oversight, such as steering committees. UNV should test the involvement of the private sector in VI projects via strategic pilots, as host agencies to volunteers, or for exploring links for alumni employment.

6.) Project Implementation – Gender and Diversity

UNV should analyse gender within VI projects beyond the ratio of female to male volunteers/trainees; this could be achieved partially by standardising gender-responsive project indicators. UNV should integrate gender into basic programming through supporting projects to set project-level gender strategies, promote gender training and formulate gender policy in coordinating bodies/implementation agencies. More VI projects should include specific outreach efforts to target women amongst the VI projects and initiatives to understand gender differences in control/access to project resources. Research into how the gender dimension affects the process of volunteer recruitment, deployment and management could be included in objectives of some projects.

UNV should direct project resources towards the piloting of projects that target particular sub-sectors of youth; and not limit the participants of volunteer schemes to university graduates alone.

7.) Strategic Direction/Oversight

It is strongly recommended that a specific results framework or strategy be developed to support this thematic area of UNV's work. Such a framework would 'nest' underneath the UNV Strategic

Framework 2014-17[5] and represent good practice in managing for development results. In addition, a Steering Committee (or Expert Panel) can be established to offer strategic guidance on UNV's VI interventions and act as the primary point of coordination, retaining comprehensive oversight of UNV's VI portfolio in its entirety.

8.) Monitoring and Evaluation

UNV should pay very strong attention to establishing consistency of Monitoring and Evaluation across VI projects. It is important that clear lessons should be appropriately captured from UNV-supported projects; in order to generate useful and appropriate evidence to support UNV advocacy and influencing, and to identify practices and tools for replication. UNV must invest in institutional systems and practices at the field level in order to properly capture, store and retain monitoring and evaluation data, and facilitate easy access to data by UNV Field Unit staff, in order to capture innovation and enhance knowledge sharing and learning.

UNV should follow well-established UNDP project cycle guidance and templates. Every project should be subject to a Final Evaluation (within six months of completion). As UNV cannot always control evaluation activity by partners, it is crucial to ensure project reporting that is of good quality and sufficient detail – either via project completion reporting or annual reporting.

At the project level, UNV should: ensure the consistency of Results and Resources Frameworks (comprehensive, detailed, including qualitative as well as quantitative indicators for measuring progress); standardise the development of project Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks in the project inception phase; and include a full time M&E Officer (UN volunteer) on each project staff. Specific to VI projects, UNV should support national partners to conduct effective monitoring of participation in training delivered by volunteer coordinating bodies, network participation and record-keeping on volunteer scheme participants (e.g. on career trajectories of volunteers to demonstrate results).

[5] i.e. output 1.4 of the Programme framework would then become the Impact statement of the 'volunteer infrastructure' strategic framework.

ACRONYMS

AIM	Advocacy, Integration and Mobilisation (Programme)
APPR	Annual Project Progress Reports
ARLAC	Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean (Region)
AVI	Australian Volunteers International
BVF	Beijing Volunteering Federation (China)
CCIVS	Coordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service
CIDT	Centre for International Development and Training
CNPV	National Committee for Promotion of Volunteerism (Senegal)
CNV	National Volunteer Corps (Cape Verde)
CONVOL	The National Commission on Volunteerism (Peru)
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organisation(s)
CV3A	Volunteer Corps of the Third Age (Senegal)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDS	Domestic Development Services
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DRM/DRR	Disaster Reduction Management/Disaster Risk Reduction
EAG	Evaluation Advisory Group (UNV)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	Evaluation Unit (UNV)
ECOWAS VP	Economic Community of West African States Volunteer Programme
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GiV	Gender in Volunteerism
HCYU	Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HQ	Headquarters

IAVE	International Association for Volunteer Efforts
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPU-IPC	Inter-Parliamentary Union – Inter-Parliamentary Council
IVD	International Volunteer Day
IYV	International Year of the Volunteer
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
MIMP	Ministry of Women and Vulnerable People (Peru)
MoA/MoU	Memorandum of Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding
NDVS	National Development Volunteer Service (Nepal)
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NGO(s)	Non-Government Organisation(s)
NYVS	National Youth Volunteer Service (Liberia)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PA/O	Programme Assistant/Officer (UNV Field Unit)
PNVB	Burkina Faso Volunteer Programme
POEM	Programme Officers Empowerment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RIVERSEE	Regional Integration through Volunteers Exchanges for Reconciliation of South East Europe (Programme)
RNV	National Network of Volunteering Organisations (Nicaragua)
SEEYN	South East Europe Youth Network
SVF	Special Voluntary Fund
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund

UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
V4D	Volunteerism for Development
VI	Volunteer Infrastructure
VIO(s)	Volunteer Involving Organisation(s)
VKIS	Volunteer Knowledge and Innovation Section
VLA	Volunteer Living Allowance
VOICE	Volunteer Information and Coordination Centre (Sri Lanka)
VOSESA	Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa
VRA	Volunteer Recruiting Agencies
VSA	Volunteer Sending Agencies
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
VVIRC	Vietnam Volunteer Information and Resource Centre
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. INTRODUCTION

In the decade which has passed since the International Year of the Volunteer in 2001, UNV has made the promotion of national/regional volunteering and national and regional volunteering schemes one of its priorities. However UNV has never commissioned a broad corporate evaluation to study the impact, results, best practices and limitations in its approach and support to volunteer schemes. Hence this evaluation was endorsed by UNV Senior Management Team (SMT) in 2012 as an important corporate thematic evaluation, with findings and recommendations of this evaluation intended to contribute to charting and prioritising the course that UNV interventions take from 2014 onwards.

1.1 UNV's Vision and Mandate in relation to Volunteer Infrastructure

In 1976, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 31/1666 mandated the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop and expand activities in the field of domestic development services (DDS), defined as organised efforts by local indigenous groups and communities to promote self-help. UNV was to act as a catalyst, establishing contacts with these organisations and developing an exchange programme among developing countries in the same region. Over time, the important role played by voluntary and community organisations in social and economic issues such as social inclusion, poverty alleviation and fostering full employment were highlighted, and it was identified that, "to flourish, [volunteering] requires an effective infrastructure, both at national and local level, to help mobilise, support and match volunteers to appropriate organisations and tasks."

As part of the marking of the first International Year of the Volunteer (IYV 2001), the Inter-Parliamentary Council (IPU-IPC) adopted a resolution urging parliaments and their members around the world to identify and adopt policies to encourage volunteerism and to establish a legislative framework supportive of voluntary action. However the capacity of some countries to fully take advantage of the potential of volunteerism was impaired by the lack of a viable volunteering infrastructure. Since IYV 2001, UNV has made the promotion of national/regional volunteering and national and regional volunteering schemes one of its priorities.

The UNV Volunteer Infrastructure: Guidance Note (2004) defines Volunteer Infrastructure (VI) as: **"... the systems, mechanisms and instruments needed to ensure an environment where volunteerism can flourish".** Since this is a rather broad definition, covering a varied range of structures and methods aimed to create a supporting environment for both individual volunteers and VIOs, for the purpose of this evaluation the operational definition is: **a UNV supported plan, design, project, or programme for establishing volunteerism at national or regional levels as an ongoing resource to address specific peace and development objectives.**

1.2 Overview of the Methodology

The ***Scope of the Evaluation*** was identified at three inter-connected levels of society that UNV projects commonly address: volunteer, volunteer-involving organisation and public policy levels. The scope included 22 projects across 19 countries and 2 regional programmes launched between 2004 and 2012, as shown in table 1 below (along with the means of data collection):

Table 1: Evaluation scope

	Country/ Regional programme	Document review	Telephone interviews	Field mission
Tier 1	Peru (3 projects)	✓	✓	✓
	Nicaragua (2 projects)	✓	✓	✓
	Nepal	✓	✓	✓
	Vietnam	✓	✓	✓
	Cape Verde	✓		✓
	Liberia	✓	✓	✓
	Togo	✓		✓
	Burkina Faso	✓		✓
Tier 2	Mali	✓	✓	
	Mozambique	✓	✓	
	Niger	✓	✓	
	Senegal	✓	✓	
Tier 3	Sri Lanka	✓		
	China	✓		
	Benin	✓		
	Honduras	✓		
	Lesotho	✓		
	Pakistan	✓		
	Ecuador	✓		
Regional	RIVERSEE[6] Programme	✓	✓	
	ECOWAS[7] Volunteer Programme (VP)	✓	✓	✓

The geographical scope was provisionally set by the evaluation ToRs (Annex A) and the UNV Evaluation Unit briefing document[8]. The rationale for selecting the countries/programmes for evaluation was to achieve a regional balance and include representation of the diversity of UNV engagement in this field; however, selection was also driven to some extent by availability of data, institutional memory and envisaged access to respondents.

Data Collection

Preliminary evaluation methods included a scoping mission to UNV HQ in Bonn, initial document review and telephone interviews with HQ staff. Ensuing in-depth data collection included Institutional Mapping of UNV's modalities for support to VI in varying contexts and through varying funding arrangements; and identification of key policies and policy developments within the evaluation period.

Eight country missions took place between 18th October and 13th December 2013, in order to collect information on the relevance, quality of design and implementation of the VI schemes and to assess the results and, where relevant, the impact of the projects on beneficiaries. Missions were locally prepared and supported by national consultants. During the missions, the evaluators met with a wide range of stakeholders, implementing partners and beneficiaries, and drew on tools from the V Methodology toolkit to support consultations. Respondents varied considerably according to country/project context, but included National Governments, UNV's development partners,

[6] Regional Integration through Volunteers Exchanges for Reconciliation of South Eastern Europe Programme.
[7] Economic Community Of West African States – the ECOWAS Volunteer Programme HQ was visited during the Burkina Faso field mission.
[8] UNV's Contribution to Volunteer Infrastructures: Background document summarising relevant evaluations, August 2013.

volunteers, VIOs, recipients of volunteer activity such as community members etc. The data collection was guided by the Evaluation Matrix which is included in Annex B.

A total of 283 documents were reviewed, 227 respondents were interviewed and 23 focus groups conducted. The details of these can be found in Annexes C and D. Data triangulation was built into the evaluation methodology in the inception phase and included triangulation via multiple methods and through multiple respondent groups.

Data analysis and presentation

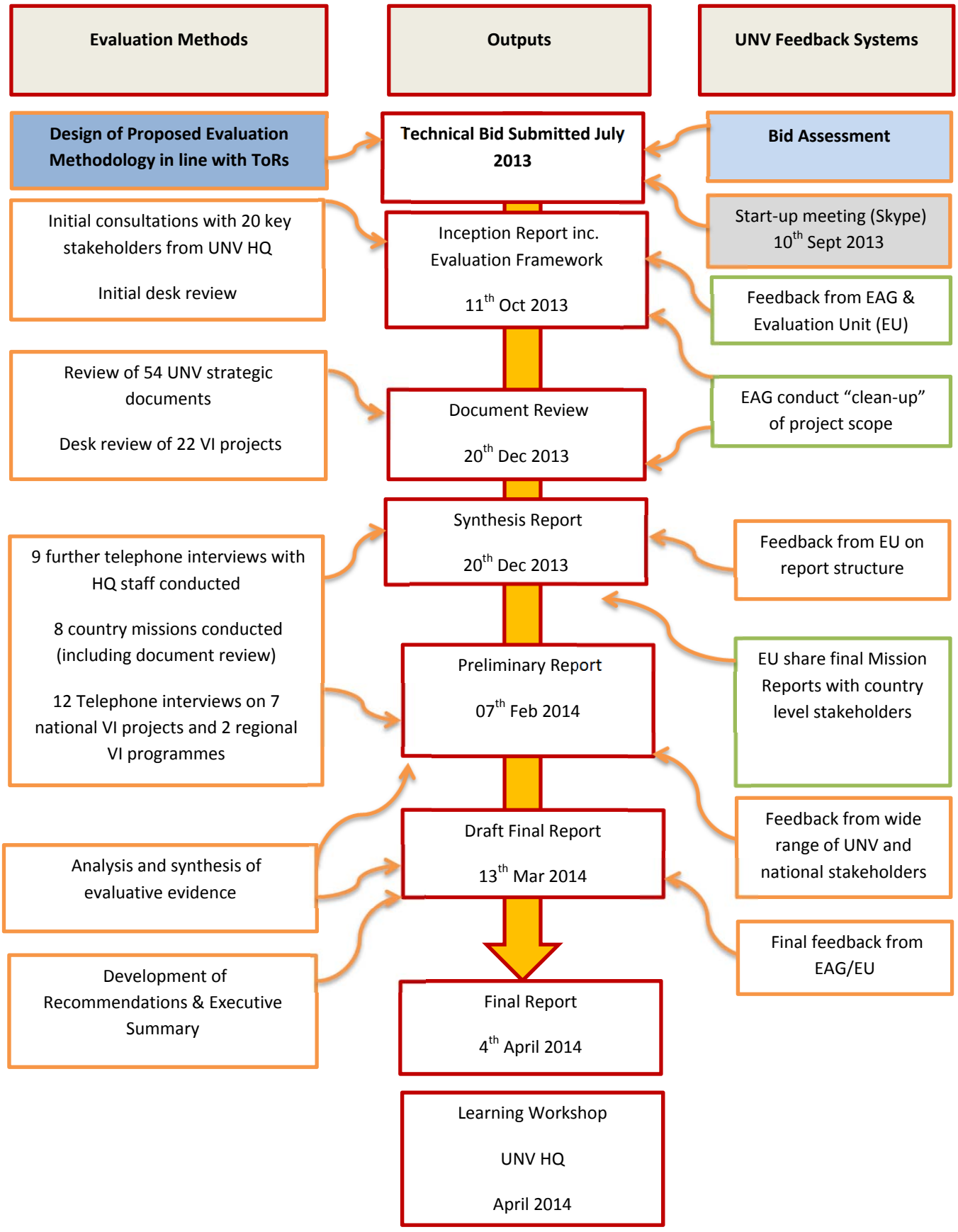
The data was analysed using the five standard evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) – **relevance**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency**, **impact** and **sustainability** and as per the ToRs, added a **gender** focus.

The evaluation sought to establish the extent of *UNV's catalytic role* in promoting regional/national volunteering and to document the institutional shift towards public policy support within the evaluation period. The evaluation analyzed the value of the UNV mandate to lead the volunteer sector, set the agenda and influence other VIOs, development partners and national governments in support of volunteerism; and the extent to which UNV has been successful in leveraging resources and capitalizing on relationships within the UN structure. This evaluation sought to compare what was achieved in the countries evaluated, against UNV's organisational intent, as expressed in strategies and guidance notes.

There were six **Deliverables** for the evaluation: Inception Report/Evaluation Matrix, Desk Review, Synthesis Report, Preliminary Report, Draft Final Evaluation Report and Final Evaluation Report. The eight country mission reports were prepared as separate documents and are provided in a separate annex.

See figure 1 below, an overview of the complete evaluation process, which shows evaluation methods, evaluation outputs and the mechanisms of UNV feedback.

Figure 1: Summary of evaluation process



1.3 Limitations of the Evaluation

The evaluation encountered a number of limitations or challenges, which broadly fell into three categories including:

Late definition of evaluation scope

Defining the scope of the VI evaluation posed an institutional challenge for UNV. Whilst the clean-up exercise undertaken by UNV HQ was useful in clarifying the scope of the evaluation, it occurred whilst the first two country missions were already underway. This restricted time for preparation for the earlier evaluation missions by both international and national consultants, and in some cases, projects to be included within the country evaluation scope were decided only after the mission had started.

Access to project documentation

The absence of consistence in the documentation of progress, challenges and results in most of the VI projects, combined with the lack of timely access to Project Documentation, meant that document review presented a logistical challenge for the evaluation team. Access to Project Documentation was limited in some countries/projects for a number of reasons - that projects had never been reviewed or evaluated; that documentation was held by the implementing partner and not available to the evaluation team; that there was weak or absence of institutional memory due to staff turnover. Due to a combination of the first two limitations, some important documents were not identified by the evaluators.

Procurement delays

The thorough UNDP procurement process caused some delays in the hiring of national consultants, which resulted in very limited time for the international and national consultants to work together to adequately prepare for country missions.

Selection of method

The initial evaluation methodology anticipated an online survey be conducted to achieve breadth of data collection. During the scoping mission, this method was ruled out, due to a recent large survey conducted by UNV which may have led to 'respondent fatigue' and due to the poor access to the internet in some countries within the evaluation scope.

Bench-marking UNV's engagement

The ToRs called for a 'bench-marking' of UNV against other VIOs or development agencies engaging through a VI mechanism. The closest point of comparison for this was bi-lateral VIOs that partnered UNV to engage with volunteer schemes at the country level, or engaged in alternate schemes/ approaches. The evaluation did not achieve good access to respondents or data from similar international VIOs, although such findings would have helped to highlight the UNV comparative advantage or value addition.

2. RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

Relevance of VI projects has been assessed at two levels: to regional/national and local stakeholders' needs and requirements, and to global and sector-wide priorities vis-à-vis volunteer infrastructure. The coherence of UNV's approach in engaging with volunteer infrastructure, UNV's strategic priorities and intervention logic and conceptualisation are all discussed within this section.

2.1 UNV Intervention Logic and Strategic Priorities

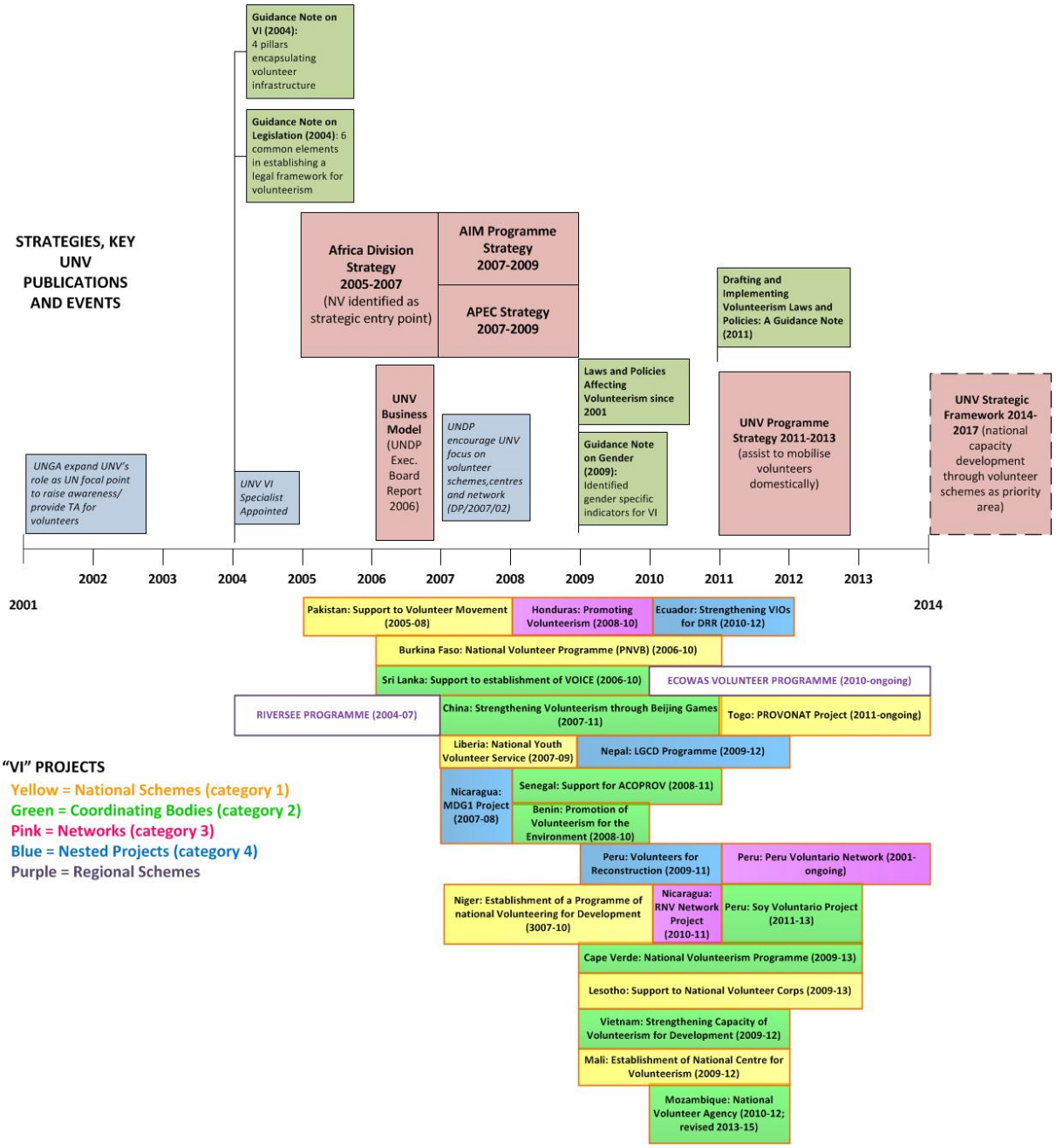
An institutional mapping was undertaken in relation to volunteer infrastructure, and is summarised in the timeline below. This shows all relevant UNV strategies, influential publications and UNGA guidance to UNV relating to volunteer infrastructure for the evaluation period of 2004 – 2012 and depicts the VI projects undertaken within this time period.

The timeline in Figure 2 shows a number of UNV strategies that reference volunteer infrastructure. However, until the drafting of the UNV Strategic Framework 2014 – 2017, there had never been an overall corporate strategy to guide/direct UNV's engagement with volunteer infrastructure, or offer a specific theory of change. The two Guidance Notes published in 2004 were very significant in outlining best practices in volunteer infrastructure and in informing and influencing UNV's support at the country level. As stated in the Guidance Note on Developing Volunteer Infrastructure: "While there is no common model of volunteering that works in every country, there are common elements that can work together to strengthen volunteerism as a strategic resource for development… These actions, taken together, form the backbone for the development of an effective volunteer infrastructure."

There was general sign-posting of UNV towards volunteer infrastructure, from the UNGA (in 1976, 1999, 2001, 2007, and 2012) and UNV corporate strategies, which do make mention of engagement with volunteer structure throughout the evaluation period; therefore a broad rationale for UNV's engagement exists. However within the evaluation period there was no VI-focused strategy or thematic results framework, or 'baseline' to allow the measurement of achievement against corporate intent. Put simply, one cannot measure whether UNV did what it said it would do. UNV's VI interventions have not been conceptualised or managed as a holistic 'portfolio' or cluster; at times engagement on VI has been led by responsiveness to national requests and at times through proactive engagement by individual staff at Headquarters or in the UNV Field Units. Of the 22 projects that form the focus of this evaluation, 9 are understood from Project Documents to have been directive (instigated by UNV) whilst 4 are seen as responsive to national requests[9]. It is unclear from the remaining 9 where the engagement on VI originated, given that in most cases it was built upon previous, occasionally long term UNV presence in the country. In some instances, the UNV VI was a component of a wider UNDP programme (as in Nepal and Lesotho).

[9] Responsive include: Vietnam; Nicaragua RNV; Cape Verde; Burkina Faso; Senegal; Honduras; China; Peru Volontario Network; Pakistan. Directive include: Peru Reconstruction; Niger; Ecuador; Nicaragua MDG1.

Figure 2: Timeline of recent UNV engagement with Volunteer Infrastructure



Critically, VI was identified as a strategic entry point within one regional strategy, the Africa Division strategy of 2005. This identified the need for UNV to support governments according to its technical capacity, rather than back-stopping across a broad spread of sectors. The other strategic entry point identified was Youth, and these twin focal points have sustained, in particular within the modality of volunteer schemes, but youth also features as the predominant beneficiary group in most of UNV's VI-supported projects. Youth are not always identified as a target group, but given that in many countries of UNV's operation youth account for around 30% of the population[10], often it is youth volunteers that are mobilised by default. However a deliberate focus on youth was reinforced by the UNV 2011 corporate strategy, which stated the need to "ensure that youth constitutes a core part of UNV programming in all targeted countries."

Two important principles for VI intervention are noted in the Africa 2005 strategy, and are reflected in the UNV approach as a whole:

- Building on what exists and avoiding the temptation to recreate from scratch, in order to capitalise on solidarities, networks and relations of trust already in place.
- Testing out modalities for the involvement of volunteer-involving organisations before generalising the practice.

2.1.1 UNV's conceptualisation of volunteer infrastructure

The definition of volunteer infrastructure is provided in section 1.1 above. A key principle of UNV's definition is that volunteer infrastructure should be sustainable beyond the life of the project. This means that within each VI project, there should be a strong element of capacity building and robust planning for sustainability.

The table below shows the volunteer sector organisations which were identified as using the terminology of 'volunteer infrastructure' and shows the ways in which they define the concept. Whilst other organisations may engage with this modality (Voluntary Service Overseas [VSO], France Volontaires, Australian Volunteers International [AVI] and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency [JICA]), they do not use the term "volunteer infrastructure" to describe their engagement[11].

Table 2: Definitions of volunteer infrastructure

	Organisation	**Definition of volunteer infrastructure**
1	World Volunteer Web	Technology, building, training or funds - basic physical and organizational structures and facilities
2	Institute for Volunteering research	Volunteer service centres, volunteer bureaux, volunteer centres
3	E-volunteerism (journal)	A crucial element to encourage the development of a broad range of meaningful volunteering opportunities and the engagement of a diverse spectrum of people in volunteering. Includes: "Peak bodies" engaging in policy debate with national government; volunteer centres providing local brokerage of volunteering opportunities; or other organisations delivering many other services at any of the levels in-between.

[10] Average figures by region (of population aged 10-24 in 2013): 32% West Africa, 33% East and Middle Africa, 30% Southern Africa; 27% Latin America and Caribbean; 29% South Central Asia (including Nepal and Pakistan). In many nations, the upper age bracket for youth is extended to 35 years, in which instances this average population will increase significantly. Please see: Population Reference Bureau, 'The World's Youth 2013 Data Sheet' (http://www.prb.org/pdf13/youth-data-sheet-2013.pdf)

[11] E.g. VSO defines their equivalent engagement as "national volunteering".

4	Volunteering England	Voluntary organisations whose primary purpose is the provision of infrastructure functions (support and development, coordination, representation and promotion) to front-line voluntary and community organisations. Volunteer Centres are really generalist volunteering infrastructure agencies as they deal with a general range of volunteering and volunteers across a given area. The term specialist volunteering infrastructure is more rightly applied to those agencies that provide services, brokerage for example, to specific audiences of volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations.
5	CSO SMART	Volunteering Infrastructure (VI) encompasses the different systems, mechanisms and instruments needed to ensure an environment where volunteering can grow/prosper. Adequate volunteer infrastructure is a precondition for development of the volunteering in the country.

From research of the above sample of definitions, and the discussions held with UNV staff and stakeholders, it can be observed that "volunteer infrastructure" is not a term used commonly and consistently across the VIO sector. According to the evaluation ToRs[12], "volunteer scheme" is a synonym for volunteer infrastructure, yet for many UNV staff and stakeholders, volunteer scheme describes a particular national volunteer service/corps model of volunteer deployment.

Internal to UNV, the term is considered by many as outdated and not fit for purpose, or as UNV 'jargon' – in addition it does not translate well to other languages. Where it is used, volunteer infrastructure is a flexible and broad concept, which can include the following aspects or sub-sets: *volunteer centre, volunteer network, volunteer service, volunteer service centre, volunteer corps, volunteer management system, volunteer-related initiative, volunteer movement, volunteer programme, volunteer network, volunteer platform, and volunteer coordinating body.* However it is clear that through this concept, UNV has been able to capture a rich and diverse body of initiatives.

2.2 Global Development/Volunteerism Sector Priorities

The global relevance of UNV intervention on volunteer schemes can be framed within the guidance from the UN Expert Working Group on Volunteering and Social Development (1999); in UN Secretary General Reports and UNGA Resolutions, especially that of 2006, which urged UNV to continue to assist programme countries to develop sustainable national capacities, to mobilise volunteers domestically through national volunteer schemes, volunteer centres and networks. In addition youth has risen to prominence in the development agenda in recent years due to the Arab Spring and global demographic youth 'bulge'. The modality of volunteer infrastructure offers a valid response to this issue of global importance, through a focus on youth employment, training and productive meaningful engagement through voluntary action.

As a UN body with the mandate for volunteerism, UNV has few direct points of comparison within the volunteerism sector; the closest being the bi-lateral VIOs such VSO, France Volontaires, AVI and JICA, who recruit and deploy international volunteers[13] into national projects and programmes. Within this group UNV does not have a monopoly of promoting volunteer infrastructure or schemes

[12] In preparation of the ToRs, the UNV Evaluation Unit conducted a literature review that explored the landscape and a conceptualisation effort was made at the European Union level (Conference).

[13] In some cases including south-south volunteers.

at national level, and other VIOs are also engaged in offering similar support to governments and civil society organisations.

For example, VSO considers its support to more than 200 national volunteering partners in 35+ countries to create and coordinate their own community-owned programmes[14], as a cost-effective and creative mechanism for development support[15]. VSO provides training on volunteer programme development and management and technical support in the form of training, study tours, partnership and network building, work placements in the UK and support via youth programmes, such as VSO's Global Xchange[16]. In addition VSO supports the establishment of national volunteering programmes through deployment of international volunteers, small grants and seed funding.

Comparative to UNV, support to volunteer infrastructure appears to be on a smaller scale, community-driven, more sector-specific and operating at the grassroots level. VSO national volunteering programmes operate through different modalities in different countries[17], including community schools; youth forums; nutrition classes; mobilisation of volunteers through churches and Mothers and Teachers Associations.

2.3 Relevance to National/Regional Priorities

The timeline shows regional trends which may indicate the relevance of certain VI models in different parts of the world, depending on the particularities of national or regional contexts. There has been fast uptake of volunteer schemes in Africa, whereas Latin America has favoured networks and round tables, and in Asia a volunteer coordinating body or centre has been a common model. In the timeline above, projects have been coded according to type of intervention - these categories of VI intervention are explained in detail in section 3.1 of this report.

In most projects covered within the scope of this evaluation, a clear relationship was identified between UNV's strategic intervention at the national level to support volunteer infrastructure and national or regional goals. Project Documents were quite consistent in making clear links between the project concept and the relevant national strategies, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) etc. A thorough process of engagement and project development was evidenced in Project Documents, typically including a rigorous feasibility study undertaken by external consultants and extensive consultation and partnership brokering with stakeholders, taking place over many months. This process of stakeholder engagement appears to be a strength of UNV's, and contributed strongly to the design of projects that were relevant to national stakeholders.

It is noteworthy that UNV VI projects for the most part are launched in countries where UNV has consolidated its presence and built relationships and reputation over a number of years. In many cases, UNV had followed a phased approach in supporting a range of interventions, which loosely build upon each other, or can be seen to lay the ground work for success. For example, in Cape Verde UNV supported a project to promote volunteerism and sustainable environment management, before engaging in the implementation of the National Volunteerism programme in

[14] National Volunteering – Introduction (VSO Leaflet – date unknown).
[15] By offering seed funding VSO can do 'a lot with a little' and a range of initiatives are engaged with, no 'one size fits all'.
[16] The lessons learned from the Global Xchange programme in 2012 on completion of its funding cycle have gone on to inform the UK government's International Citizen Service youth volunteering programme.
[17] VSO Country Case Studies (VSO leaflet – date unknown).

2009. In Ecuador the VI project built on UNV's prior engagement through a nationwide study on the state of volunteerism and the support of national VIO coordinating body. It is very interesting to note that in Pakistan, one of the few countries where UNV's VI project is considered as having entirely failed to sustain, UNV did not have a national presence prior to engaging in the project.[18]

For volunteer schemes (e.g. Togo, Liberia, Burkina Faso), relevance was contextualised within the demographic youth bulge, and the challenge of youth employment considered so pressing by many governments. With limited access to formal employment this human capital is under-utilised and many governments are seeking mechanisms to redress this. To give one example, for Lesotho – with 39% of the population aged 10-24 and a 40% unemployment rate for the youth population – effective participation of youth in economic and socio-political national development is highly relevant.

In addition, the Liberia National Youth Volunteer Service (NYVS) and the ECOWAS Volunteer Programme (VP) were both designed to promote peace and social cohesion through the spirit of volunteerism, solidarity and exchange. Whilst on paper these programme attributes were convincing, the evaluation found little evidence to link programme interventions directly to this aspiration, given their small scale and implementation challenges of the programmes on the ground The ECOWAS VP operationalises its Vision 2020 of moving "from a union of states to an ECOWAS of the people." For RIVERSEE, fostering collaboration between countries of the Balkans after years of civil conflict was an important step in regional reconciliation.

It is evident that UNV relevance is consolidated by engagement in partnerships to support VI, where the agenda is fully owned and set by the national stakeholders (see section 3.3). As well as relevant, the UNV engagement was often timely, usually reflecting government priorities and offering national incentives to develop VI, for example via seed funding which opens the door to wider national or development partner investment.

2.4 Relevance to Local Stakeholder Needs and Requirements

In developing projects, UNV have tended to be quite cognisant of the particular national context of social traditions which form the basis for volunteering, such as mutual assistance at the community level, formal and informal cultures of volunteerism etc. For example, in China and Vietnam VI projects recognised and capitalised on the popularity of student volunteerism. In the design stage, UNV consult with regional and community level stakeholders to understand their needs and ascertain project risks.

The relevance of some national volunteer schemes is demonstrated by strong demand from young people to volunteer. For example in Togo there is a database of more than 20,000 youth – a level of interest wildly beyond expectations. The appetite of Togolese host agencies (civil society organisations and state entities) is evidenced by the fact that it has been possible to find placements for more than 3,500 youth volunteers to date. Similarly, in Lesotho there were 2000 applications for 400 volunteer opportunities.

[18] Rather, UNV had proposed the first National UNV Scheme in Pakistan to provide coordination support for recovery and rehabilitation in the wake of the 2005 earthquake, which was then launched in tangent with a project to strengthen the Government's National Volunteer Movement – itself newly established to support the recovery/rehabilitation efforts.

In some cases, even where a programme was initially perceived by local stakeholders as less relevant, it finally proved its worth. For example in Nepal, 'non-technical' volunteers deployed to District level under UNV support, performed well (receiving praise from District colleagues interviewed) due to a clear mandate and detailed ToRs.

In many cases, the relevance of a national programme lies in its potential to contribute to filling a human resource gap through community service. Where volunteers deliver services to local populations (e.g. through teaching in schools, or working in clinics), the relevance at the community level is said to be high. This demand can be echoed at the national level, for example in Liberia where the President called for constitution of a 'Liberian Peace Corps' to fill gaps in delivery of basic services in rural areas.

Similarly where projects are developed to support disaster relief (as in Peru and Ecuador), volunteer efforts directed towards reconstruction are clearly perceived as relevant to local people. In Benin, the project mobilised community volunteers on important local issues relating to natural resource management and the development of local resources. Finally, four pilot projects were introduced at community level in Sri Lanka in partnership with I/NGOs and academic institutions, with relevance to particular needs in each of the following four areas: legal empowerment, empowering elders, taking English language skills to marginalised youth and working with migrant women.

3. EFFECTIVENESS OF UNV CONTRIBUTION TO VOLUNTEER INFRASTRUCTURE

3.1 Key Characteristics, Components and Range of UNV Engagement with VI

Across the 19 countries that informed the evaluation, the 22 projects examined can be broadly arranged into four categories of project type, as follows:

Table 3: Categorisation of UNV VI projects

Category	Country	Recruitment/ deployment of volunteers (volunteer management)	VIOs/ Vol. training?	Volunteer legislation or policy advocacy/ drafting?	Promotion/ recognition of volunteerism	Sector of Voluntary Action[19]	Research/ studies on volunteerism
1) Establishing or strengthening a government hosted national volunteer corps, movement, programme or service, which recruits and deploys volunteers *For this evaluation, known as:* **VOLUNTEER SCHEMES**	**Liberia**	✓	x	X	✓	Education; Health; peacebuilding; V4D; MDGs' Government policies	x
	Burkina Faso	✓	x	✓	X	Education; Health; Environment; Capacity of Local Authorities; Economic Development	x
	Togo	✓	x	X	X	Specifically linked to national priorities (broadly MDGs); social integration/cohesion	x
	Mali	✓	x	✓	X	E.g. Health; Education; Income Generation; Agriculture; Sanitation; Water Reforestation; V4D	x
	Niger	✓	✓	✓	✓	Governance; Health; Environment; Rural dev; Local level management; Civic duties; Youth issues; V4D	x
	Lesotho	✓	x	X	X	MDGs; community development	x
	Pakistan	✓	x	x	X	Disaster Relief and Recovery	x
2) Establishing or strengthening a coordinating body to support and promote volunteerism nationally and facilitate the institutionalisation of volunteerism (through capacity building and/or mobilisation of VIOs and/or their volunteers) *For this evaluation, known as:*	**Sri Lanka**	X	✓	X	✓	4 x pilot projects: legal empowerment; empower elders; ESOL for marginalised youth; corporate volunteerism network with SMEs	✓
	China	✓	✓	X	✓	Various including MDGs; environment	✓
	Vietnam	X	✓	✓	✓	Various	✓
	Peru[20]	X		✓	✓	N/A	x
	Mozambique	X	✓	✓	✓	Various	✓
	Cape Verde	✓	✓	✓	✓	Various	x
	Senegal	X	✓	✓	✓	Health; Education; Poverty Reduction; Local Development; Participation; Empowerment of Women; Civic Service; MDGs	✓

[19] This includes services delivered and/or awareness raising activities undertaken by volunteers in these sectors.

[20] Peru Youth and University Volunteerism in Poverty Reduction Strategies and Decentralisation Support Project, or *Soy Voluntario* Project.

COORDINATING BODIES	**Benin**	X	✓	X	✓	NRM ; environment; MDGs; V4D	x
3) Building capacity and coordinating VIOs to establish and/or strengthen a VIO Network or platform *For this evaluation, known as:* **NETWORKS**	**Peru**[21]	X	x	✓	✓	Various	x
	Honduras	X	✓	✓	✓	Various	✓
	Nicaragua[22]	X	x	✓	✓	Various	x
4) Building capacity of volunteers and/or volunteer managers in a particular area or sector, as part of a wider project ('nested' programme) *For this evaluation, known as:* **NESTED PROJECTS**	**Peru**[23]	X	✓	X	✓	Post-earthquake reconstruction; DRR/DRM techniques; citizen participation in local development	x
	Ecuador	X	✓	X	x	Hazard mapping and climate change adaptation measures; DRR/DRM	x
	Nepal	✓	x	✓	x	Support to citizen participation in development planning and local governance	x
	Nicaragua[24]	✓	x	X	x	Local government capacity building; Food security	x
REGIONAL PROGRAMMES	**ECOWAS Volunteer Programme** [25]	✓	x	X	✓	Determined by each host country with each recruitment, but previously includes: health; education; youth; peacebuilding & reconciliation; social cohesion	x
	RIVERSEE Programme[26]	✓	✓	✓	✓	Regional integration; social cohesion; peacebuilding and reconciliation; social care; education; vulnerable groups.	x

[21] Peru Voluntario National Network Project.
[22] Nicaragua National Network of Volunteer Involving Organisations (RNV) project.
[23] Peru Volunteers for Reconstruction Project.
[24] Nicaragua Contribution to the Reduction of Hunger, Under-Nutrition and Poverty in Nicaragua and among the Most Vulnerable Families, Through Strengthened Local Governance, Improved Local Coordination of Actions and Mobilisation of Local Actors and the Poorest People in 52 Selected Municipalities Project, or MDG1 Project.
[25] Economic Community of West African States Volunteer Programme.
[26] Regional Integration through Volunteers Exchanges for Reconciliation of South East Europe Programme.

The categories above are only loosely defined; they do not fully capture the *diversity of projects* and their various objectives/outputs found in the same category, or the blurring of lines *between* categories, as elaborated below. They do however provide a useful starting point for discussion of trends and characteristics of UNV VI projects.

Generally speaking, the table above indicates that there is a dominance of government-led volunteer recruiting/deploying **national schemes (category 1) in West Africa**, variously referred to as national volunteer Programmes (Togo; Burkina Faso; Niger, Mali), Services (Liberia) and Corps (Lesotho). Through formal, usually long term placements, volunteers were variously involved in service delivery and/or volunteer-led awareness raising activities in a wide range of sectors – from health and education to economic development and civic duty, Volunteerism for Development (V4D), youth issues and peacebuilding/social cohesion. As an exception to others in this category (in terms of focus and location), the national volunteer 'movement' in Pakistan specifically looked to recruit and deploy volunteers to strengthen post-earthquake relief and recovery efforts.

Category 2 projects share similarities with those in the preceding category in that all are government-led and/or Ministry-hosted, but involve the **establishing or strengthening of coordinating bodies** known variously as Centres (Sri Lanka; Vietnam; Senegal[27]), Associations (China), Corps (Cape Verde) and Agencies (Mozambique), or a purposely established department or platform within a Ministry (Peru and Benin respectively). This category has a focus on strengthening the capacity of VIOs/Volunteers to perform their activities more effectively and efficiently across various sectors and/or mobilising volunteers around particular themes (as in Benin). The project in China also looked to recruit and deploy special Beijing Olympic Games volunteers through a national volunteer campaign and continue to engage these in pilot projects after 2008. The UNV project in Cape Verde was intended to recruit and mobilise its own volunteers through a national scheme (akin to those in category 1), in addition to its focus on building capacity of existing VI through national and regional coordinating centres, but was not able to meet this aim during the project lifetime.

Projects built upon **establishing or strengthening existing networks** of VIOs across sectors are prevalent in the **Latin American countries** this evaluation focuses on (Peru, Nicaragua, and Honduras - **category 3**). Here, a highly active civil society takes a lead role in initiatives, as opposed to government actors as in category 1 and 2.

Projects in **category 4** are all **nested projects** that build capacity of VIOs/volunteers in a particular area as part of wider UNDP Programmes. Given their predisposition to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods etc., the UNV component projects in Peru and Ecuador build capacity of VIOs and/or volunteers in areas specifically relating to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM)[28]. The project in Nepal is also part of a wider UNDP project, but focuses on volunteer/VIO capacity building to support citizen participation in development planning and local governance – with an additional focus on supporting legislative change. This was to be achieved through placing 100 specifically recruited volunteers in local government structures (District Development Councils). Similarly, in Nicaragua, 52 national volunteers were recruited and deployed

[27] Senegal is an exception to the West Africa trend. Whilst the long term aim of the Government was to set up a national scheme akin to others in the region, the first preparatory step was to support the development of a national coordinating centre through the project in question.

[28] Similar to the project in Pakistan, but using existing community networks of VIOs/volunteers as opposed to volunteers specifically recruited and deployed for the task through a national scheme.

in 52 Municipalities to support local government capacity building around Millennium Development Goal 1 (MDG1) and specifically food security.

Across UNV's cluster of VI projects, it is noted that the vast majority include some form of **promotion of volunteerism** component, be this through national events, volunteerism awards, media campaigns etc. This was more often an objective of projects which involve the establishment or strengthening of a coordinating body or centre with the full time mandate of supporting and promoting volunteerism and – in theory – the resources to pursue this aim. There are far fewer examples of specific **research outputs in the form of studies or publications on volunteerism** incorporated into projects; again, where these are present they almost exclusively fall under the remit of aforementioned coordinating bodies. Examples of projects tasked to **support legislative/policy change and/or implementation** can be seen across the spectrum of projects, from those recruiting/deploying national volunteers to those establishing or strengthening VIO networks.

The table above does not present the **range and diversity of UNV partners** for the 22 projects, which include Government Ministries, International and National Non-Government Partners, other International VIOs and other UN agencies at various stages of the project cycle. The range and engagement of UNV partners is discussed in detail in section 3.3. below.

Regional Volunteer Infrastructure

Distinct from the 22 projects are the two regional schemes of the **ECOWAS VP** and **RIVERSEE Programme**. Unlike other VI projects within the scope of this evaluation, these two regional schemes operate *across* national borders, recruiting and deploying volunteers from participating countries accordingly [29] . These two schemes share some similarities, in terms of their post-conflict/rehabilitation setting and their respective South-South and East-East youth volunteer recruitment and deployment. RIVERSEE looked to build the capacity of civil society to support local development through its volunteers, support regional cooperation and promote legislation on volunteerism in each of its seven countries of operation. ECOWAS VP volunteers deployed in four countries[30] took on the delivery of basic education and health services[31] to promote peace and help to rebuild human resources, as part of the larger Support to ECOWAS for Peace and Development Project.

3.1.1 Quality of design of UNV-supported VI interventions (or initiatives)

The quality of design varies considerably across UNV's cluster of VI projects, with the majority of projects considered in this evaluation comprising both stronger and weaker elements of design.

Some of the strongest examples demonstrate how project design has been responsive to local and national needs and demand (e.g. Nicaragua National Network of Volunteering Organisations [RNV] and MDG1 projects; Liberia; Peru Network project) through coherently linked, realistic outputs and outcomes (Burkina Faso; Cape Verde), captured in a comprehensive Results and Resources Framework (China). Additionally, certain designs drew on lessons learned from similar projects and

[29] ECOWAS VP participating countries: Liberia; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Sierra Leone. RIVERSEE participating countries: Bosnia & Herzegovina; Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Kosovo; Albania; Croatia; Serbia and Montenegro.
[30] These four countries represent the pilot phase, to be rolled out to other ECOWAS countries in the coming years.
[31] In the original project design ECOWAS VP volunteers were intended to complement a reconstruction-related project output to be led by UNDP, however when this output was not launched ECOWAS VP volunteers were deployed elsewhere.

pilots within the same country (i.e. the Peru Network; Togo) whilst others took into account international best practice models (Vietnam; RIVERSEE). In China, careful planning at the outset allowed for project design to be adapted to respond to emerging needs as the project progressed; in Nepal, a similar, considered approach to the design of UNV's contribution to the larger UNDP programme to ensure its specialist experience was focused in the right areas for effectiveness.

Whilst the experience and context of each project is different, there are certain similarities in design weaknesses seen across the board. Notable among these is the inclusion of overly ambitious aims and objectives within relatively short project timeframes – as in the case of Sri Lanka where a government-led statutory body was to be established from scratch and made fully operational in two years. A similar experience was shared by Niger, where an autonomous national agency for volunteerism was supposed to be launched but was not, despite a year-long extension. In Cape Verde, project-established centres were also intended to recruit and deploy volunteers within the project's lifetime but current project staff feel this step requires further careful analysis and planning before implementation is feasible.

Others failed to take into account certain risks or relied heavily on mistaken assumptions; the most extreme example being Pakistan. Here, the original project proposal (prepared by a UNV recruited consultant) that formed the foundations for its design was completely rewritten late in its first year, having been based on a set of inaccurate assumptions that lead to the partnership between UNV and Pakistan National Volunteer Movement to be "based on false expectations", and the proposal to thus become "untenable"[32]. Similarly (although with less damning consequences) the regional RIVERSEE programme design did not take into account some of the logistical difficulties of travelling and working between mistrusting countries in the Balkans after years of war. In Nicaragua, there were a number of assumptions made at design stage (unclear by whom: either UNV or the universities that formed the network) regarding who would fund the running costs of the network at design stage, which remained unresolved and caused considerable problems.

In instances where there was evidence of an extensive consultation process during the design phase, as in the ECOWAS VP programme, this was not elaborated into a comprehensive project document which could be used to guide the implementation phase.[33] In some cases, there was lack of consideration paid from the outset to the logic behind design and implementation plans (Senegal), or a "one size fits all" approach taken to working within different areas of a country (Vietnam; Cape Verde).

[32] Taken from the Final Evaluation of the project (see Annex C for full reference).

[33] Whilst the design of ECOWAS VP was quite carefully thought through, the outcomes of this process were not well-captured on paper.

3.2 Performance of UNV-supported Volunteer Infrastructure Projects

3.2.1 To what extent have objectives been achieved?

An analysis of the performance of UNV-supported VI projects is complicated by the lack of consistency in conducting Mid Term Reviews (MTR) and Final Evaluations for the 22 projects that form the focus of this thematic evaluation. Excluding the 8 country missions, reviews or evaluations exist for just 4 of the 11 remaining projects/countries – although in many cases APPRs were available to give some indication of progress against objectives.[34] The issue of limited UNV project level documentation is discussed in more detail above in section 1.3, and in the context of monitoring and evaluation in section 4 below. A final evaluation exists for RIVERSEE (which ended in 2008), whilst the ECOWAS VP is still in its implementation phase – although it is understood an MTR should have been completed by this point. Given the range of UNV VI projects which is mirrored in their individual objectives, the following four titles have been identified to group together outputs of a similar nature (drawn from the table in 3.1 above):

- Influencing volunteer-enabling legislation or policy
- Building capacity for effective volunteerism
- Volunteer mobilisation (recruitment and deployment)
- Promotion, recognition and public discussion of volunteerism

The discussion below provides an overview of performance against each of these groups, with examples of results discussed in more detail in section 5. Sustainability of VI is identified by UNV as a crucial aspect of performance, and is thus addressed separately in section 6.

Influencing volunteer-enabling legislation or policy

Of the projects evaluated, 12 included a focus on volunteer-enabling legislation or policy as one of their outputs. This focus took various forms, including: leading in the drafting of volunteer-enabling legislation (Vietnam, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso; Nepal; Mali; Mozambique; Niger; Senegal); taking up advocacy/lobbying positions to comment on draft legislation, or for better implementation of existing policy and legislation (Peru Network project and Nicaragua RNV project respectively); operationalising plans to bring legislation into regulation (Peru *Soy Voluntario* project). A number of projects included outputs pertaining to securing legal/statutory recognition and status for newly established volunteer-coordinating bodies, namely Sri Lanka, Senegal, Cape Verde, Mali, Niger and Vietnam; in the case of Benin, such a legal and institutional framework was pursued for the multi-stakeholder volunteer platform the project established. Additionally, the Honduras project included the mapping of existing policies that facilitate/hinder volunteerism, as part of a wider strategy to foster maximum institutional and policy support for volunteerism. See also section 5.2.1.

[34] APPRs for Peru Volunteers for Reconstruction project (ending 2011) were only made available to the evaluation team at the end of the evaluation period, along with the Mid Term Review of the Nicaragua RNV Project. The two Nicaragua projects(RNV and MDG1) were considered small 'activities' as opposed to fully fledged projects (although included by UNV in this evaluation), and so they did not have standalone Project Documents – rather, they were considered to be covered under the Advocacy, Integration and Mobilisation (AIM) Programme for the Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean (ARLAC) region.

Overall, performance against this objective was considerable, with volunteer-enabling legislation passed as a result of/in part due to the project in a range of countries, and all bar two of the coordinating bodies achieving statutory status (Senegal, Niger). However, in some instances this built on many previous years of UNV work, and was often done in collaboration with multiple stakeholders; therefore, it would be difficult to attribute this entirely to UNV's involvement. Where lobbying and advocacy positions were taken it is more difficult to assess performance; in Peru this work is only just beginning whereas in Nicaragua it is felt that progress has been slow.

Building capacity for effective volunteerism

'Capacity' can have a range of meanings and, consequently, 'building capacity' can take a range of forms. In UNV supported VI projects, the focus at objective level has been on capacity building-as-training for effective volunteerism,[35] predominantly the training of VIOs and/or volunteers (as in Vietnam, China, Peru Volunteers for Reconstruction Project, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Senegal, Honduras, Ecuador and Benin). Capacity building of coordinating bodies/host government agencies or ministries – those intended to sustain project activities or outcomes – is also incorporated into the objectives of projects (including Nicaragua MDG1, Vietnam, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Senegal and Niger). Training of Trainers is a commonly used approach. However, whilst certain projects indicate this should take the form of training of staff (i.e. Vietnam), in most cases it is implied that capacity building will occur through working with/exposure to UNV staff and international and national UN Volunteer expertise.

Assessing the performance against this output is complicated by the lack of monitoring and evaluation of training provision and impact, evidence of training needs assessments or training strategies/programmes. Overall, performance appears to be stronger (in terms of records of numbers trained) for capacity building of volunteers and/or VIOs – see section 5. A reliance on indirect or implicit capacity building of coordinating bodies/host government agencies or ministries through exposure to UNV is considered an area of weakness for VI projects, and is cited as a contributory factor to poor sustainability in certain cases (i.e. Lesotho and Pakistan, see section 6).

Volunteer mobilisation (recruitment and deployment)

Volunteers were successfully recruited and deployed in all seven countries supporting a government hosted national volunteer 'scheme' (category 1 in the table above) as well as in the two regional schemes, and so in this sense this objective was generally achieved. Projects in Nepal, Nicaragua, Benin and China had an objective to mobilise volunteers for specific campaigns and activities but outside the framework of a national volunteer scheme, and also successfully achieved this.

However, in several cases numbers did not reach those anticipated in the project plans or targets had to be revised down – as in both regional schemes, Pakistan, Liberia and Mali[36]. That said, at the other end of the scale some of the schemes drew up significant interest and numbers were much higher than anticipated, notably Togo, Burkina Faso and Lesotho (see section 5). There is a lack of

[35] Either in skills associated with volunteerism (i.e. management, planning, budgeting, event organisation), or sector-based skills (i.e. DRR, DRM and natural resource management techniques).

[36] In Mali, security concerns hindered the mobilisation of the planned 200 volunteers and only 136 were placed. Numbers of volunteers mobilised in Pakistan are discussed in 5.6.1. Regarding regional programmes, 68 of a planned 100 volunteer placements were secured under the RIVERSEE Programme, whilst first year targets for ECOWAS VP were revised down to 120 from 200.

information available across the board to provide a volunteer profile for the different national schemes, in order to determine how inclusive or representative they may be.

Promotion, recognition and public discussion of volunteerism

Public recognition of volunteerism for development is a powerful means of motivating members of the public to volunteer, and can take a wide variety of forms. The promotion of volunteerism is captured in the objectives of most VI projects, and includes: International Volunteer Day celebrations (Lesotho, Vietnam, Tog, Peru); conferences, seminars and debates (Peru, Nicaragua); VIO/Volunteer Award Ceremonies (Vietnam, Benin, Mozambique); National Campaigns (Honduras, China, Senegal) and galas (Mozambique); volunteer portals and online 'space' for interaction and exchange (Vietnam, Honduras, Sri Lanka) ; presence in local and national media (China, Benin, Togo). Such activities usually require sufficient national level support to achieve impact, but bring multiple benefits to those taking part (i.e. award winning VIO's benefit from more funding interest or opportunities) as well as raising the profile of the project and (where applicable) UNV.

Performance against this objective, based on the data that has been made available to the evaluation team, is considered to be strong; there are clear crossovers with UNV's wider portfolio of work and its mandate to promote volunteerism worldwide – indeed it is not always clear where promotion and recognition activities undertaken as part of a particular VI project end, and those undertaken by the UNV Field Unit in their general work begin. Activities in this area can also be highly cost-effective in terms of the size of the audience drawn, and represent a "quick win" for a project.

3.2.2 Factors that have helped achievement of objectives

A number of factors have facilitated progress against the objectives outlined above. Key among these, and particularly credited for the significant success in supporting volunteer-enabling legislation, is high levels of political good will and support and national government ownership across a number of projects i.e. Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Mali. Senegal. Where supporting legislation was not an objective of the project, strong political support was still of key importance, as in Togo where good governance practices and appropriate systems facilitated effective implementation of the project.

A related, second helping factor is the benefits brought by a significant lead in period prior to the implementation of the project (as discussed in section 2 above) and substantial stakeholder consultation during this phase (as in Ecuador). Some, but not all of the projects that saw considerable success also built on existing partnerships – be it with local partners as in Vietnam and Honduras, or other UN agencies, such as the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in the Nicaragua MDG project, UNDP in China, or a combination as in Peru.

During implementation, good collaboration with other international VIOs has been extremely important, both in their capacity to deploy volunteers to staff projects alongside international/national UN Volunteers, deliver training, and in the sharing of good practices and effective systems. Notable among examples is the RIVERSEE programme collaboration with VSO to create a highly successful volunteer selection criteria and recruitment process, drawing on both VSO and UNV experience, which resulted in high quality volunteers and low drop-out rates (3 of the 68 placements) as highlighted in the final evaluation (see Annex D). A strong element in the selection process was the testing of candidates in their team working capacity and their personal

characteristics to undertake the proposed role, in addition to taking part in phone or face to face interviews. This model enabled the best candidates for the purpose of the programme to be identified.

The strategic use of both international/national UN Volunteers to undertake project implementation is noted as a significant helping factor, with the former bringing best practise examples from different contexts (as in Vietnam) and the latter having strong local knowledge and understanding to enhance project delivery (Nicaragua MDG1 project, Nepal – see section 4).

3.2.3 Factors that have hindered achievement of objectives

Whilst factors that have hindered achievement of objectives vary considerably from country to country, project to project, there are a number of overarching issues which are shared by many. Some of these can be seen as external or environmental factors; others internal to UNV systems and processes.

Whilst working with and through committed government bodies has the potential to foster greater ownership, support and wider recognition of volunteerism for development, it can also slow project progress due to high levels of bureaucracy, slow decision making and the gradual pace of change (e.g. Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Peru, Senegal, RIVERSEE and ECOWAS VP countries). Similarly, ministerial reshuffles and changes in key personnel can bring progress to a standstill (Mozambique, Pakistan, Sierra Leone), particularly where there is also a change in ruling party, as in Niger. The politicisation of projects aims, objectives and outputs was also an issue in two projects. These issues are also discussed under section 6 in reference to sustainability.

Wider context bureaucracy (i.e. of development partner), often resulting in delayed project start-ups were a hindering factor for a number of projects: it took five years after the first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed to the official launch of ECOWAS VP[37]; Senegal experienced long delays in the signing off of the Project Document by UNV due to disagreements between UNDP and government on whether UNV should sign the document as UNDP's signature was sufficient; in Cape Verde, whilst some delays came from the government side, there was also a delay in transfer of funds from UNV HQ due to delayed submission of key Project Documentation.

Some of the shortcomings at project design stage (identified in section 3.1.1 above) also hindered project achievement. Notable among these was the lack of consideration given to risks and assumptions, and logistical challenges that may be experienced on the ground. For instance: Cape Verde's archipelago status and the poor road infrastructure of some ECOWAS countries hampered travel for volunteers and staff; lack of consideration given to cross-border working in RIVERSEE and ECOWAS countries in terms of visas/travel documents (RIVERSEE) and project bank account needs (ECOWAS VP).

Whilst the deployment of international/national UN Volunteers as well as other international VIO volunteers was highlighted as a helping factor across projects, the turnover of volunteers as well as UNV Programme Officers (POs) in UNV Field Units was identified as stalling project progress (Vietnam and Cape Verde). This was particularly the case where newly-recruited replacement international UN Volunteers – often in the role of project advisor or coordinator – had to quickly

[37] It is understood this was a government issue and not a delay on the part of UNV.

adjust to cultural and socio-political context in addition to undertaking their main role. Difficulties in recruiting staff in the outset and/or understaffing on projects also proved problematic for projects in Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Togo and Senegal. In addition to human resources, Togo and Senegal also faced additional resource constraints; the former UNV Field Unit lacking transport, office space and equipment to enable the project team to carry out routine tasks, whilst the latter experienced an HQ re-designation of UNV funds early on in the project which meant these funds were then no longer accessible to it. See section 4 on efficiency.

A final hindering factor noted is the limited absorption capacity and/or political will of host organisations of volunteer management schemes (i.e. the ECOWAS VP programmes in Liberia and Sierra Leone countries and in Togo), and the general varied capacity and 'baselines' of VIOs involved in networks and capacity building programmes (Nicaragua and Cape Verde respectively). This links to a lack of a clear capacity building strategy and programme to institutionalise required knowledge, skills and processes across the portfolio of projects, as referenced above in section 3.2 and discussed in detail in sections 5 and 6 below.

3.3 Partnership Working

3.3.1 Models of partnership in VI Initiatives

There is no singular, fixed definition of 'partnership' in the development arena, but various interpretations of its meaning, defining characteristics and even its value. For some, 'partnership working' is a contentious issue and can be co-opted to suit the needs and requirements of the dominant partner or to bypass stakeholder consultation.[38] A broad definition given in the 'Towards Global Partnership' Report of the Secretary General 2003 that encompasses a considerable range of understandings of partnership is as follows:

"Partnerships are commonly defined as voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both State and non-State, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies and benefits."

Partnerships can thus involve a wide range of organisations, be informal or formal (i.e. through MoUs or Memoranda for Agreement) in nature and serve a variety of purposes. This range is identifiable in UNV's own portfolio of VI projects.

In line with its understanding of the need to secure "the efforts of all stakeholders to sustainably change people's practices, attitude and mind-sets"[39], UNV project level documentation identifies a large array of partners across sectors, including: national government ministries; local and regional government agencies and units; other internationally operating VIOs such as VSO, AVI and France Voluntaires; Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), national VIOs and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs); academic institutions including universities and research centres; other UN agencies including United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNCDF, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNDP; private sector players,

[38] Carmen Malena, 2004: 'Strategic Partnership: Challenges and Best Practices in the Management and Governance of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships Involving UN and Civil Society Actors'. Background paper for the Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Partnerships and UN-Civil Society Relations, Pocantico, New York, February 2004 www.un-gls.org

[39] UNV Programme Strategy: Volunteerism for Peace and Development 2011 – 2013.

including chambers of commerce and business representatives. In some Project Documents, a distinction is made between 'implementing partner(s)' and 'other responsible parties', however, the assignment of responsibilities and tasks to those named as the latter would allow them to also be considered partners, according to the definition above. Project Documents also refer to beneficiaries and communities as partners in some cases.

Table 4: Numbers of partners/responsible parties identified in Project Documents in selected countries

Country/project	No. of partners/responsible parties identified in Project Document
Vietnam	8
Liberia	17
Peru	8 +
Togo	11 +
Lesotho	5 +
Mozambique	4
Mali	14+
Pakistan	7 +
Ecuador	4
Sri Lanka	4+
China	4 (Phase 1); 2 (Phase 2)
Honduras	3

'+' indicates that 'NGOs', 'CSOS' and 'other government ministries' are identified, but not individually named.

In the examples given in the table above, at least one government partner (i.e. a single Ministry) is named for every project, usually several; the vast majority also include other UN agencies as partners. Other international and national VIOs, NGOs and CSOs are cited as partners in most of the examples, but are most likely to be named en masse rather than individually identified. Private sector and academic institution partners were identified in very few of these projects. Overall, the private sector is mostly absent from both documentation and practice on the ground. That said there are one or two examples of private sector partnering beginning to emerge; an international UN Volunteer in Cape Verde is currently working with UNIDO to develop a private sector engagement strategy, for instance.

3.3.2 Nature and extent of stakeholder engagement

There appear to be a disjunction between the large numbers of partners/responsible parties identified in Project Documents and reality on the ground. National level NGOs and CSOs named as partners/responsible parties may have been heavily involved in stakeholder consultation during the design phase (which UNV appears to do well), but appear less involved in implementation and are not ascribed clear roles or tasks. Alternatively, listed partners/responsible parties could be seen as a 'wish list' of potential collaborators. There are exceptions of course, with the project in Sri Lanka particularly notable for its wide partnership base across multiple sectors. Where there are multiple partners named (i.e. upwards of seven), particularly multiple government ministries, and the roles of many may be limited to demonstrating awareness and verbal support of the project.

National schemes that are run by government tend to have little input from civil society, and even less capitalisation on the potential for placements or alumni employment opportunities through the private sector. For example, the project in Burkina Faso deploys large numbers of its volunteers within government ministries, despite this not being allowed under the rules of the scheme.

Several project plans included as an output (or part thereof) the development of a partnership strategy that captures how to formulate partnerships for implementation, with whom and to what end. In practice however these were not evidenced. Beyond Government and UN agency partnerships, the majority of partnerships tend to be informal rather than formal, although there are instances where formal agreements were held with international NGOs such as Red Cross and Marie Stopes International for the provision of training (China).

Whilst partnerships with academic institutions have been utilised to produce studies and research on volunteerism in various countries (and are a leading partner in Nicaragua RNV project and in some of the Sri Lanka pilots), their limited engagement in other aspects of the project cycle – particularly in supporting monitoring and evaluation of projects – can be seen as an opportunity missed.

In many cases, UNV follows a demand-led model, that is, Governments tend to approach UNV or UNDP to ask for supporting in setting up and/or strengthening VI. UNV VI projects are then implemented with one of two modalities: the National Implementation Modality (NIM), in which a non-UN agency takes the lead (usually a government ministry or agency/unit); or the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), in which UNV or another UN agency (usually UNDP) take on this lead role.[40] To foster ownership for sustainability NIM is preferred, however DIM is utilised if there is thought to be insufficient capacity within the government to carry out functions and activities of the project i.e. in Liberia, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Where direct implementation by UNV or UNDP is required, greater consideration is necessary to how the capacity of the host government or agency may be built, in order to allow an eventual transition towards national management.

There are important lessons to be learnt from the UNV project in Pakistan, regarding the challenges of establishing government partnerships in nations with hierarchical and heavy bureaucracy. Indeed this was felt by evaluators of the project to contradict the very spirit of volunteerism, which should be more spontaneous and driven by communities themselves.

Partnership between UNV and UNDP

UNV is administered by UNDP and is the main partner in many UNV VI projects; however the nature of collaboration between the two organisations varies from project to project. UNV and UNDP have partnered directly at field level on a number of projects, in Nicaragua, Niger, Mali, Ecuador, Lesotho, Peru and Nepal (where UNV's work was a component of larger UNDP programmes).

There are examples in Nepal and Mali of mutually beneficial partnership working between UNDP and UNV, which can be partly attributed to a distinct area of contribution and responsibility for UNV in the respective projects which allowed it to best utilise its skills and expertise. In other examples such as Ecuador however, VI projects represented a small part of the UNDP manager's portfolio and hence were low in priority, whilst UNV autonomy was limited. In these cases delegation of project management to UNV would have resolved many difficulties experienced. Efficiency and effectiveness of the project can also be influenced by the personal understanding and interest of the managing UNDP staff, as was found in Peru. A further lack of clarity regarding the different roles of UN partners within VI projects (which ought to reflect organisational objectives and strategic plans) was recognised as impacting upon the project effectiveness and efficiency.

[40] NIM and DIM were previously known as NEX (national execution) and DEX (direct execution) respectively.

From a visibility perspective, UNV's contribution and role was 'swallowed up' by bigger UN agencies like UNDP when partnering on projects in Liberia and Senegal – a long-standing and well-documented issue at country level, which goes beyond these two particular projects. Even when acting as the lead agency, UNV is sometimes viewed as an 'employment agency' or purely as a financial donor, as in Cape Verde[41]. Nevertheless, there are strong examples from China and Togo (among other countries) of a well-established UNV identity and reputation for expertise at country level.

There are opportunities to improve contributions to the Delivering as One Approach by forming stronger partnerships with UNDP and building on synergies at country level. This was proposed in Lesotho, where it was intended that the National Volunteer Corps Programme (UNDP led) would look to make time and cost efficiencies through combining Project Steering Committee meetings, sharing training and coordinating in other project areas with the existing Youth Employment Programme. However, in practice these intentions were not realised[42]. Likewise, there is good scope for UNV to build alliances or partnerships with other volunteer-involving UN agencies within country teams or frameworks, or where this practice exists, that it be better reported, and lessons learnt.

3.3.3 Efficiency and Effectiveness of partnership working

Whilst the efficiency and effectiveness of partnership working is specific to the country, project and specific partner in question (given that there are many partnerships per project); there are certain, interlinking traits that are associated with the most successful examples:

- **Clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities – agreed from the outset:** Projects in both Nepal and Cape Verde experienced a lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of different partners: for the former, volunteers were expected to report to different partners (government and UNV) which was confusing and caused an "accountability vacuum" in which no one was ultimately responsible; for the latter, lack of clarity regarding the role of the national coordinator (government staff) and the project coordinator (an international UN Volunteer) which complicated implementation. Legislation in Togo helped to clarify roles and responsibilities of partners which was helpful to the PROVONAT project there, but was lacking in Senegal between central and regional partners. This issue is not limited to UNV and government partners; in Nicaragua, a lack of clear demarcation of responsibilities for network members stalled activities.

- **Well-organised management process and systems; formal protocols:** Togo also provides a strong example of how formal protocols, well-organised and documented management processes and systems ensured that the PROVONAT project operated efficiently. This is in contrast to Senegal, where collaboration with regional development agencies was severely inhibited by the lack of such formal protocols with project structures.

- **Clear and efficient channels of communication:** Where multiple partners exist, clearly defined channels of communication are essential. A lack of coordination between partners was cited as a hindering factor for the project in Mozambique, whilst in China a complex management structure involving a number of partners was still able to operate effectively and efficiently, as a

[41] This was a perception shared by respondents during the country mission.

[42] The need to tie the programme in with other UN efforts around employment is highlighted as a lesson learned in the APPR 2012 for this project, but no detail is provided.

result of careful consideration given to facilitating good communication. Communication can be further hampered where projects operate across national borders; this was a particular challenge for the regional RIVERSEE programme, where 14 Implementing Partner Organisations across 7 countries operating in 7 different languages slowed project progress.

- **Shared spaces for collaborative working:** Projects in Vietnam and Nepal enjoyed strong government staff-UNV staff/volunteer collaboration, partly as a result of sharing office space so that the project team could operate as one. This also contributed to better cost efficiency, clear communication and timely decision making.

- **Clearly defined exit strategies and a shared vision for the future:** This issue is returned to in greater detail in section 6. It is essential that partnerships are based on a clear, shared understanding of the long term aims and objectives for volunteerism, beyond UNV's involvement. In Pakistan, the partnership was based on false expectations of UNV's involvement; in Senegal, national UN Volunteers were pulled out with no phase out strategy in place, leaving partners overwhelmed, although the issue of overspend which lead to the ending of the contract had been shared with them in advance.

3.4 UNV's Comparative Advantage

As discussed in section 2, UNV's unique status gives it legitimacy to harness the power of volunteerism, at global, regional and national levels, and UNV can act as a catalyst and facilitator of a national process from the position of a neutral agency. This is critical given that the development of a national volunteer infrastructure should evolve through dialogue and collaboration among the main stakeholders[43]. As the UN face of volunteerism, UNV holds the mandate to insist upon national ownership, 'convening power' to mobilise different stakeholders, and the legitimacy to facilitate harmonisation of efforts. This has been demonstrated in the brokering of the ECOWAS VP for example, where UNV convinced three separate departments in ECOWAS who wanted to develop volunteer corps to combine their efforts to avoid duplication. This neutrality can offer great potential in post-conflict contexts, for example in the brokering of RIVERSEE, where UNV was able to take an objective stance which created trust amongst all partners.

However, UNV does not always capitalise on this status to full potential, perhaps partly due to its identity as a service organisation and 'junior partner' to UNDP and the wider UN family. UNV visibility is often limited at the national level, sometimes at the expense of its ability to convene and lead the VIO sector. This requires strong leadership at UNV Field Unit Level, and/or strong guidance from UNV HQ. For example, in Ecuador, UNV provided 78% of project funds, yet UNDP chaired the steering committee, whilst UNV played a more peripheral VIO liaison role. Importantly, UNV Field Unit capacity is critical in positioning UNV at the national level, and ensuring its visibility. For example, in Togo this has been done extremely successfully, whilst in many other countries PO turnover and resulting loss of institutional memory and relationships have been a barrier to UNV visibility (see section 4).

[43] Developing a Volunteer Infrastructure: Guidance Note (2004).

There are a number of international VIOs that place volunteers to support projects (VSO, France Volontaires, AVI, JICA etc.), and UNV is similarly able to deploy funded volunteers to support the implementation and management of VI projects. The identification of this human resource from early in the project cycle and the perceived political neutrality of the UNV volunteers, adds value for national stakeholders (e.g. in Peru and Nepal). In particular national UN Volunteers have been recognised as playing a valued role in VI implementation, as discussed in section 4.

3.4.1 How UNV can add value

Compared to other UN Agencies and donors, UNV funding capacity is relatively limited (see section 4 for the extent of UNV financing on VI projects). UNV has successfully used seed funding to mobilise complementary funds from development partner and national governments, in order to promote and show-case VI initiatives at the national and regional levels. However, in order to achieve optimum impact and sustainability, the status of these 'pilots' must be made explicit in Project Documents and UNV must build in a much strong element of learning, in order to support replication (see section 6).

Going forward there is backing in-house for UNV to add value through a purely technical/advisory support capacity. There are a few cases where this approach has been followed; for example in Togo UNV offered no direct funding[44], but provided technical support and strategic deployment of international UN Volunteers, and is therefore recognised to have played a critical role. In Mauritius and Kurdistan UNV responded to requests for technical support to establish a volunteer scheme but direct funding was not part of the UNV support package[45]. These examples have proved successful, but there are few examples of Least Developed Countries where this model has been followed, given the strong capacity needs. In the ECOWAS VP, UNV has played a predominantly technical assistance role[46] to the volunteer component of a wider ECOWAS project, and UNV's role has been positively recognised by the key funder, the African Development Bank.

However, it is clear from other country experiences (as in Liberia) that UNV may still need to offer seed funding, in order to be taken seriously by other implementing partners. UNV's technical role could also be articulated much more clearly at the project design/inception stage and new modalities could be explored, (such as a regional advisory mechanism) or existing ones strengthened (exchange of experience through visits and learning events at the national/regional level).

On the other hand, there is no doubt that in some countries, UNV support has been recognised at the highest levels – for example the President of Mali paid tribute to UNV in his 2011 speech on International Volunteer Day (IVD). In Vietnam, UNV is valued for its approach of offering guidance and facilitation to national stakeholders (rather than taking control of the project) and recognised for the technical assistance and expertise provided in promoting/supporting volunteerism on a nationwide scale. Similarly, in China UNV has received good exposure and credit for its interventions and support.

[44] UNDP funded the national volunteer scheme.
[45] However, funded International UN Volunteers were mobilised in support of the schemes.
[46] US$300,000 UNV funding was mobilised as contribution to ECOWAS VP.

4. EFFICIENCY

The 2004 Guidance Note introduces two models of sustainable funding, which are recommended to go hand-in-hand. The first is *volunteer effectiveness and efficient resource management as a basis for securing funding* – in other words, demonstrating project/organisational results to attract funding. The second is *long-term funding and leveraging existing resources, from multiple sources*. Few of the VI projects have been able to achieve both of these funding models.

4.1 Costs in Relation to Results

The VI projects were generally perceived as being able to 'do a lot with a little' in terms of financial resources. For example in Burkina Faso and Togo, UNV investment stimulated enduring state-supported volunteer programmes. In Vietnam and Cape Verde, UNV funds facilitated the creation of a national-level coordination body for volunteerism. In Liberia, UNV investment in the design and pilot of the VI project led to substantial resource mobilisation by UNICEF for legacy projects. For ECOWAS VP, the costs of setting up the programme were considered high by the African Development Bank, however after the initial investment the project was seen to deliver results. In Nepal, UNV's modest contribution to a multi-million dollar, multi-donor programme was seen to play a significant role in supporting progress towards the outcome of participation in local governance processes. In the recognition and promotion of volunteerism outputs, VI projects were able to have a big impact with few resources, as in China and Vietnam.

In some cases UNV investment did not generate the desired outcomes, for example in Niger where the budget of nearly US$2 million achieved few results (e.g. the coordinating agency was not set up as per one of three outputs). In comparing similar projects, there are also discrepancies in allocation of financial resources. For example the VI project in Mali to support 136 volunteers with a budget of US$2 million is comparatively expensive, to the programme in Togo which placed 3,500 volunteers with an investment of US$14 million. However lack of progress in Mali was in large part due to political instability, illustrating how the external environment can hinder project progress and in turn impact on costs versus benefits. In comparison, the RIVERSEE regional programme deployed fewer volunteers than expected and was seen as a disappointment by some UNV HQ respondents, and yet the investment generated other outputs relating to social cohesion across a politically splintered landscape.

In some cases – and this has proved more relevant for volunteer schemes - it has been possible to calculate an approximate cost per volunteer, as shown in table 5 below. However, it is important to note that these costs are not directly comparable as they do not include the same cost categories:

Table 5: Approximate costs per volunteer for selected countries

Country/ project[47]	**Cost per volunteer per month**	**Comment**
ECOWAS – regional	$1,083	Not including training or management costs (but includes cross-border travel and support to Regional Office)
RIVERSEE – regional	$1,250	Investment generated other impacts relating to social cohesion (includes cross-border travel)
Togo – national	$189	Includes VLA, running costs, training

[47] Data acquired from various project level documents or from respondents in the field.

Liberia - national	$322	Included project management and monitoring

However, many projects were not able to generate this kind of quantitative information – indeed projects were not generally set up or monitored with the intention to demonstrate value for money (VfM). For instance, many projects targeted the capacity building of VIO leadership through training, but impact was not tracked or measured.

Regarding the VI projects, lowest cost per unit is not always desirable, as can be demonstrated with the example of Nepal, in which UNV deployed volunteers alongside those of the existing volunteer coordinating body, the National Development Volunteer Service (NDVS). Volunteers supported by the UNV VI project were more expensive than regular NDVS volunteers, but were also seen as playing a significantly different and more effective role than the equivalent non-technical volunteers deployed by NDVS. Greater efficiency was attributed to better management and co-ordination, and in particular a clearer, more detailed and more focused Terms of Reference for these volunteers. Additional per head cost for the UNV supported volunteers may well be justified, then, in order to produce project results.

UNV's work to support networks[48] is considered as good value, whereby a little funding has achieved results. For example in Peru, the VI project supporting a VIO network was described as "the most cost-effective example of institutionalising volunteerism and good practice that UNV Peru has been involved in" (between 2008 – 2012). The UNV support – mostly in-kind support from the PO, international/national UN Volunteers and interns and use of UN offices for meetings – generated the direct involvement of more than 60 VIOs and hence it was considered very cost efficient and effective.

4.2 Extent of UNV Funding Allocated to VI Projects

Volunteer infrastructure projects are largely supported by the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF), which is designed to offer seed funding for small, innovative projects, with investment ranging from $250k to $1 million. In 2012, the final year within the evaluation period, 12% ($1,111,000) of UNV-administered funds were spent on national capacity development through volunteer schemes in eight countries[49]. Table 6 below indicates the range of UNV investment in a sample of VI projects and the proportion of UNV contribution, in respect of the total project funds, which ranged from 59% to 1.7%.

Table 6: Range and proportion of UNV's financial contribution to selected projects

Country/ Project[50]	Evaluation Category (see 3.1)	Project duration	Total Budget	% UNV SVF contribution	Other funding partners
Burkina Faso	1	3 years	$356,809 (+ $200,000 in 2010)	37-46%	UNDP & Gov. of Burkina Faso
Togo	1	5 years	$14mn	10 x national UN Volunteers	UNDP & Gov. of Togo
Mali	1	3 years	$1,555,694	33%	UNDP & Gov. of Mali

[48] The work under evaluation category 3.
[49] Evaluation Concept Note 2012.
[50] Data acquired from various project level documents or from respondents in the field.

Mozambique	2	2 years	$856,321	21%	UNDP JDF
Senegal	2	4 years	$2.8 mn[51]	18%	UNV JTF
Vietnam	2	3 years	$930,658	59%	UN One Plan Fund
Cape Verde	2	2 years	$963,214	44%	FF Spain, Gov. of Cape Verde
Nepal	4	2 years	$30mn	1.7%	Gov. of Nepal & Development partners
ECOWAS VP	Regional	3 years + 15 months ext.	$3.283 mn	9.1%	African Development Bank ECOWAS Peace Fund
RIVERSEE	Regional	3 years	$627,077	56%	European Union & Development Partners

There are a few cases where UNV is appointed as the implementing agency, administers project funds and thus generates income through charging a management fee (e.g. ECOWAS VP). However, in most cases UNDP has been the implementing agency.

4.3 Resource Management

A review of the SVF in 2010[52] found that while contributions to the SVF had increased and become more diversified since 2005, disbursement of project funds **still remained relatively low** (less than 70%)[53]. This is consistent with project reporting of some VI projects, for example the final year of the project in Lesotho represented a budget delivery rate of 37%, and in Mozambique there was delivery rate of just 15% in 2011, and no expenditure in 2012[54]. In Cape Verde, 66% of activities were implemented with 52% of budget, more than one year beyond the original timeframe. Of course budget under-spend could also indicate prudent use of resources; however the evaluation team did not have access to the financial data necessary to conduct a full analysis.

In some cases the direction and disbursement of project funds by UNV HQ appears to have affected project implementation. In China slow disbursement of Phase 2 funds by UNV in 2010 were said to have contributed to low delivery rates (50%) and created uncertainty around expenditure for some months. In Senegal, UNV funds which were directly administered at the outset of the project were re-designated by HQ to national administration (NIM). National stakeholders reported that due to lack of awareness of this, the project missed out on these funds, because they did not apply for them in the right way. Due to slow bureaucracy of ECOWAS procurement of office equipment for national offices within the EVP did not take place until 2012, impeding effectiveness of the National Coordinators. Although many issues were not within UNV control, there were some cases where improved communication between HQ and UNV Field Units would enhance project efficiency and for

[51] Contradicting figures within project reporting and documentation.
[52] UNV Synthesis of Evaluations, 2000-2009, Dominique De Bonis, May 2010.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] Reasons for underspend not stated in project reports.

this reason UNV HQ monitoring of levels and timeframe of disbursement to projects would be useful.

One arising issue in several contexts where volunteer schemes are implemented is that of financial compensation for volunteering. UNV has identified a Typology of Recompense in its 2009 Gender Note, which sets out seven aspects of recognition, reward and recompense for volunteers[55]. Within the category of Economic Recognition, most volunteer schemes (evaluation category 1) VI projects paid volunteers a Volunteer Living Allowance (VLA). Many of the managers of volunteer corps, programmes or services, struggled to manage expectations of volunteers in respect of VLA and in some cases programme sustainability was almost put at risk. For volunteer schemes, appropriate level of VLA can be challenging to establish. For example, under the ECOWAS VP, the VLA rate of $135 in the project document was later increased to $415 during the pilot and increased incrementally to $605 thereafter. Some volunteers still considered this did not cover their daily needs.

The issue of VLA sometimes caused controversy; VLA could be slightly higher than local salaries and thus cause tension with local staff (RIVERSEE), inadequate for conducting duties (Nepal) or confused with graduate salaries and thus a cause of dissatisfaction (Liberia).

4.4 Capitalisation on Human Resources (POs, UN Volunteers, HQ)

As described in sections above the deployment of international/national UN Volunteers in a service capacity to VI projects represents a huge asset to UNV and comprises part of the unique UNV offer. In general the support to VI projects by international/national UN Volunteers was considered to be a factor of their success.

National Volunteers bring with them a ready-formed understanding of culture and context, and their outputs are often considered to be timely and cost effective (as in Peru). UNV has often depicted engaging national UN Volunteers as a form of national capacity development for the volunteers in question; in Cape Verde, for example, four national UN Volunteers have gone on to find employment in the development sector and with national government utilising the skills developed through their project roles. There were some examples where national UN Volunteers were playing an important role, but either they (Togo) or the PO (Peru) were quite stretched in the management responsibilities this entailed.

International UN Volunteers have the potential to bring best practice and experience from beyond the national setting, and can, theoretically bring objectivity and impartiality to their role. This was particularly valued in the international UN Volunteer Project Advisor in Vietnam, for instance. However, the flipside of this is the lack of familiarity with the finer workings of local culture, which can build frustration in both international UN Volunteers and other project staff alike – also experienced in Vietnam.

[55] These include State recognition, Legislation for rights and benefits, Economic recognition, Infrastructure to support implementation, Social recognition, Support and training and Personal recognition.

There are examples of projects where both international/national UN Volunteers performed so effectively that the capacity of the project partners was reportedly undermined, however. For example in Pakistan underspend for year 1 of the project resulted in return of funds to government, which was partly attributed to the fact that UN Volunteers undertook the bulk of activities. In Nepal putting the direct management of the VI volunteers in the hands of the UN Volunteer Co-ordinator may have detracted from generating full ownership of the project by the national coordinating body.

The role of the PO is clearly quite important in respect of VI projects – in their conceptualising, brokering, implementing and monitoring. However, in some cases UNV Field Units may struggle with issues such as budget or transportation to support project work, and face demanding and conflicting priorities in their role of deploying, supporting and managing international/national UN Volunteers at the country level. Despite the constraints, there were examples identified of committed, involved POs who drove VI projects forward and sustained relationships with national counterparts (e.g. Togo, Vietnam). The quality of relationship between UNV HQ and each PO appears to vary but is important, given that it can expedite decision making and influence momentum. POs assert that to achieve results they depend on back-stopping, high-level MoUs and advocacy support from the HQ.

At UNV HQ, there may be a tension between the balancing of staff time between 'project work', (sometimes perceived as a 'drain on resources') and in the processing of international/national UN Volunteers, as the main income stream for UNV. However, it appears that the ownership and institutional memory, as well as the passion for UNV engagement in VI projects, may lie with a handful of long-serving staff.

The biggest challenge in terms of human resources was clearly identified as staff turnover. For example, in Vietnam, over a 3-year period of project implementation there were said to be three Project Managers, two POs, two Portfolio Managers, three national counterparts, and prior to that the project design was led by three people at HQ. Similarly, for the ECOWAS VP, the Regional Programme Coordinator post (an ECOWAS rather than UNV personnel post) in the Ouagadougou office was vacant between June 2012 and February 2013, which coincided with the deployment of a large number of volunteers[56]. This is not a new finding, as previous evaluations have informed that high turnover among project staff in UNV Bonn, UNV volunteers in country or host institution and partner staff negatively impacted project implementation[57].

Turnover is particularly linked to PO level personnel in the UNV HQ Development Division, as these are commonly international UN Volunteers. Turnover at this level has wide ramifications for institutional learning: in many cases POs held few or no project records for those which were not within the tenure of the current staff (e.g. Nepal, Liberia, Burkina Faso). In Cape Verde, where there were three POs within the lifetime of the project – and additional changes of key national staff –, there was a loss of institutional memory, considerable delay and the impediment of progress.

4.5 Mobilisation and Leveraging of Resources

[56] Although this gap was essentially filled by UNV HQ.
[57] Dominique De Bonis, May 2010. UNV Synthesis of Evaluations 2000 – 2009.

Regarding the mobilisation of resources, this can be considered at two points in the VI project cycle. Firstly, at the project concept stage, UNV appear to have performed fairly well in leveraging resources to complement SVF seed funding, in order to take a project forwards[58]. Secondly, at the end of the pilot or project, to support national partners in identifying or mobilising funding for the VI to continue (this is often but not always a project objective, but is identified as crucial in the VI Guidance Note 2004), UNV-supported project have often been less successful.

Not all VI projects – particularly in the earlier years – had a specific resource mobilisation strategy integrated into their project design, and where they did, this was not always activated during project implementation (Liberia, Vietnam). In some cases (such as Nicaragua), cost assumptions were made in the design of VI projects with a lack of clarity on where the funds would come from. However in general it appears that UNV have been able to successfully form partnerships which supplemented UNV project funds with other funding, typically from UNDP with a Government contribution. This is evidenced by the typical funding contribution of UNV to the project of well under 50%, as per the table above.

UNV success in supporting project resource mobilisation as part of an exit or sustainability strategy for VI projects appears to have been limited. However, this is intertwined with issues of sustainability, see section 6. In Liberia the UNV VI project was highly appreciated by national stakeholders and yet there was a break in programme delivery due to a lack of identification of programme funding by the Government, before the project was picked up and rolled out with UNICEF support[59]. In contrast, both Burkina Faso and Togo have been successful in assuring Government budgetary funding for their volunteer scheme. Similarly, the ECOWAS VP started with a budget of US$758,390, and as a result of resource mobilisation efforts now holds a budget of US$3,283,920. These issues are explored further in section 6.

To echo the 2004 Guidance Note, "Funders look to support VIOs that have sound, transparent management structures and are good stewards of their human and financial resources. Transparent and regular reporting is an important contributor to attracting the interest of potential funders." The quality of monitoring and evaluation of VI projects is assessed in the following section.

4.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has been highlighted in recently commissioned studies[60] as an area requiring significant improvement across the breadth of UNV's work; this finding is corroborated by the current evaluation, and was a limiting factor in the evaluation process itself (as discussed in section 1.3 above).

As it is administered by UNDP, UNV's approach to M&E is intended to be aligned with the programming policies and procedures outlined in the UNDP User Guide; this is often cited in Project Documents. However, the reality on the ground suggests M&E activity is challenging, as a result of a combination of factors; sometimes, M&E appears to be lacking, in others, a duplication of evaluation and review activity appears more problematic. Where UNV is not the lead implementing partner or

[58] However we do not know how many projects UNV may have tried to initiate but have not gone ahead due to lack of funds leveraged.
[59] In contrast UNICEF resource mobilisation has been very good, including 800,000 USD from AusAid, 425,000 USD from WFP and 246,000USD from the Netherlands.
[60] Dominique De Bonis, May 2010. UNV Synthesis of Evaluations 2000 – 2009.

responsible agency, M&E activity is commissioned and/or undertaken by other parties – be it a host government ministry or a UN agency etc. In such cases, this severely constrains the feasibility of UNV's Evaluation Unit affecting the efficiency of the design and management of the evaluation process. Whilst there are instances where UNV may positively influence procedures through technical advice and support, there are also many examples where UNV has had extremely limited input, has its input disregarded altogether, or is not informed that an evaluation is taking place[61].

4.6.1 Monitoring and reporting standards in relation to VI

At project level, the approach to monitoring and evaluation is captured by the Project Document; these documents vary considerably in quality, level of detail and clarity (as discussed in section 3.1.1 on design above), and this is mirrored in sections pertaining to M&E. In rare instances there is an M&E framework captured in the Project Document to accompany the narrative on M&E (for instance the Lesotho project, although these Project Documents were prepared by UNDP not UNV). More commonly, the intention to prepare an M&E framework or system in the early stages of the project is indicated (occasionally as a stand-alone activity or output as in Cape Verde). Consequently, it is rare for a project baseline to exist before implementation against which monitoring of progress can be undertaken. Delayed recruitment of an M&E Specialist for ECOWAS VP in its first two pilot years resulted in the late development of an M&E plan (end of 2013), which affected quality of delivery and lesson learning.

A failure for all partners to agree on monitoring indicators after the project has commenced can further delay its completion; this issue was faced in Sri Lanka and had caused considerable setbacks in the first year of the project.

There are good examples where monitoring has been undertaken in a systematic and efficient way as in Togo, Liberia and Burkina Faso, and in accordance to the approach laid out in the Project Documents, as in Peru. However, there is an underlying issue relating to *what* is to be monitored, *how* and *for what purpose* that is regularly overlooked, which precludes a detailed analysis of the intervention (i.e. analysis of efficiency or inclusivity). For national volunteer (recruitment and deployment) schemes, the focus tends to be on basic numbers and gender of those recruited; perhaps the number of host organisations. There is little consideration for volunteer age, ethnicity or other considerations (education, disability etc), and so only a limited volunteer profile is obtained.

Where coordinating centres or bodies are supported by UNV to build the capacity of VIOs/volunteers, monitoring tends to be weaker still. In Vietnam, insufficient consideration was given to monitoring the profile of VIOs and their member volunteers accessing the training and resources provided by the project, beyond recording numbers (and occasionally gender) of representatives attending events, workshops and training sessions. In Cape Verde, attempts were made (and should be commended) to try and mainstream Results-Based Management into the structures of both government agency and VIO partners, but the reporting and monitoring capacity of multiple VIOs was so diverse it made this extremely difficult to do.

A related issue is the clear assignment of responsibility for monitoring and reporting from the outset. This is particularly important in joint projects such as in Ecuador, where there was no clarity on this issue and therefore a lack of accountability. A designated individual(s) responsible for M&E can be

[61] In accordance with findings of the Review of UNV's Facility for Evaluation (FACE), 2009.

imperative during implementation; in Lesotho and Togo, national UN Volunteers took on this responsibility in full time M&E officer positions and contributed to successful monitoring, however the lack of an M&E focused volunteer in Vietnam (after a failure on the part of AVI to meet their commitment) was seen as a key factor in the project's weak M&E performance.

In terms of reporting, project performance is captured in Annual Project Progress Reports (APPR), completed by the Project Advisor (usually an international/national UN Volunteer) or the UNV PO where necessary. These reviews, which vary in detail and quality, provide a snapshot of progress against objectives, highlight challenges and lessons learned and highlight actions for future. Projects are also subject to an external MTR and/or a Final Evaluation in theory, although it is not clear if these are consistently conducted and/or well-controlled. There is no consistent translation of reports between Spanish, English and French, which also restricts accessibility. At UNV Field Unit level there are systems in place to support information/best practice sharing and lesson learning at project level, such as Atlas, the project document repository on ERBM and the UNV portal, but these are not utilised consistently.

4.6.2 Efficacy of results measurement

Results and Resources Frameworks captured in the Project Documents are intended to guide measurement of performance and results and are similar to a project logical framework; whilst these are present far more often than the M&E frameworks, they are just as variable in quality and detail. For instance, the framework for the Pakistan National Volunteer Scheme project comprises just two outputs and four activities; whereas the framework for China's Strengthening Volunteerism/Beijing Olympics project is extremely comprehensive and broken down by quarter.

Targets and performance indicators are present in some Frameworks but not others (if the latter, it is not clear if these are captured elsewhere). For RIVERSEE, there was a general lack of measurable indicators and M&E was not fully integrated into implementation as a result of this. Overall, targets tend to be quantitative in nature, which can limit measurement of impact – particularly for projects where the focus is on capacity building of coordinating centres, VIOs and volunteers as opposed to volunteer deployment.

Measuring the impact of capacity building on action and practice of VIOs/volunteers, and ultimately on the beneficiaries in the communities in which they operate, is notable for its absence in a number of projects, particularly Vietnam and Cape Verde. Similarly, measuring the impact of national volunteers on host organisations and on communities is also absent from national recruiting/deploying government schemes in the West African region. From the perspective of the volunteers themselves, there is no tracking of alumni or ex-poste evaluation provision to consider impact on long term employability.

At national level, there is no systematic assessment of impact in relation to national development goals. ECOWAS VP has made assessment of the contribution to national development goals using the "V" methodology in both Liberia and Guinea[62], which is commendable and should be common practice for evaluation of contribution of volunteer infrastructure schemes to national development goals. The assumption that by their presence alone, volunteers will have this transformative effect is not tenable, especially in a peacebuilding setting.

[62] However this exercise was conducted very recently and hence data not yet available.

Measuring achievements to demonstrate attribution to UNV VI project is often challenging, given the in-country administrative arrangements whereby project objectives tend to reside with those of the host partner organisation. This is particularly true of projects which seek changes to legislation or policy framework; assessing UNV's and/or a VI project's contribution is extremely difficult, as most legislative change comes about through combined efforts of multiple stakeholders across sectors over prolonged periods of time. In this sense, this is not a "deliverable" project output. Similarly, projects focused on networks (mostly in Latin America) have the additional challenge of demonstrating impact of advocacy and lobbying activities, which requires the careful development of specific indicators.

As indicated at the start of this section, this critique of UNV's approach to M&E is well known and documented, and changes are afoot. The new UNV Strategic Framework looks to improve internal systems and processes to enable more efficient working and the capturing, evaluating and accurately reporting on results. The intention is that this Framework will institutionalise a culture of Results-Based Management, reporting, knowledge management, resource mobilisation and accountability.

5. IMPACT AND RESULTS

According to the ToRs, the concept of VI can be broken down into three different but inter-connected levels of society that UNV projects are commonly geared towards. These are the individual (or placement level); the organisational level (VIO) and the public policy level. Results identified have therefore been grouped accordingly.

5.1 National and Policy Level

According to the ToRs, at this level an infrastructure would support volunteers and VIOs through funding, policies, law/legislation, schemes/programmes and institutions, as an indication of sound governmental valuation of volunteerism. This level will also capture the expected impact of volunteer action.

5.1.1 How UNV defines an enabling environment for volunteerism

The UNV Guidance Note on Developing Volunteer Infrastructure (2004) groups together common elements that can work together to strengthen volunteerism as a strategic resource for development, into four 'pillars' of volunteer infrastructure. These are:

1. reaching a common understanding of volunteerism and a shared appreciation of its value;
2. establishing and nurturing an enabling environment;
3. adopting a diversity of approaches to mobilising and facilitating volunteerism;
4. Ensuring sustainable funding.

The factor of Sustainable Funding is covered within section 4 on efficiency, whilst the actions supporting pillar 3, relating to the diversity of volunteering approaches are mainly examined under within 7.3 on promoting social inclusion. The performance of VI projects relating to the actions underpinning the first two 'pillars' are discussed in the sections 5.2 – 5.3 below.

Figure 3 below shows the four pillars of the 2004 Guidance Note conceptualised as a results framework, relating UNV input in a logical way to VI project outputs (or deliverables), project

outcomes (changes brought about by the combined outputs the project puts in place) and higher level impact to which projects can only contribute. In a similar results-based approach for measuring capacity[63], UNDP sees three levels of measurement:

1. Impact: Change in people's well-being
2. Outcome: Change in institutional performance, stability and adaptability
3. Output: Product produced or service provided based on capacity development core issues (institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability)

Presenting the pillars of UNV's approach to developing volunteer infrastructure in this way, helps to separate what UNV-supported VI projects can deliver, which factors are necessary pre-conditions for success and what changes VI projects expect to achieve as a result of achieving their outputs.

[63] UNDP 2010 Capacity Measurement Framework.

Figure 3: UNV Developing Volunteer Infrastructure: A Guidance Note 2004 – Results Framework

5.2 Establishing and Nurturing an Enabling Environment

The UNV 2004 Volunteerism and Legislation Guidance Note set a baseline for this aspect of volunteer infrastructure, by laying out seven areas of law that can impact on volunteerism[64], and six common elements in establishing a legal framework for volunteerism. Legislation is a key determinant of the extent to which volunteerism can flourish. It is vital that states recognise volunteers as a legal category per se, and to harness the potential of volunteerism towards the MDGs, parliamentarians should:

- Remove existing barriers in laws and regulations;
- Mainstream volunteerism in legislative processes;
- Enhance opportunities for volunteering, through the creation of appropriate volunteer legislation in partnership with all stakeholders.

To facilitate a favourable policy and regulatory framework, governments need to consider legislation which may impact on citizens' willingness and ability to volunteer; and balance freedom of choice with providing direction in relation to volunteerism. Ensuring regulatory frameworks which are favourable to volunteerism implies consideration not only of appropriate new legislation but also of existing legal policies and measures which may impact on people's willingness and ability to volunteer time, relating to employment, NGOs and labour standards[65].

5.2.1 Favourable policy and regulatory frameworks

In the decade since IYV 2001, over 70 new laws or policies designed to promote volunteerism have been adopted worldwide[66]. This includes 40 new national policies, laws and decrees since 2008 alone[67]. The importance of integrating volunteerism into national development planning (UNDAF, Country Programme Action Plans (CPAPs) etc) is increasingly recognised (e.g. Burundi, Cape Verde and Togo have all included volunteerism within their PRSPs).

Within the scope of this evaluation, VI projects which incorporated an output or explicit focus on policy/legislation are indicated in the table under section 3.1.

The trend of relatively rapid adoption of volunteerism legislation is reflected in the outcomes of the UNV-supported VI projects. In Burkina Faso, one of the first results of the programme in 2008 was the passing of a law on volunteering which regulates and articulates the modality of volunteering. This has been substantiated by a state budget line for volunteering (even though the level of resources is not always clear or guaranteed). Similarly, in Mozambique a legal framework and regulation on volunteerism were approved by Parliament (including consideration to rights and duties of volunteers) and was disseminated among partners, stakeholders and national institutions in 2012. In both Burkina Faso and Mozambique these results cannot be fully attributed to UNV, despite their significant lobbying efforts, as other VIOs also played a significant role. Indeed it is not always easy to trace evidence of clear UNV contributions in influencing the legislation development process or the philosophy of the project.

[64] Rights and freedoms, international law, labour law, tax law, social welfare law, immigration law, regulatory frameworks for NGOs.
[65] Volunteerism and Legislation: Guidance Note (2004).
[66] Unpublished research conducted for the State of the World's Volunteerism Report (2011).
[67] UNGA (56/288).

In Cape Verde, a Decree-Law on volunteerism was approved by Parliament in 2010 and has since been disseminated to various sectors. This is seen by many stakeholders as clearly articulating responsibilities and rights of volunteers and VIOs, and giving clear definition of volunteerism. In Nepal, UNV support was instrumental in the process of consultation for the formulation of a draft national policy for volunteerism. Support to this exercise has had mixed results, as whilst the draft has been successfully articulated and submitted for review and sanction, pushing this policy through is not seen as the current priority with elections looming. A three-year process is envisaged to begin implementation, to include preparing a legal framework to embed the policy and establishing procedural guidelines and manuals for implementation.

In Honduras: Volunteerism for Development (V4D) was included in Honduras' National Human Development report; a legislative framework was created (see box below); round tables were held with government and CSOs; and volunteerism was included in UNDAF[68].

Law on Volunteerism Approved in Honduras

The National Congress unanimously passed the Law for the Promotion and Exercise Volunteer in Honduras in September 2011 as part of the IYV+10 celebrations, after the initiative was promoted and supported through the UNV VI project with support from the National Youth Institute. The primary purpose of this Act is to ensure the organised and responsible development of volunteerism, and leverage the potential of those able, willing and dedicated (particularly youth) to volunteer in public, private and not-for-profit organisations for the development of Honduras. The spirit of this Act also focused on ensuring the rights and duties of both volunteers and hosting organisations and ensuring synergies between different volunteering efforts.

The volunteerism Bill was introduced to Congress by the head of the Youth Commission, supported by the Secretary in the Office of Youth. The draft law was developed through a series of workshops held by member organisations of the Honduras volunteer network under the coordination of the Office. The Act recognised the value of volunteerism as human capital which must be valued properly, and as a powerful resource that serves a dual purpose of benefitting the welfare of the citizens as well as contributing to economic development of the country.

With support from the regional VI RIVERSEE Programme, laws on volunteerism passed in both Croatia and FYROM[69] and reaching draft form by the end of the programme in one of two administrations of Bosnia & Herzegovina (and in the second in the years following). Kosovo also developed a Youth Action Plan subsequent to its involvement in the RIVERSEE Programme.

Legislation should not be a goal in itself, as in some contexts, it may exist but not be implemented or be used in a way that does not enable volunteerism to flourish. For example in Nicaragua, Law 543 on Social Volunteerism was passed but is still not regulated – despite proposals for regulation submitted to the Assembly – and a National Policy has been passed but still not operationalised. As implementation of legislation is not within UNV control it may be preferable to omit objectives relating to the passing/implementation of volunteer related legislation from Project Documents in future.

[68] These are mentioned in the AIM 2010 Programme Review and may not all be fully attributable to the VI project.
[69] Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

In countries where legislation has not been an explicit objective of the VI project, the project has located itself very clearly in relation to existing policy. For example in Liberia, the UNV-supported VI project represented a critical *programme vehicle* for implementation of the National Youth Policy (2005) and National Youth Action Plan (2008).

Public policy support in Peru

The contribution of volunteerism and recognition of the need for volunteer infrastructure/schemes was recognised explicitly in the 2004 law on volunteerism, which is not yet regulated. UNV has focused efforts in Peru through three separate VI projects. The **Soy Voluntario project** (although initially intended to promote youth and university involvement in volunteerism) was substantively revised to meet the changing content, and is now focused on institutionalising volunteerism. The Ministry report that the presence of a technical team [of National UN Volunteers] able to advise and provide support on volunteerism at policy level has been critical to the development of a plan and draft regulations. Success is also attributed to clear linkages between volunteer action and the development agenda; this has led to volunteerism being revalued and volunteering made the responsibility of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Under the 2009-11 Volunteers for Reconstruction project, important results were achieved at local government level through legislative changes recognising volunteers in different towns and the Department of Ica and Annual Volunteerism Work Plans launched by local authorities.

5.2.2 Recognition and promotion of V4D

Promotion of special awards and events, which build public recognition of volunteerism for development, can be a powerful means of motivating volunteer action[70]. For example in Mozambique two volunteer galas were held to promote volunteering initiatives (attended by 400+) and Volunteer Awards were held involving 85 VIOs, the corporate sector and media.

In the VI projects where UNV supported the establishment of a coordinating body (category 2), as in Vietnam or Cape Verde, the raison d'etre of the body is to promote volunteerism. For instance, in Vietnam the profile of volunteerism has been raised through establishment of a volunteer portal, volunteer awards ceremony, and a variety of public seminars, conferences and workshops. In Sri Lanka the volunteer centre was intended to promote volunteerism through a project website and advocacy to introduce V4D in the academic curricula and as a tool to campaign on MDGs.

For volunteer schemes (category 1) the main activity would be via the induction training of volunteers to engage in voluntary action to promote volunteerism, as part of or in addition to their volunteer action. In Mali this was said to have led to a greater awareness among general public and government itself about the value of V4D, as opposed to volunteerism for youth unemployment.

The promotion of volunteerism for national development includes International Volunteer Day (5 December), for which all UNV Field Units, facilitate a range of celebration events. These may not be strictly speaking within the parameters of the VI projects, as they can be funded for example by the Programme Officers Empowerment (POEM) budget. However, the Peru network project mobilised 2600 volunteers across the country for the celebration of International Volunteer Day 2012. The

[70] However in the Guidance Note, an important distinction is made between the recognition for volunteerism and incentives for individual volunteers.

same project also debated different aspects of volunteerism, whilst the Peru Reconstruction project and *Soy Voluntario* project looked to raise awareness of the power of volunteerism for development at local and government level. Similarly, in Benin there was establishment of a forum for dialogue to promote participation and commitment of the population in natural resource management and local development, which albeit less explicitly, involved promotion of the role of the volunteer.

In Cape Verde, a very interesting concept of a 'volunteer passport' was regulated through Ministerial Ordinance in 2013. This tool/certificate outlines the volunteer's obligations and rights, the work done, and competencies acquired (through 120 hours volunteering). The passport also gives privileged access to scholarships, job market and some free services from government. However publicity, advocacy and communication strategy are all needed to raise awareness and understanding of the purpose of the passport and how to acquire one.

At the international level of promotion, in Vietnam the profile of volunteerism was raised through gaining membership of IAVE (International Association for Volunteering Efforts) and CCIVS (Coordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service), which will present new opportunities to Vietnam and give it an international presence in the volunteerism arena. In China there was extensive national media print and televised coverage of the VI project outputs (including UNV personnel), reaching a mass audience.

5.2.3 Commitment of national leadership to volunteerism

As described in the 2004 Guidance Note, recognised leaders within government, civil society, the private sector and public opinion makers have a role in strengthening the enabling environment for volunteerism. This could take the form of public statement or action to exert pressure on policy makers or through partnership and collaboration. Whilst UNV-supported projects may have indirectly built commitment of national leadership, it is not something that has generally been explicitly targeted within project objectives. Indeed a certain level of government commitment is a pre-condition for UNV to embark on VI project support in the first instance.

The commitment of government can be measured through the embedding of projects within state planning systems, which is critical. In Cape Verde the VI National Volunteer Corp (or CNV) was established by the Council of Ministers through Decree Law in 2012 as financially and administratively autonomous. Government has provided physical infrastructure for activities and in addition shown public support and commitment to volunteerism through national media. The Minister of Youth has stated that volunteerism is part of the national culture, and the Government will do whatever is in its power to strengthen it and make it more effective and efficient. Indeed VI coordinating bodies established in UNV-supported projects achieved statutory status in Sri Lanka, Mali and Senegal. By way of comparison, government ownership in Liberia was recognised as absent within the Project Document, and under the present day successor programme, the same challenge remains.

Another positive example is that of Vietnam, where national leadership is deeply committed. This is expressed through the government's desire to broaden the draft policy to make it more inclusive; the initiation of establishment of a favourable regulatory framework that applies to all volunteers (not solely youth) and the consideration for 2014 to be recognised as Year of the Volunteer in Vietnam. In Senegal *local* administrative authorities have begun to recognise the role of volunteers

in development and to support the Bill on Volunteerism and other related legislation. Government has looked to foster different models of volunteerism (such as civic service volunteers, volunteer teachers for rural areas etc).

The 2004 Guidance Note explains that volunteer infrastructure can be politicised, with a fine line between an enabling environment and one that is constraining/controlling – particularly as employability is such a key focus for governments (also discussed in section 6 below). In Burkina Faso exclusive dependency on the government for funding the programme led to a 'Special Employment Creation Programme' designed as a response to youth unrest, and the distinctions between the national volunteer scheme (known as PNVB) and the new programme became blurred. This new programme encouraged the speedy recruitment of 11,000 additional volunteers[71], which was not viable given the PNVB capacity and affected quality of selection and placing of volunteers. For example, many of the 'special volunteers' were nominated by host agencies and enrolled directly without going through the recruitment processes, some volunteers did not fulfil the normal volunteer criteria (i.e. a minimal literacy requirement). Hence the new 'special volunteer' scheme was open to nepotism and corruption, and common perception of the scheme as a political vehicle threatened the good reputation of the PNVB.

5.3 Reaching a Common Understanding and Shared Appreciation of the Value of Volunteerism

5.3.1 Public dialogue and discussion

The importance of building a shared public understanding of volunteerism, through opportunities for stakeholder discussion on a range of issues related to volunteerism, is cited in the 2004 Guidance Note[72] and ultimately linked to impetus for government investment. There were a number of examples of this within the UNV-supported VI projects, but occurring more on the 'formal' side of the spectrum i.e. project stakeholders rather than wider public society.

In Nepal, policy consultation – the process of consulting with a range of stakeholders, in which UNV played an important role – clearly contributed to the articulation of the policy, which mentions as a specific objective, for example: "Cooperation and collaboration with national and international VSAs [Volunteer Sending Agencies], VRAs [Volunteer Recruiting Agencies] and VIOs."[73]. However, the collaboration was also not straightforward; wider stakeholders expressed a level of mistrust in the position of UNV/UNDP in relation to policy and in government processes (particularly among NGO stakeholders), with concerns the consultation was a token exercise and the policy intended to five NDVS control over the volunteerism landscape in Nepal. Recent silence over the policy development process and lack of follow up information has compounded this suspicion.

In the RIVERSEE Programme, stakeholders greatly valued the bringing together of 14 Implementing Partner Organisations at a regional meeting. Given the political context of the time this was

[71] In comparison to the typical 1000 or less prior to the Special Programme.

[72] Including indigenous customs and expressions of volunteerism; strengths and weaknesses of various models and approaches; nuances of language that distinguish between neighbourly; help, advocacy, volunteering and civic duty; importance of mutual support and human development; advantages or limitations of enabling resources; potential benefits; clarification of stakeholder roles.

[73] Draft Volunteering Policy in Nepal, translation Kanchan Joshi.

remarkable, and an important aspect of building relationships between nations. In Nicaragua, the collaborative advocacy work of the RNV Network has given greater visibility and leveraging power to civil society to engage with government at the national level, but it is as yet too early to judge if there will be any significant changes in policy or approach as a result of this. In Benin, a forum for dialogue was created with the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform. Seminars and events open to the wider public were also a popular feature of the Vietnam project.

5.3.2 Research and documentation on volunteering and dissemination (Factor 1)

While volunteerism is part of social traditions in most societies, it has been under-served by scientific analysis and social impact analysis. As per the 2004 Guidance Note, studies need to address the sociological, cultural, gender and economic dimensions of volunteerism and measure scale, pattern, distribution and public perceptions of volunteering.

Research has been conducted as a component within a number of UNV-supported VI projects. In Mozambique, research on valuing volunteerism and its potential development impact was commended, when a national study on the status of national volunteering practice published. In Togo policy/legislation to establish the VI programme as an autonomous body is now being discussed by the National Assembly (in the expectation that this will be passed in 2014). It was through UNV-supported research that this need was identified and that research underpinning the current policy and regulatory framework now in place.

In other cases research was undertaken via the VI projects, but it was not possible to establish the quality or impact of the research output. In Senegal a study was initiated by the project on the social and economic contribution of volunteerism to Gross Domestic Product, in conjunction with University of Dakar, using a sample of volunteers from international VIOs. In Sri Lanka research on aspects of volunteerism was conducted, including a stakeholder analysis, country-wide survey on the status of national volunteerism and place of the coordinating body (VOICE) within the voluntary sector.

For some VI projects, it is not clear that research was the strongest or most relevant project output. In Senegal, there was a considerable focus on awareness rising on MDGs, translation of these into local languages and dissemination via community volunteers. These were described in the final evaluation as 'amazing pedagogical tools', but it is not clear how this campaign in itself helped in furthering development goals. Research on contribution of V4D on achieving MDGs in Vietnam did not meet expectations of review panel and hence was not publically circulated.

The *dissemination* of information in ways that will attract attention/stimulate interest, and through different mediums is noted as an important aspect of research efforts[74]. The main example of good practice in this area identified was in China, where a book and film were produced by the VI project to demonstrate the value of V4D and disseminated to 243 member organisations and international delegations. A further handbook produced by Beijing University, featuring information on volunteering opportunities in Beijing with 200 VIOs, was distributed to 2000 groups and organisations.

[74] Developing a Volunteer Infrastructure: A Guidance Note (2004).

5.4 The Expected Impact of Volunteer Action

Amongst the categories of VI projects identified by this evaluation[75], it is easiest to trace the impact of volunteer action for national volunteer schemes (i.e. category 1), which represent long-term volunteers serving in more formal programmes, typically with a monitoring system in place. For the other two categories noted, 'support to a coordinating body' and 'support to a network', the link to ultimate beneficiaries of volunteer action is further removed.

Amongst the volunteer schemes evaluated, the VI project in Togo is recognised as being a good model for other countries to follow and provides a useful case study for the long-term impact of UNV's role and contribution in developing volunteer infrastructure. The scope of the volunteer scheme (currently 5000 serving volunteers) is large enough to merit discussion of impact of the volunteer action (as opposed to relatively limited scope of some 'pilot' projects). The volunteers serve poor communities in rural and urban Togo (estimated as 61% of the population) in key sectors[76]: health, local government including women's participation WASH[77], agriculture, rights of vulnerable people, governance and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Impact includes better maternal and infant health; better sexual and reproductive health, especially for young women; reduction in preventable diseases including HIV/AIDS[78]; more efficient and timely services (health, legal, administrative etc) for the poor, which helps to save time and stress; increase in women's enterprise (income generation); increase in women's empowerment; increase in community cohesion; increase in community enterprise.

In Nepal, whilst it is recognised that the main direct benefit of the VI project went to the volunteers, the increased capacity in human resources at the local level sustained beyond the lifespan of the project. The work of the volunteers scored highly within the wider project, as their capacity building impact on Social Mobilisers, whose duties were to motivate participation in development planning at community level, and particularly among the most marginalised.

There is other anecdotal evidence from some VI countries, such as Cape Verde, of increased interventions at community level such as: tree-planting; assisting people in need; and organising events to promote health/education messages. However the evaluation did not succeed in capturing large volumes of data on the impact of volunteer action[79].

Case study: Peru Reconstruction Project

Improved community organisation as a result of volunteer impact was a clear change attributed to training received through the project. One volunteer showed the street alignment, electricity posts and site of a new park in her neighbourhood and introduced volunteers in each street who took responsibility for organising communal events such as litter clearance. Recently they had also managed to secure litter bins for each street, which would now be emptied by the council.

[75] See section 3.1.
[76] In order of number of volunteers.
[77] Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.
[78] Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.
[79] This is due mainly to the short time visit of 5 days duration for field missions – see also section 4.3 (M&E) and section 1.3 (Limitations).

Case study: Togo PROVONAT Project

One male volunteer deployed by the project, a lawyer, is working with prisoners and assisting with their appeals (without which they would have no legal support). He has so far deposed 20 cases and three prisoners have been released. He has also set up an income generating project to help prisoners reintegrating into society when they leave prison to enable them to support their family.

One female volunteer has been working for the Water and Forestry Department in a rural area helping to develop technical capacity among the local farmers in the planting, protection and management of forests, which in turn helps to protect the environment and improve people's livelihoods. She has helped to increase the number of trees in the region (from 5000 in 2011 to 10,000 in 2012) as well as helping to plant trees around schools and other public buildings.

5.5 Organisational Level

According to the ToRs, at this level an appropriate infrastructure would consist of professional commitment to volunteering, resulting in clearly defined projects/programmes, employment of volunteer coordinators, organisational capacity, availability of appropriate office equipment, training and development opportunities, along with a coherent culture of recognition of volunteers and their contributions.

The 2004 Guidance Note states that effective facilitation of volunteerism is not just about mobilising large numbers, but rather good practices in volunteer management, which relies on capacity of VIOs to deliver services, support volunteers and increase retention (through training, M&E, recognition etc). In turn, effective facilitation practices will strengthen volunteer engagement and increase the potential for high-impact volunteer activities. Investing in good practices to manage volunteers increases the capacity of VIOs to deliver services, to support volunteer involvement and to increase volunteer retention. In other words, effective volunteer actions require high-quality management capacity, as this is recognised as a key component of volunteer infrastructure in any country. Capacity building for VIOs is broken down into: formal training; networks for sharing experience; learning from documentation; and ongoing analysis and reflection.

5.5.1 Assessing and monitoring capacity

The UNDP Capacity Measurement Framework 2010 identifies three levels of assessment: Performance (efficiency and effectiveness); Stability (institutionalisation, risk mitigation); and Adaptability (continuous improvement, innovation). These factors can help frame the starting point for a programmatic response on volunteer infrastructure at the organisational level, by defining a starting point for change; highlighting the challenges an institution faces as it delivers on its mandate; helping to focus the capacity development response on those areas that will actually make a difference; and providing tangible baselines against which progress can be measured. The Framework sets out a number of question prompts to guide needs analysis during the design/inception phase of the project cycle, and which could be used during project evaluation:

- How effective are an institution's policies in meeting beneficiaries' needs?
- How efficiently does the institution use the resources it has to deliver services?
- How well is it able to institutionalise and sustain performance improvements that have already been made?

- How well can it anticipate and respond to a changing environment?

It does not appear to have been common practice to capture capacity assessment in a formal document, such as a capacity development strategy, which could guide organisational development that takes places over the project life-cycle. That said, the aforementioned issue on M&E document control and management (see section 4) would suggest these formal documents may have existed but aren't readily available. In Vietnam, it is understood that a needs analysis of VIOs was undertaken through observations of VIOs at work and through discussions with representatives, but if captured in a document, this was not available to the evaluation team. In Lesotho, intentions to introduce Results-Based Management systems and processes into VIOs were hampered by the variable levels of existing capacity present, suggesting that a thorough needs analysis did not inform this part of the project.

5.5.2 Capacity development (Volunteer Schemes)

For the national volunteer schemes, capacity can be built and measured around the volunteer management cycle i.e. recruitment/selection, training, deployment, monitoring, exit etc. Three examples of volunteer schemes are examined in more detail below: Burkina Faso, Togo and Liberia.

In **Burkina Faso**, the system of recruiting volunteers (under the 'normal' scheme[80]), finding placements and providing support to the volunteers through 'animators' appears to be working. At the organisational level, the PNVB project has some core staff with a number of departments covering communications, M&E, re-insertion into post volunteer life, administrative and finance management. A weak point is the dependency on the state; in the strategic plan it was hoped that host organisations would contribute to co-funding the placement on a sliding scale depending on the organisation type. However, in practice this was unfeasible, in part because local authorities and decentralised services have extremely limited funding. Learning has been another weak point as the current M&E system collects only very basic volunteer data, and hence does not generate data useful for learning. The key capacity development strategy employed by UNV appears to have been the initial fielding of UN Volunteers, who later mentored national volunteers, and provided on-going technical assistance. Beyond this, it is not clear through what actions UNV further built the capacity of the PNVB team.

In **Togo** there are two 'waves' of recruits each year, whereby eligible young people complete an application form and their details are added to the central volunteer database. A selection panel operates at central level to review applications and make an initial selection; thereafter all candidates deemed appropriate are invited for interview by said panel. This transparent, centralised process ensures that there is no nepotism or political interference in selection. A similar process exists for selection of placements[81]. In 2012 it was estimate that the scheme includes 656 host organisations, all of whom have a legal agreement with PROVONAT (as do all volunteers).

[80] But not the Special scheme.

[81] Interested organisations initially contact their regional CRV or respond to mobilisation activities. One of the national UNV Focal Points from the CRV visits the organisation and completes a detailed form. The information collected is later synthesised into a second form with a Recommendation (or not) as suitable for a volunteer placement. The forms are sent to the National Committee where a selection panel makes the final decision.

Each new wave of volunteers (c. 300) receives pre-service training[82], and support and supervision of volunteers in the field is carried out by the national UNV Focal Points in each region, who make regular placement visits and hold meetings and training for volunteers at the regional centre. There is a detailed communications strategy and grassroots awareness-raising campaigns. PROVONAT is also a member of National Committee for the Promotion of Volunteerism (which liaises direct with UNV HQ) and takes an active part in the International Day of the Volunteer activities.

The UNV pilot in **Liberia** ended in 2010; however the National Youth Service Programme is currently implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, wholly funded by UNICEF and other donors. Under the UNDP/UNV implemented project, volunteer management was said to be good, however the Ministry-housed project unit currently faces some key challenges in volunteer management. For example, young volunteers deployed to communities far from their homes had received just one or none of their monthly stipend payments since deployment[83]. In addition, Programme Officers had not been paid for three months and were threatening to strike[84]. There was an issue around ttransparency of conditions with most national volunteers reporting their perception that they had been 'tricked' during the induction regarding condition of service (namely the amount of VLA). Many had high expectations of government jobs at the end of their period of service; these experiences partially reflect the conflict-affected context, and so special consideration needs to be given to approaches to ground volunteer expectations in reality. Significantly it was recognised in the UNV Project Document of 2007 that "there is no guarantee that the government will have the capacity or the structure to manage a national volunteer programme" as "the project activities/outputs do not include building this capacity or structure in the government." The lack of explicit capacity building actions and objectives to host the programme beyond the UNDP/UNV implemented pilot was a significant flaw in the approach.

For the examples identified above, a key factor for success appears to be national government ownership (see section 3.3 and section 6.3). This would appear to be almost a pre-condition for a VI project and should be evidenced by co-financing or substantial in-kind support from the outset. The question is whether commitment of national leadership is really something that can be 'delivered' by VI as a project output? This in turn generates further inter-linked questions: What type of activity can VI projects engage in to strengthen government commitment? How can UNV diagnose whether national commitment is sufficient to proceed with a VI project?

The two regional programmes invested quite heavily in capacity building. The ECOWAS VP has supported capacity building of its national offices in the three pilot countries, through providing office equipment, setting up bank accounts and providing transportation – however this input came only in 2012. There has also been intensive mentoring/supervision by both UNV HQ staff to the regional office, and National Coordinators by the UNV Field Units. Under RIVERSEE, volunteer management capacity of Implementing Partner Organisations and host organisations was enhanced through the project via a study tour to VSO in the UK. However, as RIVERSEE was focused on the capacity building of just the 14 focal points within these Implementing Partner Organisations, it lacked a proper strategy for sustainable organisational development.

[82] On topics such as the value of volunteerism, the ethos and objectives of PROVONAT, terms and conditions of service, as well as some orientation about working within host organisations.
[83] Three instalments were due.
[84] The reason given was that Ministry of Youth and Sports was awaiting project funds from the Peace Building Fund.

In Nepal, the project partner (the National Development Volunteer Service, or NDVS) does not show any perceptible enhancement of capacity. Volunteer deployment remains at similar levels to its previous position and the interaction with international UN Volunteers placed does not by itself appear to have generated any long term change in management practice in NDVS, which was already handling large numbers of volunteers. The capacity building inputs into NDVS in the form of the library/resource centre has created some modest improvements in the enabling environment for volunteers, but as yet the impacts are limited.

One form of capacity which has been much appreciated by partners has been support for database development. In Nepal the database developed for volunteer recruitment/matching is a promising resource which is already highly appreciated for management benefits within NDVS and offers the beginnings of the Volunteer Information Management system. In Senegal support to the CV3A (Volunteer Corps of the Third Age) took place through brokering of partnerships between CV3A branches and two French NGOs and also support to CV3A through providing office space, IT equipment such as a computer and a travel budget to establish regional CV3A bodies.

5.5.3 Capacity development (Coordinating Bodies)

One important facet of capacity development was statutory regulation. For sustainability and national ownership it is important that governments fully embed VI projects within centralised planning and budgeting systems. However it is equally important that coordinating bodies should have sufficient administrative and financial autonomy – for example in Cape Verde the CNV was established by the Council of Ministers through Decree Law in 2012 as financially and administratively autonomous and similar status has been achieved by the Volunteer Information and Resource Centre (VVIRC) in Vietnam.

In Cape Verde the CNV delivered training modules on subjects including how to mobilise and manage volunteers, planning and budgeting, project design and management and social mobilisation. The introduction of results based planning – defining of goals, indicators, activities and rights/role of volunteers – is a new approach for Cape Verde VIOs. However there was no M&E of the training activity.

The key partner in the Vietnam VI project was the Ho Chi Min Youth Union (HCYU), and this is a strong example of support to a permanent and sustainable national institution for the promotion and support of volunteerism. Although there was limited M&E, it is reported that that training opportunities were valued by VIOs (although these could have been extended beyond HCYU membership and be more responsive to local needs i.e. outside of Hanoi). A network in the north of the country was catalysed and is still active with 22 member VIOs, each with 300 volunteers. A further activity was the development of a VIO directory, which whilst not brilliantly executed was nonetheless seen as valuable tool for VIOs around the country, as it contained details for some 500 VIOs nationwide.

In China, a rigorous approach to training was taken by the Beijing Volunteering Federation (BVF) coordinating body, utilising the internationally recognised PMBOK framework, but again there was a lack of monitoring of impact of training in practice. However 19 BVF in-house trainers were trained to deliver project management training, and continue to provide this training. In addition, model

pilot projects were launched by different VIOs in a range of sectors, with total of 2000 active volunteers.

The coordinating body for Sri Lanka[85], VOICE, was established as a permanent institution and provided for in a new Voluntary Social Services Organisations Act. There was development of a 3-year strategic plan and a volunteer database was created, although the establishment of VOICE is since understood to be progressing at a slow pace.

The Peru Reconstruction project had mixed impact on organisation and groups: there were some instances where the project contributed to consolidate organisational development of different groups; others where local volunteer networks lacked funds to create sustainability, and so disappeared. Due to the lack of support from local authorities, a mechanism of seed funding for CSO groups would be needed to keep them operative. Despite this, there were some positive examples where local volunteer groups had been able to influence participatory budgets, and hold elected authorities to account.

It was found that the *Soy Voluntario* Project in Peru has contributed to improved levels of sustainability for the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable People's (MIMP's) work on volunteerism – MIMP now has taken a long term vision of its own objectives in relation to mainstreaming volunteerism across its work, which is independent of whether it remains as the lead Ministry for volunteerism. However, there is a question raised as to whether enough attention has been paid to capacity building of government staff, and rather an over-reliance on the national UN Volunteer team.

Overall, the greatest organisational results among coordinating bodies were experienced where existing structures and entities were supported (as in China and Vietnam), as opposed to being established from scratch (as in Sri Lanka and Peru *Soy Voluntario).* This is linked to the issues of UNV project duration often being limited to two years, ambitious aims and inevitable delays experienced earlier on in the project, as discussed in section 3.2 above.

5.5.4 Network development

There are just three examples of this type of VI project, amongst the 22 VI projects examined, and yet capacity building of networks is an interesting VI modality, given the potential to achieve results with very little funding. Networks have flourished in Latin America, which may be particular to the regional context, in contrast with, for example, the challenge faced to generate steering group representation without 'seating fees' in some of the African countries.

In Nicaragua the RNV Network originated from the University Volunteers Service, a small group of Universities facilitating development in response to Hurricane Mitch. The idea of a wider, and more representative national network was put to UNV by national NGOs, initiated by the members recognising that despite the government's promotion of solidarity and voluntary action, large numbers of community groups and NGOs remained unrepresented at a national level. In addition to advocacy and lobbying efforts, the Network has also done a lot of work on internal structures, policies and regulations and members of the Network coordinate in organise events.

[85] Based on information contained in an undated summary.

In the Peru Network project, despite the deliberately informal nature of the Network at present, members are able to develop relationships, discuss good practice and share their concerns and priorities at national and sectoral level. The active participation of government ministries testifies to the validity of this network over the official top-down organisation CONVOL[86] specified within the Volunteer Law of 2004. Members also contribute to the Volunteer Bulletin, which has a multiplier effect of increasing visibility of the aims of the government. It is clear that the number of organisations participating in the network overall (over 60 at present) is for the most part attributable to UNV.

5.6 Individual Level

At this level an appropriate infrastructure would provide good access to volunteering opportunities, and professional support by qualified staff throughout the engagement (including training and exit procedures). In relation to this the evaluation sought to establish a) the number of volunteers generated by each VI project; b) the quality of the volunteering experience. (*Access* to VI volunteer opportunities is considered under section 7 in relation to gender and social inclusion. Reflections on the quality of the staff/support/training are included in section 5.2 above, which focuses on VIO capacity and organisational level results.) In this section, findings are presented relating to the impact of their volunteering experience upon their lives of those who participated in VI projects i.e. the individual volunteers.

5.6.1 Number of volunteers mobilised by volunteer infrastructure projects

In some cases, it has been possible to establish numbers of volunteers mobilised by VI projects, in order to establish the scale of the impact. However quantitative data is not available from every project and is sometimes not consistent in project documents and reporting. The differing types of volunteer that participate in the various types of VI projects, means that aggregation into an overall number of volunteers catalysed by all UNV-supported VI interventions, would not be meaningful. That is to say, volunteers participating in schemes for one year duration cannot be classified alongside people mobilised for one day to participate in specific events, forums and celebrations such as International Volunteer Day.

Data is more readily available to measure the numbers of volunteers participating in volunteer schemes (characterised as "category 1" by this evaluation – see section 3.) Under the "category 2[87]" type VI project identified by this evaluation, volunteers are 'one step removed' as they are affiliated with the VIOs who received training/support from the VI project, rather than directly recruited and deployed by it. In some projects, such as Vietnam, training records were not kept; in others, such as Cape Verde, the increased number of volunteers and volunteer activities was noted in its own right as a result of the project by VIOs, but not quantified.

[86] La Comisión Nacional de Voluntariado.

[87] Establishing or strengthening a coordinating body to support and promote volunteerism nationally and facilitate the institutionalisation of volunteerism, which does not necessarily recruit and deploy volunteers itself, but may build the capacity of VIOs and/or their volunteers.

Table 7: Numbers of volunteers mobilised

Country	No. of Volunteers mobilised	Comment
VOLUNTEER SCHEMES		
Liberia 2008 – 2010	128	2 further cohorts of 153 & 175 volunteers deployed via UNICEF-funded project thereafter – total of 644 volunteers catalysed by the project and its successor project.
Burkina Faso 2008 – 2013	20,905 including 11,724 "special volunteers"	Typical deployment ranged averaged about 1000 volunteers per year until 2012, when the programme was overtaken by a "Special Programme for Employment Creation" which introduced over 11,000 in one year
Togo 2011 – 2013	3500	
Mali 2009 – 2012	136	
Niger 2007 – 2010	65	
Lesotho 2009 – 2012	400	Plus an additional 150 for IVD
Pakistan 2005 – 2008	No clear data -29? 250 trainers trained	29 according to final evaluation, other figures from project reports include 6000/12,000/15,000
COORDINATING BODIES		
China 2007 – 2011	8200 5150	Volunteers & managers trained Volunteers for environmental opportunities created
Vietnam 2009 – 2012	1200+	200+ through IYV+10 celebrations in 2011; 1000+ through forums, festivals, volunteer awards ceremonies and campaigns in 2012. Likely to be considerable repetition of participants across all events.
Mozambique 2011 – 2012	1000+	Communication volunteers
Cape Verde 2009 – 2013	3243	There is no database, this figure is estimated. These were volunteers supported by VIOs (in turn supported by CNV) – not deployed by CNV directly.
Senegal 2008 – 2011	4344 300 60 40	Reached through MDG campaign Blood donors mobilised Community nutrition/breast feeding advisors trained Regional Scout leaders trained in anti-malarial techniques
NESTED PROJECTS		
Ecuador 2010 – 2012	1428 from 20 institutions	Recruited and trained in case of potential disaster prevention need
Nepal 2009 – 2012	100	Alongside 741 volunteers of the NDVS, a national coordinating body
Benin 2008 – 2010	520	In addition 56 technicians trained, 252 participants learning community workshops, 18 environmental brigades set up, 25 Heads of Community Based Organisations trained and 36 journalists trained
REGIONAL PROGRAMMES		
ECOWAS 2010 – *present*	81	
RIVERSEE 2004 – 2007	68	

These numbers are taken from a combination of Final Evaluation and/or Mid Term Reviews and/or recent APPRs where available and/or records kept by partners where accessible for field mission countries.

5.7 Impacts on Participating Volunteers

In the case of most VI projects, the project results were identified in relation to the experiences of the volunteers, or in policy and practice of the focal organisation (for which see section 5.1). The most commonly reported positive impacts on VI volunteers are noted below.

Employment

Some volunteers secured employment as a direct result of their volunteer engagement (Cape Verde); including in the coordinating body supported by the UNV project (Liberia). In Nepal, most volunteers met had gone on to find employment at increasing levels of responsibility and in sectors relevant to their volunteering experience (i.e. local governance, capacity building, municipal coordination, project management). In other cases it was not possible to attribute subsequent employment to the volunteering experience; however it is reasonable to assume that this was one contributory factor. However there are few examples of projects which keep records on the career trajectories of volunteers, so analysis was limited to anecdotal evidence gained during the country missions. Lesotho would appear to be the exception, in that the project reports 50 of 200 volunteers to be in full-time employment six months after their volunteer engagement.

Within volunteer schemes[88], respondents noted the key driver for volunteer engagement as employment or employability. This motivation can result in an undue emphasis by volunteers on issues of entitlement such as allowances (ECOWAS VP Liberia) and expectations of automatic employment as a condition of service (Liberia). This is supported by research in the field, as a study of VI in five countries of southern Africa[89] by VOSESA (Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa) uncovered a spectrum of volunteer motivation ranging from altruism to self-interest. Within the ECOWAS VP for example, many volunteers appeared to see volunteering VP as a career opportunity given that financial compensation was greater than employment opportunities in their home country. However, the VOSESA study also raises questions of sustainability and morality regarding the expectations of poor people to volunteer their time and effort to provide welfare services to communities, without remuneration. This supports the need for payment of VLA as is the practice under UNV-supported volunteer schemes.

Confidence

In several project contexts, increased confidence, self-esteem and recognition were cited as benefits accrued by those who engaged as volunteers in the VI projects. In Togo, volunteers reported they has developed self-confidence, flexibility and the ability to cope in difficult situations. In Cape Verde, a change in attitude towards volunteers was credited to the VI project: “before people used to think that volunteerism is for the unemployed but now they are changing their perceptions.” This led to a new positive sense of recognition for the individuals involved.

Knowledge and skills

Although in most cases volunteers were expected to share their skills, it was also reported that they developed new skills and knowledge through their participation in VI, often as a direct result of the training they received. For example, in Nepal volunteers deepened their knowledge in local

[88] Category 1 as identified by this evaluation.

[89] Volunteer Service Enquiry Southern Africa - Five-Country Study on Service and Volunteering in southern Africa Research Report, June 2007.

government policy, project planning and selection, and gained experience in training and facilitation, the formation of user committees, reporting, monitoring and social mobilisation. In Ecuador, Peru and Nicaragua community members developed skills in disaster prevention. In several contexts the development of professional skills, putting into practice academic learning, or using knowledge from academic studies to provide a service, was considered as beneficial to the volunteer participant.

Empathy/ Development thinking

This was noted in schemes which deployed volunteers within and across communities. In Nepal, volunteers indicate that their personal and professional networks have expanded and they have good relations with local people and the communities they work in. In Togo, volunteering had helped individuals to develop understanding of the lives and needs of poor communities in urban or rural areas, and to develop a sense of connection with beneficiaries and with the development problems of the country. In Liberia urban youth noted the exposure they had gained through deployment in counties away from home, a new appreciation of what people in deprived communities are facing, and learnt to live with people from a different cultural background. This was very important given the peace-building context of the Liberia VI project.

Empowerment

There were a few examples of the transformative power of volunteerism. Notably as a result of the Peru Reconstruction project, women in particular were empowered as leaders via the training they received through the project to influence local community development. Women talked of how their identity, self-esteem, self-confidence and even position within the family had changed. Even those not directly linked to the Associations formed by the project, were able to use their new skills in developing their own streets, communities, employment plans etc.

Negative impacts

The experience of volunteers within the VI projects was not unanimously positive. In Burkina Faso the experience of volunteers consulted (albeit a very small sample) varied between volunteers who feel they do contribute and are treated adequately as resource persons and those who feel exploited and possibly even discriminated against due to their volunteer status. In some countries (Liberia and Burkina Faso) where gaining employment was the outcome mentioned foremost; few volunteers were able to define the value of volunteerism in its own right, such as broadening horizons or perspective of solidarity and development.

6. GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The UNV Programme Strategy of 2011 mentioned the need to: “Ensure gender needs and equality are reflected in volunteer programming, management and mobilisation”; reinforced gender mainstreaming as a priority for all aspects of UNV programming; and suggested UNV local volunteer schemes should model non-stereotypical volunteer gender roles and leadership. However, at the project level it appears that programming related to gender dynamics and gender-related issues are not always an area of strength in UNV-supported VI projects. Gender within VI projects, is most commonly understood as the ratio of female and male volunteers/trainees.

6.1 Women's Representation and Experience in Volunteer Infrastructure Projects

The UNV Gender Concept Note of 2009 lays out some very important principles, specifically distinguishing between Gender *in* and *for* volunteerism. Gender *in* volunteerism (GiV) captures issues such as how men and women experience volunteerism (as volunteers), the gender equality of volunteerism structures, process and projects and gender mainstreaming in volunteerism.

For VI projects, GiV-related risks include:

- A negative experience of volunteerism (personal or professional), due to the different needs of male and female VI volunteers not being taken into account.
- Missed opportunities to engage and capitalise on the potential of women to contribute.
- VI volunteer opportunities that exclude women, who due to their socio-economic circumstances may prefer (or only be able/allowed) to volunteer part- time or occasionally, to fit around other commitments.
- In some contexts, the low status of volunteerism that entails female domination of what may be seen as a 'lowly' sphere of work.

Clearly the impact and the sustainability of a project can be limited or curtailed by the lack of integration of gender in volunteering activities. In its VI interventions, UNV has not consistently integrated gender into basic programming; for example in setting project-level gender strategy, standardising gender-responsive project indicators or supporting formulating of gender policy in project VIOs. This means that there are only a very few examples of specific outreach efforts to target women amongst the VI projects, including in Mozambique and Mali.

The Enquiry Framework of the UNV Gender Concept Note of 2009 suggests several indicators of gender specific to volunteer infrastructure, which should be considered in project/programme design, as shown in the table below. These have been used to measure the performance of UNV's VI projects in relation to gender.

Table 8: VI project performance against gender indicators

#	***Indicators of gender***	***Assessment of the 22 VI projects***
1	*Equal access and participation by men and women in volunteer infrastructures*	Many projects have 50:50 targets for volunteer recruitment. However there is little formal investigation into how the gender dimension affects the process of volunteer recruitment, deployment and management (e.g. *disaggregating male/female drop-out, tracking employment post-volunteering* etc.) Several schemes have positive discrimination processes at the selection stage.
2	*Recognition and response to strategic and practical needs of men and women volunteers (childcare, personal security, training etc)*	Some schemes have policies for maternity leave. Few other examples were identified. Whilst personal security in rural areas was recognised as a bar to female volunteering in many countries, there were no policies to address this reported.
3	*Gender training, gender mainstreaming training*	Few examples were identified – in Mozambique a module on gender sensitive policies is included in the training programme and gender mainstreamed into VIO training packages.
4	*Support infrastructure to address gender issues , including networks at international, national,*	A few UNV-supported practices were identified e.g. in Mali (regional level gender network supported)

	community levels	
5	*Capacity of managers and implementers of volunteering activities/projects to deal with gender issues – gaps, good practices*	Capacity appeared generally low. E.g. procedures do not typically offer codes of conduct for sexual harassment, security of female volunteers etc . However UNV HQ & POs do share experiences of volunteer recruitment, deployment and management with national counterparts e.g. advising on maternity policy, right to work whilst pregnant etc.

The most commonly measured of these indicators related to male: female parity, which ranges from 50:50, to 75:25 for ECOWAS, to 100:35 for Mali. Many Project Documents included no gender specific indicators or activities, for example Honduras and Lesotho. Others such as Ecuador had some gender considerations built in and declared a commitment to existing government mainstreaming procedures or UNDP Equality agendas. In some instances, such as the Niger project, there was good practice in including specific gender objectives in the Project Document. In other cases, such as Vietnam, there were strategic project components on gender equality on paper but only minimal attention paid to these in practice. Whilst a number of VI projects practiced gender selection strategies to promote women (for training or volunteer deployment), none appeared to have a gender focus in terms of their own organisational staffing. For example, in Liberia the 14-person (Government) project team is all male.

6.2 Women's Empowerment through Volunteer Infrastructure Projects

Volunteerism *for* gender equality/empowerment captures how, through its contribution to development and its ability to support social inclusion, volunteerism has strong potential for promoting gender equality. Many VI projects indicate significant involvement of women in project activities, but explicit intention to empower women or influence gender relations (at the community or other level) is much less prevalent. There were few cases of projects that sought to understand gender differences in control/access to project resources. In Senegal, whilst there was no specific gender focus in Project Documents, in practice there was a focus on women's involvement in and empowerment via micro-projects such as micro-finance. In Mali there was collaboration with women's organisations to promote women's political participation and income generation. In Peru, there were examples of gender empowerment and women's leadership and female respondents talked of how their identity, self-esteem, self-confidence and position within the family had changed as a result of the project. In Nepal gender was mainstreamed into the project, in that some elements of the wider national programme had a clear focus on improving gender equality (e.g. the establishment of Citizen Awareness Centres). In Togo, a number of volunteer projects are geared towards looking at gender issues, and in both Togo and Liberia female volunteers are considered to be good role models for women in girls in rural communities.

There may be further examples of gender-related programming, but due to poor M&E practices and low awareness/understanding of the gender dimension, the relevant data is not being captured to evidence these. However, this means that there could be some 'quick wins' on gender, if UNV were to corporately scrutinise practices and redouble efforts to inspire or/or capture positive practice.

6.3 Diversity of Approaches to Volunteer Infrastructure

As stated in the 2004 Guidance Note, a volunteer infrastructure should include strategies for involving all segments of society, with targeted programmes for specific social groups such as youth,

women, older populations, persons with disabilities, minorities and other excluded groups. To achieve this aim different volunteering modalities will need to be employed – online/onsite, short/long-term, community level-support functions/administrative etc.

Whilst the overall cluster of UNV-supported VI projects is diverse in the sense of different modalities that suit specific contexts, there are few examples of diversity of approaches at the project/country level. One example might be Peru where three projects with alternative audiences and modalities of volunteering were undertaken. Another example might be Senegal where there was diversity in approaches at the community level and within the micro-project modality.

As discussed in section 2, the vast majority of beneficiaries of VI projects are youth – either through targeting (Liberia, Peru) or by default. A couple of examples found contrary to this trend was Sri Lanka, which piloted an Elders' Volunteer Initiative[90] and Senegal where support and capacity building was offered to the 14 branch offices of the CV3A, a unique West African Organisation set up by the CNPV (National Committee for Promotion of Volunteerism).

6.4 Promoting Social Inclusion

Whilst many projects focused on youth – typically characterised as the 18-35 demographic – there was little evidence of special efforts amongst the VI projects to widen or target particular sub-sectors of youth, such as marginalised ethnic groups, youth with disabilities or street youth etc. In most instances, there was no data available to differentiate participation and this is an area that needs wider attention around the VI project cycle. The intentional or inadvertent focus of many volunteer schemes considered during this evaluation is on students/graduates (Mali, Lesotho, Pakistan, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Nepal, Nicaragua and Togo) however there are a couple of examples of efforts to introduce 'spin-offs' of existing schemes to address out-of-school youth and drop-outs (Togo) and 'at-risk' youth (Liberia).

Rehabilitating youth via grassroots activities in Cape Verde

Ponta de Água is one of the communities of the Praia municipality. In this community, two groups of delinquent youths engaged in criminal acts and fought each other for the command of criminal practices. Realising this was not good for the community and for the youth themselves, a group of local volunteers approached the leaders of the two gangs and invited them to participate on activities aiming at community development such as tree planting, cleaning and painting of public spaces, organising festivals, camping etc. They began by showing them a film in which ex-gangsters shared their experiences of the damage caused by gang-activity. The whole intervention was done jointly with the project and as the 'youth in conflict' become re-integrated into the community life, some of them were given scholarships from the government for professional training. Although the process is still new, there was a general sense that some of ex- criminals are more critical of their behaviour and engage in less criminal activity, meanwhile, local residents feel their security is increasing.

Nepal has a complex picture of social inequality, and volunteer recruitment included an emphasis on inclusion for disadvantaged ethnic groups and Dalits. Indeed, recruitment of Dalit volunteers supported under the UNV project was able to exceed the standard achieved by the national

[90] The results of this are unknown due to lack of Mid Term Review or Final Evaluation.

volunteer coordination body, which deployed volunteers in parallel to the UNV-supported project. A final evaluation of the wider programme in Nepal suggested dramatic increases in the level of participation of marginalised groups engaged in local governance processes.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

Whilst strong project results and partnerships were achieved within the project life-time across remaining projects, results, partnerships and activities tend to wane once UNV support ceased and the volunteer infrastructure was handed over to full national implementation. Despite being a key tenant of UNV's philosophy of volunteer infrastructure, the intention to ensure something permanent is in place at the end of the project is not typically well-articulated in project design.

7.1 Planning for Sustainability

Rather than an inherent inability of these projects to yield sustainable results, the key challenge to sustainability is the lack of consideration paid to incorporating exit or phase out strategies in the Project Documents. With the late development of an exit strategy[91] and little exploration of future funding mechanisms for RIVERSEE, (alongside unrealistic expectations of the capacity of the organisation South and East Europe Youth Network (SEEYN) intended to take over activities,) very few activities or outputs continued beyond the programme's end in 2007. Similarly, the lack of an exit strategy in Vietnam, the host organisation's overestimation of its own capacity to continue the work and uncertainty of funding for a second phase, resulted in a period of 6 months where only two staff continued the work of 10; and as a result, certain structures i.e. regional networks struggled to operate with support and oversight. The current Peru *Soy Volontario* Project, is recognised as doing excellent work, but will need a clear strategy to ensure it is regulated and resourced effectively on UNV's withdrawal.

There are examples where VI project exit strategies have been developed and implemented effectively, however. Notable among these is China, where a comprehensive exit strategy ensured that training programmes, the V4D campaign and online platforms would be incorporated into the approach of the host agency, BVF. In terms of government run national volunteer schemes, Burkina Faso utilised a mechanism whereby national volunteers worked alongside international/national UN Volunteers in the hosting government ministry for a period of time, before taking over their responsibilities. A similar approach is being taken in Cape Verde (although it is too early to comment on sustainability), where the handover of the National Volunteerism Programme from the UNV project to become a government-funded National Volunteer Corp; took place *during* the lifetime of the project – as opposed to after it ended. This enabled UNV staff and international/national UN Volunteers to support the institutionalisation of the programme with troubleshooting and technical advice, in its fledgling months.

Viability studies on the sustainability of specific activities tend to be absent altogether, and where they are present in Project Documents, risk assessments are often vague or optimistic – despite their obvious importance to developing appropriate exit strategies and facilitating sustainable outcomes.

[91] The original RIVERSEE pilot Programme Document did not have an exit strategy incorporated into its design; however an exit strategy was imbedded in the project when there was a request for SVF support. Subsequently an exit strategy was built into the 'second phase' at a stage when the project has almost been under implementation for 2 years with limited UNV HQ support.

This was particularly identified as the case in Pakistan (see section 3.1.1 design), but also applies to areas prone to political instability and/or insecurity (as in Mali) or in post-disaster contexts, where community needs and vulnerabilities are heightened and political opportunism (rather than commitment) is likely (as in Peru). With short term projects the norm for UNV, as discussed in section 3.1.1, due consideration to risks and assumptions is imperative to ensure that maximum time is spent supporting key objectives and consolidating national ownership.

7.2 Sustainable VI Project Results

As shown in the timeline in section 2, half of the 22 projects that form the focus of this evaluation ended in 2012 or are ongoing (with a further 5 finishing in 2011), and so a discussion of long term sustainability of project results is somewhat premature. There is however some evidence of sustainable project results across the range of VI projects evaluated (in addition to China, discussed in preceding section):

Vietnam Volunteerism in Development project (end: 2012): The implementing partner, HCMYU, has subsumed the running of the VVIRC into its activities and mandate, provided staff and maintains the website and social media presence of the Centre. The project's Northern Region Network of VIOs continues to meet regularly and share ideas and collaborate on campaigns, without the oversight of the project team. A second phase of the project has now begun to build on successes of phase 1.

Peru Reconstruction project (end: 2011): there was initially a very positive evaluation of the results and potential future impact of this project (supporting grassroots volunteer schemes), however the political co-option of Associations formed has halted activity in some areas, whilst others struggle with lack of funding. The consensus is that one further year of UNV support would have enabled Associations to cope with external pressure. That said beneficiaries met discussed the ongoing personal changes they had experienced through project involvement, including growth in knowledge and skills in community development and (among women), greater self-esteem, confidence and power within the household.

Togo PROVONAT national scheme (original end: 2012; extended twice): although the Togo project is ongoing, the fact that it has become institutionalised and has just entered its fourth year is evidence of its sustainability. Approximately US$6 million has been pledged by the Government of Togo in addition to contribution from UNDP; PROVONAT is seen as a part of the life of the country and will continue to promote volunteerism.

Nicaragua RNV network (end: 2011): Members of the RNV (although they may or may not still attend regularly), report that they are still benefitting from greater understanding of Law 543 and are able to contextualise it in their own situations.

Mali National Volunteer Centre (end: 2012): there is evidence of strong government ownership of the volunteer 'centre', as although it is hosted by a single ministry, all others have active involvement in placing volunteers within decentralised government agencies. The Government of Mali has approached UNDP to contribute towards funding for project continuation, and was aiming to deploy 400 volunteers on the ground (the recent security difficulties may have stalled this aim, however). The government has also taken over the responsibility of funding 3 national UN Volunteers to continue working in the centre.

7.3 Risks and Constraints to Sustainability

Whilst the risks and constraints to sustainability are tied closely to the specific context of the country, project and partnership arrangements, there are three interlinking factors which are particularly crucial to support sustainable outcomes: **fostering national ownership and appropriate political commitment; securing investment; and appropriate capacity building.** These are in addition to **planning for sustainability,** discussed in section 6.1 above.

7.3.1 National ownership and appropriate political commitment

The legacy of a VI project should be enduring commitment at government, community and civil society level; the failure to secure national ownership or the co-option of volunteerism for political ends is hugely detrimental to the long term success of a project or programme.

A lack of national ownership and a vision for national volunteerism programmes has hampered the project in Niger, yet is one of the driving forces behind the success in Togo and the commitment demonstrated in Mali – though heavily undermined by its ongoing security troubles. Building ownership and commitment in some pilot countries is still a considerable task faced by the ECOWAS VP; not including Guinea where national support has been forthcoming.

The Peru Reconstruction Project exemplifies the challenge of transforming the dominant public view of volunteers as charity and welfare-focused, into volunteers as development actors, and the risk of governments feeling threatened by the potential building of such social capital that may lead to social activism and ultimately challenges to the political status quo. The complex nature of citizenship is thus tied up with the issue of fostering national ownership, in a way that is non-threatening, mutually beneficial and representative.

National ownership that is entirely government-driven may not be the best model for long term sustainability; there are growing concerns in Cape Verde that the recently transferred National Volunteer Corp is becoming too centralised and bureaucratic, and that there is evidence already of reduced interaction with non-government stakeholders. The Peru Volontario Network provides good example of how leadership from civil society can promote transparency and inclusion of a range of representatives in the development of volunteerism at a national level, which can be a 'sustainable dialogue methodology' with or without political will. It is felt that the 14 Implementing Partner Organisations (non-government) that took part in the RIVERSEE Programme should have been involved in its design and implementation from the outset; consolidating their ownership of the programme and positioning them as the driving force behind it may have fostered more sustainable results after UNV's departure.

Political will and commitment is required for any project to succeed, but VI can also be used for political ends, such as when newly elected parties or individuals feel the need to reinvent the wheel. For instance, the national Volunteer Corps established in Lesotho through a UNV project is likely to be replaced by or competing against a new National Youth Service, which was introduced by the new government after the incumbent of 14 years, was ousted in May 2012.

In Peru, local authority support is indispensable for institutionalising community level VIOs; however, political opportunism is rife in many reconstruction contexts. In Burkina Faso, the national volunteer corps was overstretched by a government programme for employment creation to place thousands of young people in voluntary 'employment' – as discussed in section 5. Similarly struggling

with high levels of youth unemployment, in Togo there are ongoing concerns that volunteerism may be sought as an answer by the state for tackling unemployment, and consequently trade unions sit on the PROVONAT National Council.

7.3.2 Securing investment

A key constraining factor for sustainability is a lack of investment or long term funding options. At project level, as discussed in section 4 above, resource mobilisation strategies should be incorporated into every project design as a stand-alone output in the Results and Resources Framework; even if the actual strategy is to be devised during the project implementation phase, resources for future work should be broadly identified in the Project Documents.

Funding issues are regularly identified as hindering progress or limiting sustainability: in Benin, the planned multi-stakeholder platform does not appear to be up and running, and financial resources are cited as one of the key reasons behind this; in Burkina Faso, despite substantial government support there are cash flow issues resulting from a lack of a diverse funding base; in Cape Verde, the government must now cover both administration costs and activity costs, which were previously covered by the project.

National ownership and political commitment is insufficient without investment: in terms of volunteer corps, it is important that governments fully embed these within planning and budgeting systems where possible, and in other cases, ensure that the host agency or coordinating body has sufficient administrative and financial autonomy to operate sustainably. In Liberia, whilst the National Youth Volunteer Service was clearly a flagship ministry programme, it did not translate into resourcing of the project and as a consequence the programme nearly collapsed in 2010.

There are successes: in Lesotho a 'demand driven approach' was proposed from the outset, in which volunteer hosting organisations would provide funding for costs related to the volunteers placed with them. UNV went on to collaborate with VSO to field a Resource Mobilisation Officer and Policy Advisor to support the transition of project into fully government-led.

Whilst these examples constitute success or failure in finding long-term funding and leveraging existing resources from multiple sources, as per the 2004 Guidance Note (and discussed in section 4 above), of equal importance is the need to demonstrate effective and efficient resource management. In addition to installing adequate systems and processes for M&E, there is a need to review and clarify purpose and intended use of the internal UNV monitoring and review processes (PO monitoring visits, project monitoring, annual volunteer retreats, V-Methodology etc) and create opportunities to creatively review the overall impact of VI and lessons being generated.

7.3.3 Appropriate capacity building

The incremental pace of developing sustainable capacity often finds itself at odds with the pressure to demonstrate progress quickly to beneficiaries and donors, and UNV's cluster of VI projects is no exception to this. However, if UNV's vision is to establish sustainable volunteer infrastructure, then building capacity of host agencies, coordinating bodies or network members who will take forward this vision must be a key objective of every project. Appropriate capacity building will vary from context to context and will need to be based on thorough needs assessment (not currently undertaken widely), but should include: building of knowledge, skills and attitudes; systems, structures and processes, to ensure efficient and effective operations. Results based management

and tools and frameworks for monitoring and evaluation should also be developed; this was attempted in Cape Verde among VIOs, but is still in its embryonic stages. Without considerable attention to how to build capacity, high levels of national commitment and sufficient investment alone will not be adequate to ensure effective, efficient and sustainable volunteer infrastructure.

The absence of a capacity building programme in RIVERSEE for SEEYN resulted in a lack of sustainable outcomes. Similar experiences were had in Honduras, Pakistan and Lesotho; in each there was a tendency to over-rely on the international/national UN Volunteers during implementation, in addition to a lack of capacity building programme for stakeholders. The approach to capacity building taken in China was acknowledged in the Final Evaluation of the project as highly successful, and was a stand-alone output in the project Results and Resources Framework.

Capacity building that is limited to one or two key individuals is a risk to sustainability, particularly where staff turnover is high as in many government settings. Rather, the focus should be on organisational/institutional capacity building. In some instances, it may be necessary to consider a capacity building programme that precedes the setting up of a volunteer programme (rather than running concurrently), particularly of hosting organisations in volunteer corps (for instance, in Senegal, Togo and Cape Verde where VIO capacity is often low).

7.4 Scalability and Replicability of VI Projects

In general UNV-supported VI projects have had good potential for scaling up, and there are several examples which have been effectively scaled up, such as Togo and Burkina Faso. These two programmes have shown that, with vision, commitment, resourcing and sufficient technical capacity, it is possible to deploy large numbers of national volunteers using good management practices.

However there are parameters to scaling up, as the Togo project is currently experiencing. It is likely that 5,000 youth volunteers in the current PROVONAT is an absolute maximum that can be managed (as even now there are problems arising with lack of capacity for supervision and deployment). Similarly in Burkina Faso at the time of the 'Special Programme of Employment Creation' the PNVB realised that it does not have the capacity to manage such large numbers as this led to abuses of the rules and procedures. The number of volunteers has now been capped to 40 per region[92] at any one time, in order to stabilise the process.

The ECOWAS VP has been rolled out as a pilot to three countries, and resources are currently being mobilised to extend the pilot to Mali and Ivory Coast, but at present there are no plans to extend to the further 15 ECOWAS members. It is not clear whether a scaling up strategy has been developed, but more attention will need to be paid to evaluation and lesson learning in order to capitalise on the experience to date.

In terms of replication, this has been of particular interest to the volunteer schemes, which have commonly targeted university graduates – a rather narrow section of society. The model is already being replicated in Togo with the different target group of out-of-school youth/school dropouts and different aspects of grassroots development (with a focus on manual trades). In Liberia, UNICEF has facilitated a new target group of 'at-risk youth' and some evaluation respondents called for the

[92] Whilst this stabilisation measure has been set at 40 volunteers at any one time, at the end of the year it may be more, since volunteers are placed for different periods of time (e.g. 3 months etc).

programme scope to be widened further to target high school and vocational training graduates. There has also been replication across UNV-supported programmes, following the lead of Burkina Faso in 2006.

7.5 Promoting Innovation in Volunteer Infrastructure

UNV's VI work has been funded through the SVF, which is an open UNV trust fund of voluntary contributions from a wide range of donor countries[93]. UNV's volunteer infrastructure interventions are commonly referred to in-house as 'pilots', relating both to their time-bound nature, the relatively low scale of funding and the sense of a small model that may be taken up by national stakeholders.

The SVF has the potential to finance the most creative and pioneering things which UNV does and through strategic use of seed funding, constitutes an enormous opportunity to bring volunteerism to new audiences, showcase new approaches and demonstrate the value of volunteerism in and for development. The pilot and experimental nature of the SVF funding stream is exciting, as "when development strategies focus on clearing pathways to innovation, they create favourable 'tailwinds' that allow ideas to take flight[94]".

Many of the volunteer infrastructure projects can be defined as innovative at the national level, in that where schemes or bodies are being established (rather than strengthened); volunteer infrastructure is coming into existence for the first time. Some examples of the more interesting and innovative practices from across the spectrum of the VI projects include:

- In Mozambique the corporate sector was involved in volunteerism promotion through a Corporate Social Responsibility Award.
- In Senegal, 100 micro projects in different communities mobilised local volunteers. Senegal also experimented with three '*villages planetaires*' – bringing together volunteers from different VIOs working in the locality to work together, explore synergy, develop a shared work plan and put it into operation, as opposed to working in silos.
- There was very good use of social media in the Network and *Soy Voluntario* projects in Peru, to improve effectiveness of communication and extend the reach of volunteerism. In addition the *Soy Voluntario* logo was developed, which gave a gender-neutral identity to the work undertaken by the Ministry to promote volunteers.
- In the Peru Reconstruction project the potential for links to be created between national government, the policy on volunteerism and local governance built vertical links beyond the standard horizontal linkages. The *Soy Voluntario* offer of technical assistance to national and regional governments and the resulting input into MIMP's 2013 – 2017 Plan appears to be an experience that is unique to Latin America, which is creating incremental results and could be replicated in a favourable political context.
- The creation of the Peru Network, with a fluid and largely informal membership was innovative in the Latin America context, and also in providing opportunity for government departments and private sector to participate in this 'VIO' network.

[93] Including untied grants for General Purposes and earmarked contributions for Special Purposes.
[94] Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer 2009.

- In Cape Verde, the volunteer passport gives incentive for volunteer involvement and has good potential for replication.
- The partnerships established by RIVERSEE allowed for an unprecedented East-East volunteer exchange among countries of the Balkans. The whole programme was considered to be an 'innovative approach' in the region, in terms of the component of involving youth in development – the use of ICT was also considered to be innovative, particularly in the recruitment of volunteers.

These interesting and powerful examples are prime for replication and showcasing. However Project Documents do not conceptualise VI projects through a learning lens, in a way that generates evidence and tests innovation. For this reason the SVF funding modality may be yet to achieve its strategic potential, as noted in 2009:

> *If SVF funds were really used to test innovations, the projects would need to be designed to provide robust and convincing evidence that the innovation really works and what it means in terms of programme logic and contribution. However, there is no evidence that this is practice within UNV*[95].

7.6 Promoting Institutional Learning

It has been noted that knowledge generated and capacity developed is often lost at the end of VI projects/programmes. It is important that clear lessons are appropriately captured – in order to generate useful and relevant evidence for advocacy/influencing work, as well as case studies and tools for replication in order to capture UNV's wide body of knowledge generated globally. UNV needs to examine knowledge needs and develop centralised systems for knowledge management. Even if evaluation is directed by external partners, each project should have on record the full set of annual reports, at a minimum. UNV could consider the introduction of a project completion report template, which could be used to capture data and learning from the project, if a review or evaluation does not take place.

It would appear that in some countries a large body of knowledge may exist, but this is not centralised or consolidated; of course, this is wider corporate issue that is beyond the scope of this evaluation. However the lack of any project records in-country was noted in several country missions; in Nicaragua and Cape Verde for example, there was a complete void of knowledge pertaining to particular projects, with no institutional or paper-based memory held by the UNV Field Unit. A Management Information System would appear to be a vital tool for the UNV Field Units.

The issues identified by this evaluation are 1) the institutional systems to capture, store, access and share monitoring and evaluation data; 2) the framing of 'pilot' projects in a way that captures innovation and learning, and; 3) means for active sharing of this learning. These issues are in line with those identified by a recent knowledge management workshop held in UNV.

[95] Review of UNV's Facility for Evaluation (FACE), November 2009.

The renewed investment in the Volunteer Knowledge and Innovation Section (VKIS) at HQ should entail a stronger focus on this area going forwards, in conjunction with the attention paid to systems and Managing for Development Results in the UNV Strategic Framework: 2014 – 2017.

7.7 Institutional Sustainability of Volunteer Infrastructure at UNV

During the process of corporate planning for the UNV Strategic Framework: 2014 – 2017, volunteer schemes were identified as one of five priorities for the upcoming strategic period. The impetus of a new strategic period and Framework offers an opportunity to set the baseline, targets and agenda for this programmatic element in order to both explain what UNV does to the outside world and respond to calls for aid transparency – but most importantly for UNV to understand what it wants to achieve in this programme area.

The intervention logic that UNV has refined via the strategic planning process is that in under-resourced settings, voluntary action is an accessible and effective vehicle for achieving much needed short-term change.

> *UNV's key assumptions are that if: (i) public institutions and people come to play a complementary role in achieving peace and development results; (ii) and volunteerism is recognised and leveraged as a form of people's mobilisation to actively contribute to the realisation of those changes that will improve their sense of security and their level of social cohesion; then countries at all levels of society will strengthen an enabling environment for volunteerism in order to engage people more effectively for peace and development results*[96].

Falling out of this Theory of Change, the Strategic Framework articulates a clear strategic focus in the area of volunteer infrastructure:

> *Drawing upon its expertise in promoting and supporting the development of volunteer schemes at local, national, and regional levels, strategic efforts will be made to effectively support the establishment of volunteer corps, volunteer centres, volunteer networks and information and referral centres, as well as institutional capacity development in volunteer mobilisation and management at the grassroots and community levels.*

This aspiration is in turn captured in one dedicated output (amongst nine) of the Results Framework and its associated indicators:

Output (1.4): *National capacities for volunteer action strengthened*

- Indicator: *# of National Volunteer schemes established with UNV support, including youth volunteer schemes.*
- Indicator: *# countries where UNV supports volunteer legislation/policies and # volunteerism national committees.*

These indicators seem both realistic and measureable at the corporate level, and the use of *scheme* in preference to *infrastructure*, offers a welcome clarification of terminology. It is strongly recommended that a further 'nested' results framework or strategy be developed to support this

[96] UNV Strategic Framework: 2014 – 2017.

'practice area' of UNV's work. This would facilitate evaluation of thematic or regional clusters of volunteer schemes for the future. It is also expected that the findings, lessons and best practices generated by this evaluation will inform the strategic way forward.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Overall the evaluation has found many positives across all project categories with some key areas of weakness/for improvement identified. The conclusions below summarise the evaluation findings presented in the wider report, and are substantiated by evidence therein. The conclusions respond specifically to the question laid out in the evaluation ToRs, section 2, see Annex 1.

8. 1 Relevance

One of UNV's greatest achievements is its consistency in ensuring objectives of volunteer infrastructure projects are aligned with priorities and policies of host nations and local stakeholders and partners. UNV has a record of extensive consultation prior to the start of project implementation; building on existing relationships in-country and understanding of context through previous work; and undertaking work that is relevant to both global development and the volunteerism sector.

Whilst the activities and outputs of volunteer infrastructure projects vary considerably across this cluster of UNV's work, in most instances there is considerable alignment UNV's mandate as determined by the UNGA and to the four 'pillars' of the Developing Volunteer Infrastructure Guidance Note 2004, particularly 'Reaching a Common Understanding of Volunteerism and a Shared Appreciation of its Value' and 'Establishing a Nurturing and Enabling Environment'. Less explicit attention is paid to 'Adopting a Diversity of Approaches to Mobilising and Facilitating Volunteerism' (within a given country) and 'Ensuring Sustainable Funding' – particularly with regard to the early development of resource mobilisation strategies.

The variety of volunteer infrastructure projects, loosely grouped into the four categories of national volunteer schemes, coordinating bodies, national networks and nested projects (and an additional fifth category of regional schemes) precludes analysis of the validity of volunteer infrastructure project objectives en masse, however, individual project activities and outputs have been mostly relevant and consistent with intended impacts and effects. That said objectives, activities and outputs have not always been appropriate to project timeframes, and have in some cases been highly ambitious.

8.2 Effectiveness

In terms of the effectiveness of volunteer infrastructure projects, the evaluation team conclude that there are notable achievements in the areas of: influencing volunteer-enabling legislation (often building on years of previous work and/or achieved through collaboration with others); policy and the promotion, recognition and public discussion of volunteerism (a well-established component of UNV's wider work); and volunteer mobilisation (although downward target revision and demand that out-stripped targets were commonplace). Factors contributing to these achievements include high levels of political good will and support, national government ownership and good collaboration with other international VIOs (in both resource mobilisation and project implementation) and other project partners.

Objectives relating to the building of capacity for effective volunteerism saw mixed levels of achievement, although this is complicated by weak Monitoring and Evaluation in this area. Whereas numbers of volunteers/VIOS trained appear high, a lack of formal capacity building strategies for coordinating bodies/host Ministries is a recognised weakness of UNV-supported volunteer infrastructure projects and a major factor in cases where project objectives were not achieved.

Overall, UNV have taken a successful participatory approach to involving stakeholders in the early stages of project design and consultation, but the diversity, roles and responsibilities of partners tends to fade over the course of implementation. Strategies used to engage and involve partners tend to be limited to multi-stakeholder meetings and workshops at the design phase, but tools for civic engagement during implementation include public festivals and awareness raising events, media coverage, web-based communication and social media. Whilst these seemed to have a positive effect on the achievement of results, there is less evidence of reaching more marginalised populations.

8.3 Efficiency

The evaluation team concludes that volunteer infrastructure projects are generally regarded as being able to achieve considerable results often with minimal financial and human resources at their disposal. There are exceptions, as well as examples of resource allocation which is not well-aligned with project objectives, and considerable budget variations between similar projects implemented in similar contexts[97]. Furthermore, aims and objectives have often been ambitious for the short project timeframes.

UNV support to volunteer infrastructure through international/national UN Volunteers is an efficient means of delivery, which sets UNV apart from others operating in the sector and brings benefits to the individual volunteer, the project and UNV itself.

8.4 Impact and Results

There is evidence across the UNV cluster of volunteer infrastructure projects of impact and results at individual, organisational and policy level. UNV have undoubtedly played an important role (in conjunction with others) in: the promotion of a better understanding of volunteerism and appreciation of its value, both to the individual and local/national peace and development goals; to increase mobilisation of volunteers within and between nations; influence policies and regulatory frameworks at local and national level; and, to some degree, build capacity at individual, organisational and national levels.

The evaluation team conclude that UNV does have a distinctive contribution to make and adds value to the outcomes of national and regional volunteer infrastructure, in coordination and collaboration with other inter/national VIOs, governments and UN agencies (particularly UNDP). UNV is in the unique position of having the legitimacy and neutrality to act as a catalyst and facilitator for volunteer infrastructure and the promotion of and fostering the environment for volunteerism more

[97] National schemes in West Africa exemplify this: Niger's programme is extremely small in terms of numbers of volunteers mobilised (65) and numbers of placement; yet the similar Togo programme is supported by a far smaller project team but has mobilised 3,500.

broadly; this is particularly crucial for garnering high level political support, which is essential for the sustainability of volunteer infrastructure.

The impact of UNV engagement in volunteer schemes on its business model and structure has been considerable and is best reflected in the UNV 2014 – 2017 Strategic Framework, where volunteer schemes are identified as one of five strategic priorities. Whilst there has been no overarching strategy in the past (with the exception of the Guidance Note 2004), VI is one of five key themes in UNV's work moving into the new strategic period.

8.5 Gender and Social Inclusion

Gender dynamics and gender issues have not been well promoted within volunteer infrastructure projects, certainly gender cannot be said to be mainstreamed. Gender within volunteer infrastructure projects, is most commonly understood as the ratio of female and male volunteers/trainees, but is not consistently integrated into basic programming. There are some specific outreach efforts to target women amongst the volunteer infrastructure projects or of gender training; but little formal investigation into how the gender dimension affects the process of volunteer recruitment, deployment and management.

The vast majority of beneficiaries of "VI" projects are youth (18-35 years), through targeting (Liberia, Peru) or by default due to the demographics of developing countries. However there was little evidence of special efforts to wide access beyond graduates/students or target particular sub-sectors of youth, such as marginalised ethnic groups, youth with disabilities or street youth.

8.6 Sustainability

Half of the 22 projects within the scope of this evaluation ended in 2012 or are ongoing (with a further 5 finishing in 2011), and so a discussion of long term sustainability of project results is somewhat premature. There are strong flourishing sustainable programmes in some countries such as Togo, where Government taken full ownership of the volunteer scheme. Whilst strong project results and partnerships were achieved within the project life-time across remaining projects, results, partnerships and activities tend to wane once UNV support ceased and the volunteer infrastructure was handed over to full national implementation.

The experience of UNV-supported projects proves that national ownership and political commitment is insufficient without investment: where governments do not fully embed volunteer infrastructures within planning and budgeting systems, projects are not sustainable. Despite being a key tenant of UNV's philosophy of volunteer infrastructure, the intention to ensure something permanent is in place at the end of the project is not typically well-articulated in project design. Rather than an inherent inability of these projects to yield sustainable results, the key challenge to sustainability is the lack of consideration paid to incorporating exit or phase out strategies in the project documents. Whilst UNV has been successful in mobilising funds and brokering partnerships for project start-up, success in supporting project resource mobilisation as part of an exit/sustainability strategy for volunteer infrastructure projects appears to have been more limited.

9. BEST PRACTICES

Best practice is understood as a method, procedure or approach that is accepted as being the most appropriate, effective and efficient in achieving results in comparison to others. These strengths or successes for UNV to build upon constitute the most appropriate, effective and efficient means for

UNV to achieve the outcomes and contribute to the impact identified in Figure 3 above (Guidance Note 2004 Results Framework):

1.) One of the strongest attributes of UNV volunteer infrastructure projects is their relevance to local, national and regional priorities and timely introduction. UNV's broad definition of volunteer infrastructure allows for the project to be shaped to meet particular needs within a specific cultural context, and UNV's ability to respond to demand is recognised and valued by national stakeholders.

2.) UNV successfully utilises its valuable attributes of neutrality, legitimacy and convening power as a UN organisation. This enables UNV to garner high level political commitment and support, bring together otherwise disparate stakeholders and tap into the wider UN agency network of resources.

3.) The strategic use of UN volunteers (both national and international) to support volunteer infrastructure projects brings multiple benefits: to the individual volunteer (fostering skills, expanding networks and experiences, post-project employment), the project (UN national volunteer understanding of local context or, international best practice and experience brought by international UN volunteers) and for development partners (cost efficiency and effectiveness.)

4.) UNV's collaboration with international VIOs can be seen as a strength to build on, through mutual deployment of volunteers, delivering training and providing expertise, or the sharing of good practices and effective systems. These different collaboration modalities ultimately allow for combined efforts to achieve a shared development objective that might otherwise be diluted.

5.) One of the most successfully achieved outcomes across the volunteer infrastructure cluster of projects has been the creation of an 'enabling environment' through support to drafting and/or implementing volunteer-enabling legislation or policy. Although this success cannot be attributed entirely to UNV and/or the particular project in most cases, it is still an area to which UNV lends considerable expertise and exerts influence.

Best practice examples of each of the broad volunteer infrastructure project categories are identified below. However, whilst particular projects are drawn upon in each example, it is noted that all of the projects highlighted have faced challenges and difficulties, whilst those not included below may have also demonstrated elements of best practice:

6.) **Volunteer schemes:** the PROVONAT project in Togo has been one of the most successful UNV volunteer schemes, and comprises a number of best practices including: well-organised management processes and systems; formal protocols; a transparent and efficient mechanism for assessing and recruiting volunteers. The scheme saw particularly high demand from potential volunteers, and has one of the lowest costs/per volunteer of those analysed (see Table 5). UNV's initial project investment catalysed a sustainable state-supported a programme.

7.) **Coordinating bodies:** UNV has seen most success in this category of volunteer infrastructure project where it has looked to strengthen *existing bodies,* such as the HCYU in Vietnam or the BVF in China, to either strengthen or expand their role to support volunteerism (as opposed to establishing brand new coordinating bodies from scratch). Best practice includes the development of a comprehensive approach to capacity building to staff that is internationally recognised, as in China; achieving autonomy and/or statutory recognition of the body, as in Vietnam and Cape Verde; successful promotion and recognition of volunteerism, through having the appropriate resources available to undertake a wide-ranging programme of events, activities and workshops that reach large numbers across wide audiences (China and Vietnam). The volunteer passport introduced in Cape Verde should also be noted in here as a best practice that could be rolled out more widely.

8.) **UNV strengthened/supported VIO Networks:** the low costs versus the potential benefits of even the most informal networks allow them to be considered a highly desirable a model to support volunteerism, and demonstrate how leadership from civil society can be fostered in a manner that is highly participatory and sustainable. Supporting networks in the appropriate cultural contexts can be seen as a best practice in itself, with the networks evaluated in the course of this evaluation both[98] shown to have been successful (in terms of benefits to members and sustainability beyond the life of the project).

9.) **Nested Projects:** the UNV support to the UNDP Local Governance and Community Development Programme in Nepal can be considered a best practice example of a nested volunteer infrastructure project. This is due to the clear demarcation of UNV's role and responsibility (and that of the volunteers it deployed) within the programme, which effectively enabled it to utilise its experience and expertise. UNV's involvement enhanced the outcomes of the programme, whilst also allowing UNV to meet its own strategic objectives.

10. LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learnt are generalizations based on evaluation experiences that can be applied to broader situations[99] - these frequently highlight strengths or weaknesses. A number of lessons learnt have been identified in respect of UNV's engagement on volunteer infrastructure, as summarised below:

1.) Project Design

The quality of design varies considerably across UNV's cluster of VI projects. Some of the strongest examples demonstrate how project design has been responsive to local and national needs and demand, through coherently linked, realistic outputs, captured in a comprehensive Results and Resources Framework, with a built in capacity development approach. However there are certain similarities in design weaknesses across many of the project documents, including: overly ambitious aims and objectives within short project timeframes; and failure to take into account certain key risks or reliance on inaccurate assumptions.

[98] I.e. Peru and Nicaragua. Honduras (tier 3 countries) is not included in this statement, as there were no documented results or impacts available.

[99] Development Assistance Committee.

2.) National Ownership

Whilst working with and through committed government bodies has the potential to foster greater national ownership, support and wider recognition of volunteerism for development, it can also slow project progress due to high levels of bureaucracy and slow decision making/pace of change associated with public office. Furthermore, whilst political will and commitment is a pre-condition for project success, but projects can also be subject to political influence which can compromise or undermine activities. There is an inherent difficulty associated with establishing government partnerships in nations with hierarchal bureaucracy, which contradicts the notion of a community-driven spirit of volunteerism. National ownership that is entirely government-driven may not be the best model for long term sustainability of volunteer projects.

3.) Multi-Sector Stakeholder Engagement

In many of the Government-led national volunteer schemes, there is little representation or input from civil society. The legacy of a VI project should be enduring commitment at government, community and civil society levels. Furthermore, private sector and academic institution partners[100] were identified in very few volunteer infrastructure projects; overall the private sector is mostly absent altogether from both documentation and practice on the ground[101] and the potential for placements or volunteer career opportunities through the private sector has not been properly explored. Whilst academic institutions have been involved to a limited extent in conducting studies and research for some projects, their limited engagement in other aspects of the project cycle (particularly supporting M&E) could be a missed opportunity.

4.) Capacity Building

This evaluation has identified the 'weak link' in the UNV results chain as capacity development of volunteer coordinating bodies[102]; that is, organisational capacity development. In project documents, capacity has generally been understood as training for effective volunteerism for VIOs and volunteers and where capacity building of coordinating bodies or host agencies/Ministries is represented in project objectives, there are few cases of explicit capacity building activities. The assumption that capacity will be built indirectly, through working with/exposure to UNV personnel and UN volunteers is high risk. Related to this, there has also been weak measurement of the impact of capacity building on the actions and practice of VIOs/Volunteers and ultimately on the beneficiaries in the communities in which they operate. In addition, the incremental pace of developing sustainable capacity is often at odds with the pressure to demonstrate progress quickly to beneficiaries and donors. Capacity building that is limited to one or two key individuals is a risk to sustainability, particularly where staff turnover is high as in many government settings.

5.) Project Monitoring and Evaluation

There is a spectrum of engagement and quality across the volunteer infrastructure portfolio – in some projects M&E is lacking, in a few others, there is duplication of evaluation/review efforts by different partners. Where UNV is not the lead implementing partner or responsible agency, evaluation activity is commissioned and/or undertaken by other parties. Whilst there are instances where UNV may positively influence procedures, there are also many examples where UNV has had extremely limited input, or is not aware an evaluation is taking place.

[100] Latin American networks are a notable exception.
[101] With one or two exceptions, notably recent work in Cape Verde discussed in section 3.3.1
[102] See section 3.2.1.

UNV's own approach to M&E requires significant improvement across the breadth of UNV's volunteer infrastructure engagement: project documents lack M&E frameworks; and project baselines are rare, with implications for the monitoring of progress. There is scope for clarification of *what* is to be monitored, *how* and *for what purpose* at project level. For national volunteer schemes monitoring is very basic, so that only a limited volunteer profile is obtained. Where coordinating centres or bodies are supported by UNV to build the capacity of VIOs/volunteers, monitoring tends to be weaker still, and in many cases very little monitoring is carried out[103].

In terms of UNV reporting, project performance is captured in Annual Project Progress Reports which also vary in detail and quality.

6.) Knowledge Management and Innovation

Knowledge generated and capacity developed is not well maintained at the end of VI projects. In some countries there is a large body of knowledge, but this is not centralised or consolidated. In other cases project records are completely lacking, with no institutional or paper-based memory retained by the UNV Field Unit. Translation of evaluation material[104], is not consistently done, which prevents knowledge sharing and lesson learning. One implication of this is that (against international good practice) external evaluators are expected to work like 'detectives' to search for information that the evaluating agency should readily provide at the outset[105].

These are a number of interesting examples of innovation within volunteer infrastructure projects, which are prime for replication and showcasing. However project documents do not conceptualise volunteer infrastructure projects through a learning lens, in a way that generates evidence and tests innovation. For this reason the Special Voluntary Fund modality is yet to capitalise fully on its strategic potential, as a financing source for the most creative and pioneering things that UNV does.

7.) Gender and Social Inclusion

Gender dynamics and gender issues have not been well promoted within volunteer infrastructure projects, certainly gender cannot be said to be mainstreamed. Gender within volunteer infrastructure projects, is most commonly understood as the ratio of female and male volunteers/trainees, and even this is not consistently integrated into basic programming. There are only a very few examples of specific outreach efforts to target women amongst the volunteer infrastructure projects or gender training; and little formal consideration given to how the gender dimension affects the process of volunteer recruitment, deployment and management.

8.) Turnover

The high turnover (relating to both recruitment and retention) of UNV Field Unit staff/UN Volunteers has hampered project progress in a number of projects. Turnover of UNV HQ staff and within national partner organisations was also cited as a barrier to success. Turnover is recognised as a contributing factor for poor knowledge management, relating to the handover of documents, knowledge and relationships.

9.) Resource Mobilisation

[103] E.g. of volunteer or VIO training.
[104] i.e. French, Spanish, English, Portuguese.
[105] Development Assistance Committee.

National ownership and political commitment is insufficient without investment: governments must fully embed volunteer infrastructures within planning and budgeting systems for sustainability; or ensure that the host agency or coordinating body has sufficient administrative and financial autonomy to operate sustainably. There has been a lack of resource mobilisation strategies integrated into project design and/or developed during project inception/implementation phase. Whilst UNV has been successful in mobilising funds and brokering partnerships for project start-up, success in supporting project resource mobilisation as part of an exit/sustainability strategy for volunteer infrastructure projects (in line with the Guidance Note 2004) appears to have been limited; either absent from Project Documents all together, or not designed and implemented where included as project objectives.

10.) UNV Partnership with UNDP

There are examples of mutually beneficial partnership working between UNDP and UNV, which can be partly attributed to a distinct area of contribution and responsibility for UNV, which allowed UNV to best utilise its skills and expertise. From a visibility perspective, UNV's contribution and role was 'swallowed up' by bigger UN agencies like UNDP when partnering on some projects, even when acting as the lead agency. That said, there are also examples where UNV identity, reputation and expertise are well-established and appreciated at country level.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.) UNV may wish to **clarify its terminology** within this thematic area, as the term "volunteer infrastructure" is agreed by most stakeholders to be outdated and imprecise[106].

There is no 'one size fits all' approach for UNV's VI engagement. However there are a number of factors which are conducive to successful UNV-supported VI projects, which occur at different stages around the project cycle:

2.) Project Scoping

New VI projects should build upon a pre-existing, consolidated UNV presence in country in order to capitalise on reputation and relationships built over a number of years. Engagement can be incremental, for example new projects can build upon a foundation laid by a prior UNV project[107]. UNV should identify strong cross-sector national ownership before investing heavily at the country level and negotiate strongly for government commitment of financial/in-kind resources to the project from the outset. UNV should maintain its current practice of a significant lead-in period prior to project inception, during which substantial stakeholder consultation and partnership building is carried out to develop the way forward and build national ownership.

3.) Project Design

UNV should conduct strong situation analysis and intervention modalities should be selected according to the region/context, selecting from the 'menu' of successful interventions within the UNV portfolio[108]. Resources are best targeted to utilise and support existing structures and entities (be it government or non-government coordinating bodies, agencies or institutions with the

[106] It is noted that volunteer infrastructure has been replaced by "volunteer schemes" in the UNV Strategic Framework 2014-2017 which is a welcome development.

[107] For example a capacity building project is undertaken which targets VIOs, this is then followed by a project which supports the establishment of a coordinating body.

[108] These include: establish/strengthen volunteer schemes, coordinating bodies, VIO/volunteer networks, support to policy/legislation development, promotion and research in volunteerism.

mandate to support volunteerism etc), rather than establishing new structures – particularly where projects are of a limited timeframe (i.e. two years).

There is a notable gap in research in the field of VI which UNV is well-placed to address, given its international mandate to lead the volunteer sector. UNV support to the production of high quality research outputs and the dissemination of research products (through channels which will stimulate interest), would represent a 'quick win' in the influencing of the VI modality.

4.) Project Design/Implementation: Capacity Development

UNV should build clear strategies and outputs on capacity development into all VI projects, articulating the logical chain of activities and results which will allow the required knowledge, skills and processes to be institutionalised by the volunteer coordinating body. To fulfil UNV's vision of sustainable VI, an explicit component to build capacity of host agencies or coordinating bodies must be a key objective of every project. Indeed capacity development may need to precede the establishment of a volunteer programme (rather than running concurrently).

UNV could capitalise on a decade of support to VI projects, to more explicitly facilitate lesson learning and more widely offer technical assistance to build national capacity for VI initiatives. Mechanisms could include support to national/regional conferences and seminars, continued support to study visits between countries to observe good practices in VI and introduction of designated regional advisory services on VI development and implementation.

Some UNV staff (HQ and Field Unit) may require professional development in order to support VI project design or implementation. UNV should undertake a capacity needs assessment exercise in-house, in order to identify any capacity gap. This could be addressed through study visits of UNV personnel to successful VI projects, learning chats by consultants who designed the VI projects or other means.

5.) Project Design/Implementation - Partnership

UNV should convene and collaborate with bi-lateral VIOs and other agencies present at the country level, to add value by identifying synergies and preventing duplication of national efforts (share capacity, best practices and established systems, maximise resources etc). Within partnerships of the UN system to deliver VI projects, UNV should ensure clearly defined roles and devolved responsibility are identified through MoUs (with UNDP, for example).

UNV-supported projects should include a partnership strategy in Project Documents or develop this during the inception period. All sectors - Government, civil society, academia (and where relevant private sector) - should be represented in VI project management or oversight, such as steering committees. UNV should test the involvement of the private sector in VI projects via strategic pilots, as host agencies to volunteers, or for exploring links for alumni employment.

6.) Project Implementation – Gender and Diversity

UNV should analyse gender within VI projects beyond the ratio of female to male volunteers/trainees; this could be achieved partially by standardising gender-responsive project indicators. UNV should integrate gender into basic programming through supporting projects to set project-level gender strategies, promote gender training and formulate gender policy in coordinating bodies/implementation agencies. More VI projects should include specific outreach efforts to target women amongst the VI projects and initiatives to understand gender differences in control/access to project resources. Research into how the gender dimension affects the process of volunteer recruitment, deployment and management could be included in objectives of some projects.

UNV should direct project resources towards the piloting of projects that target particular sub-sectors of youth; and not limit the participants of volunteer schemes to university graduates alone.

7.) Strategic Direction/Oversight

It is strongly recommended that a specific results framework or strategy be developed to support this thematic area of UNV's work. Such a framework would 'nest' underneath the UNV Strategic Framework 2014-17[109] and represent good practice in managing for development results. In addition, a Steering Committee (or Expert Panel) can be established to offer strategic guidance on UNV's VI interventions and act as the primary point of coordination, retaining comprehensive oversight of UNV's VI portfolio in its entirety.

8.) Monitoring and Evaluation

UNV should pay very strong attention to establishing consistency of Monitoring and Evaluation across VI projects. It is important that clear lessons should be appropriately captured from UNV-supported projects; in order to generate useful and appropriate evidence to support UNV advocacy and influencing, and to identify practices and tools for replication. UNV must invest in institutional systems and practices at the field level in order to properly capture, store and retain monitoring and evaluation data, and facilitate easy access to data by UNV Field Unit staff, in order to capture innovation and enhance knowledge sharing and learning.

UNV should follow well-established UNDP project cycle guidance and templates. Every project should be subject to a Final Evaluation (within six months of completion). As UNV cannot always control evaluation activity by partners, it is crucial to ensure project reporting that is of good quality and sufficient detail – either via project completion reporting or annual reporting.

At the project level, UNV should: ensure the consistency of Results and Resources Frameworks (comprehensive, detailed, including qualitative as well as quantitative indicators for measuring progress); standardise the development of project Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks in the project inception phase; and include a full time M&E Officer (UN volunteer) on each project staff. Specific to VI projects, UNV should support national partners to conduct effective monitoring of participation in training delivered by volunteer coordinating bodies, network participation and record-keeping on volunteer scheme participants (e.g. on career trajectories of volunteers to demonstrate results).

[109] i.e. output 1.4 of the Programme framework would then become the Impact statement of the 'volunteer infrastructure' strategic framework.