Photo Captions and Credits

Page 6:
UNDP supported the Institute of Statistics for the Roma registration in the framework of the 2011 census. (Credit: UNDP Albania).

Page 10:
UNDP’s intervention seeks to address the structural weakness of the agriculture sector, which remains low input, low-value and subsistence oriented, and is vulnerable to frequent climatic shocks. (Credit: UNDP Ethiopia/Julie Pudlowski)

Page 17:
Mr. Paulo Jannuzzi, National Secretary of Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development of Brazil passes the Evaluation Torch to Mr. Vichit Chitvimarn, Acting Director-General of TICA, Royal Thai Government at the opening of the 2015 NEC conference. (Credit: IEO/UNDP)

Page 20:
The 2015 NEC conference team (above) and conference participants (below). (Credit: IEO/UNDP)

Page 25:
Patient collecting anti-retroviral therapy from a clinic supported by the UNDP managed Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria grants. (Credit: UNDP Zimbabwe)

Page 51:
YouthStart programme, building youth inclusive financial sectors in sub-Saharan Africa. (Credit: UNCDF)

Page 54:
Women from the Aid and Hope Programme for Cancer Patient Care Association in the State of Palestine sewing breast prosthetics which are distributed for free to female cancer patients. (Credit: UNV)

Acronyms

ADR  Assessment of Development Results
CIS  Commonwealth of Independent States
ECOWAS  Economic Community of West African States
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF  Global Environment Facility
GRES  Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
IEO  Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP
MDGs  Millennium Development Goals
M&E  Monitoring and evaluation
OECD/DAC  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
SDGs  Sustainable Development Goals
SGP  Small Grants Programme
UNCDF  United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDAF  United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNEVAL  United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF  United Nations Children’s Fund
UNRWA  United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UN SWAP  United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNV  United Nations Volunteers
WFP  World Food Programme
2015 was a major year for the United Nations with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the development of indicators

FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to continue the tradition of providing a foreword for the third Annual Report on Evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This report provides an in-depth look at the numerous activities of UNDP’s Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) as it discharged its core functions as well as continued its corporate advocacy work promoting the evaluation function and improving evaluative practices. The focus and attention being paid to upgrading national evaluation capacity is particularly welcome.

Members of the UNDP Executive Board have always appreciated the annual evaluation reports since they provide an independent account of UNDP’s contributions and help flesh out the narrative of development. These reports are of particular value as they provide a transparent and unbiased demonstration of how UNDP exercises its accountability function. The added value of their longer, more extended format is that it provides an overview of the evaluation work of the IEO with respect to various evaluations, both at the corporate and country level. I encourage you to read the full reports as they indicate the complexity and depth of UNDP’s work across the globe. I am aware that each of these reports will have particular target audiences, and I am encouraged to see the effort invested in presenting the findings for discussion at the country and headquarters levels.

The attention to independent evaluation bodes well for UNDP’s own credibility as a transparent and learning organization, committed to accountability for results. The report also includes details on the evaluation practices of both the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) that are of value to UNDP Executive Board deliberations. Each annual report, therefore, presents a complete picture of the evaluation function in UNDP as a whole.

2015 was a major year for the United Nations with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the development of indicators. These will help chart the course as nations reach out to meet the SDG challenge to leave ‘no one behind’ in their quest for better development. The role of evaluation and good monitoring is crucial to mark this path and flag areas of achievement, as well as provide instructive lessons learned.

We look forward to IEO’s continued contribution to shedding light and bringing key issues to the fore for decision-making at UNDP as well as in the Executive Board.

Zohrab Mnatsakanyan
Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations
President of the UNDP Executive Board
PREFACE

2015 was a landmark year for evaluation in the United Nations with the system-wide celebration of the Year of Evaluation. It is therefore a distinct pleasure to present this Annual Report on Evaluation, which showcases the spectrum of evaluation activities during the past year in which UNDP’s IEO was deeply involved.

Prominent among these was the Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity held in October 2015, on “Blending Evaluation Principles with Development Practices.” This event involved over 450 participants from the UN system and its partner national governments and key stakeholders, and represented a cross section of evaluation users and producers. The SDGs were at the centre of the discourse, which culminated with the Bangkok Declaration on key actions to strengthen national evaluation capacity.

In terms of the IEO’s core business, thematic evaluations presented to the UNDP Executive Board tackled major themes that were timely, strategic and of seminal relevance as UNDP charts its course for the next few years. These included Evaluations of UNDP’s contributions to the “National Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals,” “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment,” “Global and Regional Human Development Reports to Public Policy” and “Mine Action.”

The life-blood of UNDP’s contribution to development is its country programmes, and 2015 was a busy year for assessment of the effectiveness of these. Eight country Assessments of Development Results (ADRs) were undertaken. This report analyses common issues that emanated from these. The reports are key contributions of the IEO, and I am happy to report on the continuing refinement of ADR methods in 2015.

In terms of the revised evaluation policy, discussions both within UNDP and in the Executive Board have provided a timely opportunity for deep and constructive reflection on emerging paradigms for effective evaluation practices, and the crucial role of policies that guide and buttress evaluation activities. The value of the independence of the evaluation function, and the need for this aspect to be clearly and unequivocally reflected in the evaluation policy has become increasingly recognized and appreciated. The credibility and subsequent use of evaluations depends on their independence. This core IEO principle needs to be protected to secure access and report with confidence to stakeholders across the globe. UNDP will continue to deepen the discourse on this topic in the years to come.

Finally, the strategic shift to professionalize the IEO in supporting and leading evaluations at the corporate and country levels has yielded benefits. These include the building of in-house knowledge and expertise, implementation efficiencies, enhanced credibility as the office operates as part of a global evaluation community, and the ability to engage directly with governments and stakeholders as a credible entity.

The credibility and subsequent use of evaluations depends on their independence. I look forward to greater refinement in our methods so that we can build on these gains.

Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP
Annual Report on Evaluation 2015

chapter three: Decentralized Evaluations

3.1 Overview of evaluations commissioned by country offices, and regional and policy bureaux in 2015 27
3.1.1 Evaluation plan compliance 29
3.1.2 Management responses 32
3.1.3 Monitoring and evaluation specialists 33
3.1.4 Evaluation resources 34

3.2 IEO decentralized evaluation assessment strategy 34

3.3 Achievements, challenges, and strategies in decentralized evaluation conducted by UNDP policy and programme units 36
3.3.1 Bureau for Policy and Programme Support 36
3.3.2 Regional bureaux 37
3.3.3 Examples of exemplary evaluations as reported by UNDP’s five regional bureaux 46

chapter four: Evaluations at UNCDF

4.1 Key achievements and challenges in 2015 53
4.2 UNCDF strategy for improving evaluation quality, and pursuing innovation and learning 55

chapter five: Evaluations at UNV

5.1 Key achievements and challenges in 2015 56
5.2 UNV strategy for improving evaluation quality, and pursuing innovation and learning 58

annexes

Annex 1. Itemized, fully costed programme of work for 2016-2017 (estimates) 59
Annex 3. Decentralized evaluation data 62

Endnotes 64
chapter one

INTRODUCTION

This report of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is presented annually to the UNDP Executive Board as a key corporate accountability tool. It summarizes 2015 highlights in the work of the office as well as that of associated evaluation units at the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and United Nations Volunteers (UNV). All three operate under the UNDP evaluation policy.
In 2015, the UN evaluation community witnessed a number of significant events, including the celebration of the International Year of Evaluation or EvalYear. The UN General Assembly noted the importance of developing national evaluation capacities as well as stronger evaluation functions at the United Nations in resolution 69/237. A torch signifying countries’ commitment to evaluation was symbolically passed at over 80 events around the world.

UNDP’s work reflected the importance of EvalYear in terms of strategic topics picked for thematic evaluations and the hosting of the Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity. This Annual Report provides details of these and other achievements, and reflects on recent lessons from policy and programmatic activities, towards improving future results for development.

1.1 Overall architecture: Who does what?

The evaluation function in UNDP, as per its evaluation policy, has many players.

### Contributing to accountability and learning:

- **The UNDP Executive Board**
  - The UNDP Executive Board is the custodian of the evaluation policy. It approves the policy and considers annual reports on implementation, ensures the independence of the evaluation function; uses and draws on evaluation findings for oversight of corporate policies, strategies and programmes; requires management responses to all evaluations, and reviews and approves those for independent evaluations; and periodically requests the IEO to commission independent reviews of the evaluation policy.

- **The IEO**
  - The IEO is an independent unit that each year reports directly to the Executive Board on evaluation functions, compliance, coverage, quality, findings and follow-up. It conducts evaluations on themes and programmes at the country, regional and global levels.

- **The UNDP Administrator**
  - The UNDP Administrator is accountable for corporate results, and safeguards the integrity and independence of the evaluation function. His/her role also includes ensuring that senior management responds to and applies evaluation findings, and that relevant units follow up on recommendations.

- **UNDP programme and policy units**
  - UNDP programme and policy units conduct monitoring, evaluate programme performance and manage findings. The results feed into independent evaluations.

- **The evaluation units of UNCDF and UNV**
  - The evaluation units of UNCDF and UNV conduct evaluations in their organizations, and contribute to the IEO’s development of common evaluation quality standards and guidelines.
1.2 IEO’s mandate and function

The IEO is guided by the UNDP evaluation policy approved in 2011. The office conducts systematic assessments of UNDP’s contributions to development results by performing independent evaluations, and by setting standards and guidelines on evaluation.

Key evaluation values are independence, credibility and utility. Core values comprise the independence, credibility and utility of evaluations. The office employs various means to ensure the quality of its work, including evaluation policy reviews, guidance from its external Evaluation Advisory Panel and peer reviews by evaluation offices at other UN organizations.

The IEO has a central role in supporting UNDP as an organization that routinely learns from its own experiences in countries around the world, as well as in drawing in knowledge from other UN entities and the global evaluation communities. Evaluations provide important evidence for corporate performance monitoring. They also increase accountability to all those with a stake in UNDP helping to deliver development results—the Executive Board, the funders of programmes, and the governments and citizens of countries that UNDP serves through its programmes.

1.3 Purpose: What’s in this report?

This Annual Report is intended for a wide range of audiences. Beyond providing information about evaluation at UNDP, UNCDF and UNV, it can serve as a resource for strategic decision-making and dialogue on strengthening contributions to development. Key audiences comprise:

- UNDP Executive Board members, who approve and fund evaluation activities;
- UNDP, UNCDF and UNV staff responsible for formulating, implementing and monitoring projects, and reporting results in various offices; and
- Global development and evaluation communities interested in sharing information and lessons.

This report was prepared during a major transition in UNDP’s evaluation functions, which has been ongoing since late 2014. Significant elements have been an independent review of the current UNDP evaluation policy and practices, in-house discussions on findings and recommendations, and Executive Board deliberations on the recommendations. Steps to improve the decentralized evaluation system and practices, as well as quality assurance and assessment have received particular attention.

There has been a concerted emphasis on strengthening mechanisms to follow up on evaluation recommendations and management responses, and to deepen collaboration among UNDP, UNCDF and UNV. The IEO has continued to suspend application of its quality assessment system for a second year pending finalization of the revised evaluation policy proposed by the Executive Board in 2015.
1.4 Structure of the report

The report consists of 5 chapters:

- **Chapter 1**: Introduction
- **Chapter 2**: Focuses on IEO work in 2015, lessons drawn and the proposed programme for 2016-2017.
- **Chapter 3**: An overview of compliance in decentralized evaluations in 2015 as well as the latest discussions on how to improve the quality of those carried out by UNDP programme and policy units.
- **Chapters 4 & 5**: Dedicated to the evaluation work of UNCDF and UNV, respectively.
chapter two

IEO EVALUATIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

This chapter highlights the work of the IEO in 2015, offering an overview of key activities, budgets and human resources, and lessons learned. It also outlines plans for moving forward.

2.1 Overview of 2015 activities

The IEO’s primary function is to conduct independent evaluations at the country, regional and global levels, as well as on thematic topics of particular importance to UNDP. It also promotes the development of evaluation capacity at the national level, and provides critical support to the work of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG). This section summarizes these
activities in 2015, covering thematic, country and joint evaluations that helped strengthen organizational accountability and learning.

2.1.1 Evaluations of thematic contributions

The IEO’s current work plan was developed under the Medium Term Evaluation Plan 2014-2017 approved by the UNDP Executive Board. In 2015, the IEO completed four thematic evaluations that were presented to the Board for discussion and decisions.

In 2001, the UN Secretary-General entrusted UNDP with the lead roles in facilitating country-level monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in campaigning for the goals on behalf of the United Nations. The objectives of the evaluation were to assess these roles and results achieved in support of the MDGs, and identify factors affecting UNDP’s contribution and performance. The evaluation considered UNDP as the ‘MDG champion’ and ‘scorekeeper’, looked at technical assistance and policy support to devise and scale-up development strategies and plans, and analysed UNDP mechanisms (trust funds, and institutional and regional initiatives) to prioritize work on the MDGs.

The evaluation was complex, given its summative nature and the range of the MDGs themselves. The time horizon covered 12 years (2002-2014) with a global reach. It was decided to focus primarily on tools and approaches that supported MDG achievement at the country level, and that emphasized comprehensive support to all goals as a ‘package’. Since this excluded assistance linked to a particular MDG or sector, the evaluation undercounted the total volume of UNDP contributions to MDG achievement.

A simplified theory of change was developed, and the evaluation relied on multiple data collection tools. Over 400 people were interviewed and 11 country case studies undertaken. Countries were selected using Qualitative Comparative Analysis methods, which helped identify and analyse causal pathways and interactions. Evidence was synthesized from global, regional and outcome evaluations. The evaluation also undertook a meta-analysis of 70 country programme ADRs, a desk review of national development strategies in 50 countries, a questionnaire survey of UNDP staff with strong involvement in MDG programmes and a structured review of 11 MDG-related guidance notes issued by UNDP headquarters. Two members of the IEO Evaluation Advisory Panel provided important strategic, methodological and substantive inputs, and reviewed key outputs and evaluation reports.

The evaluation concluded that UNDP had a positive normative influence on development policy, helping to conceptualize the MDGs and mobilize support. Together with the World Bank and the UN Millennium Project, UNDP helped make the case for a significant increase in official development assistance in countries that could absorb it.

Overall, UNDP tools and instruments were well designed, but various trust funds were often disconnected from major work related to the goals. The MDGs were generally seen as a success in improving targeted actions, although they allowed a ‘drive for numbers’ and an excessive preoccupation with readily measurable results. UNDP could have used the expertise of specialized agencies to a greater extent at the country level, and too often failed to translate its support into tangible development programmes and funding streams.

While UNDP is now well positioned to help countries tackle the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the emerging agenda is
significantly more comprehensive. It will test the capacity of the UN system, including to ‘deliver as one’.

UNDP published the first global Human Development Report in 1990. Since then, the report and its Human Development Index have become benchmarks of human development discourse, routinely capturing the interest of policy makers, the media and academics. Twenty-three global reports have been produced, along with 33 regional and subregional reports. These have contributed to public debate, and national and regional policy processes, including by bridging the concept and application of human development.

This was the first independent evaluation of the global and regional reports. To assess their contribution to public policy dialogue, the evaluation considered two pathways through which the reports inform and influence policy processes: direct, when used by policy makers, and indirect, when used by policy intermediaries such as UNDP, non-governmental organizations, think-tanks, academics and research organizations. A comprehensive data collection plan involved analysis of 1,108 survey responses from eight groups of stakeholders, while a meta-analysis covered 103 UNDP evaluations. Over 700 public policy and development experts were interviewed. Ten in-depth desk reviews took place along with 22 country case studies. Analysis of web search patterns of the reports, a comparative analysis with select global publications, and an analysis of web-based sources for citation and content use yielded data that helped measure the use and influence of the reports.

The evaluation had five major conclusions. First, over a quarter century, the global reports have made major contributions to shaping the global development debate. For the regional reports, the reputation of UNDP as a neutral agency makes them particularly suited for initiating sensitive discussions; these have often responded to issues relevant to multiple countries. Second, the global environment for development knowledge has changed significantly, but the global Human Development Reports have not kept pace. Third, discussions on the global reports have been increasingly focused on their indices, rather than generating broader debate on human development. The Human Development Index is losing its relevance and needs to be revisited. Fourth, UNDP does not have mechanisms to convert ideas mentioned in the reports into action. Finally, management of the global reports needs to be strengthened to make them thought-provoking publications with clear and strong messages.

Gender equality remains a central but unfulfilled human right, and together with the empowerment of women has been a major theme in global commitments since the 1970s. UNDP adopted gender mainstreaming for all its activities in the 1990s.

In 2007, a Gender Equality Strategy (2008-2013) responded to the first independent evaluation of UNDP’s performance in promoting gender equality. The strategy had two components, the first covering ‘development results’ in UNDP’s then four focus areas (poverty and the MDGs, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and the environment and energy) and the second examining ‘institutional results’ in the areas of coordination and management.
Assessing UNDP’s contribution to the attainment of gender equality and promoting women’s empowerment is complex and multilayered, since the process encompasses dimensions of cultural context and values, power relationships, accelerators of progress, and issues of sustainability and backlash. The evaluation involved team visits to 13 country offices and 3 regional centres. Six databases were compiled from Gender Marker data, results-oriented annual reporting, Human Resource Office data, Global Staff Survey data, results from a global gender staff survey, and a gender results data set derived from a meta-evaluation of 77 IEO reports (which included 66 ADRs).

To enable deeper analysis of the effectiveness of UNDP results and the type of gender change achieved, the evaluation developed two analytical frameworks to assess ‘gender results’, which were defined as outputs and outcomes contributing positive or negatively to gender equality and women’s empowerment. The first was the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES), which consisted of a five-point scale moving from gender negative results towards gender transformative results. The second drew on the Gender@Work quadrants, which categorize four types of change: individual, formal, systemic and informal.

In terms of institutional results, the evaluation assessed UNDP performance with respect to planning and resources, innovation to promote gender mainstreaming, deployment of the Gender Marker, gender parity and organizational culture, accountability and oversight measures, knowledge management and communication, and UN system collaboration on gender. The evaluation also assessed UNDP performance in terms of the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

It found that overall, there had been far-reaching change and marked improvement in UNDP’s approach to and implementation of policies to address gender mainstreaming. The Gender Equality Strategy was catalytic and advanced a number of innovative instruments, notably the Gender Steering and Implementation Committee and the Gender Equality Seal. But the evaluation also concluded that UNDP has yet to fully promote and resource gender equality as a first priority and point of departure for all corporate engagements. Very few of UNDP’s gender results were found to be gender transformative in addressing the root causes of inequalities. The majority were gender targeted, meaning they tabulated the number of women and men involved.

An exception was in the area of democratic governance, where results were gender responsive and addressed the different needs of men and women, and the equitable distribution of benefits. The evaluation concluded that gender analysis needs to become mandatory in all programming and be linked with the Gender Marker rating of each intervention.

Since 1999, when the Ottawa Convention went into force, there has been substantial progress in mine action. Globally, casualties have declined to one-third the 1999 rate of some 25 per day. While removal of landmines is not typically associated with UNDP’s development work, the agency has been an important partner on this effort in over 40 countries, with some programmes dating back nearly 30 years. Most support helps national governments build capacities to carry out mine action.

The evaluation assessed the extent to which UNDP’s contribution to mine action had strengthened national institutional capacities to deliver services that reduce vulnerability, enable equitable development, advance the rights of persons with disabilities and support compliance with relevant international treaties. A theory-based approach was adopted, built on data collected through a global
portfolio analysis. Three detailed country studies were undertaken in Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mozambique and Tajikistan, along with desk studies on work in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Lebanon and Sri Lanka. The principal modes of data collection were community-based observations, interviews and focus groups of men and women, using rapid appraisal techniques.

Team members visited 24 mine-affected communities to determine how land release affected local communities, and whether or not the situation of landmine survivors and their families had changed. UNDP programme data prior to 2004 were not readily accessible, and securing other data was problematic, particularly at the community level. Furthermore, links between capacity-building work at the national level and impacts at the community level proved to be tenuous since UNDP largely works with national partners.

Overall, however, the evaluation concluded that UNDP’s mine action work has made positive contributions to many communities by reducing fear and improving the quality of life. The organization is viewed as a neutral and reliable partner that facilitates access to international funding, and provides considerable knowledge and experience. In over a dozen countries, UNDP has made major contributions to building institutional capacity for mine action. It has sought to frame its support in terms of poverty reduction, and in most villages visited, there is some evidence of better standards of living, though the extent to which this is a direct result of demining is difficult to quantify.

Since 2008, the profile of mine action within UNDP’s strategic framework has declined, and the temporary closing of the mine action global programme has caused uncertainty among stakeholders. The evaluation underscores the important role that UNDP is playing, and finds UNDP has compelling reasons to continue its work. It should more deeply tie its mine action support to other development programming so that affected communities also receive improved government services, better infrastructure and greater economic opportunities.

2.1.2 Evaluations of country contributions

Country-level evaluations, known as Assessment of Development Results (ADRs), pinpoint UNDP contributions to national development progress. The IEO undertook eight of these in 2015: in Albania, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mauritania, Morocco, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Viet Nam. ADRs for Somalia and Zimbabwe were completed the same year. These exercises confirmed that, overall, UNDP’s interventions have been relevant and aligned with national development priorities. Insights and some common issues are summarized below, alongside an update on progress in implementing recommendations and remaining challenges.

UNDP value-added in middle-income countries

Several ADRs were conducted in middle-income countries, namely, Albania, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Morocco and Viet Nam. These found that UNDP continues to be well positioned in countries at this stage of development. Its work often yields critical development results as well as useful policy lessons. In the Dominican Republic, there was broad recognition of UNDP’s added value in fostering political dialogue, and facilitating public policies on sustainable human development and human rights. In Morocco, UNDP was considered a longstanding, trusted, credible and responsive partner with particular competencies in project management and capacity development.

A challenge when countries transition to middle-income status is the associated reduction in official development assistance, which
often affects the scope of UNDP services. A case in point is Gabon, where this shift has coincided with weakening oil prices that have reduced government revenues. Constraints on international and domestic funding led to a diminished UNDP country office programme and technical capacity. In Albania and the Dominican Republic, more limited funding is also an issue. In São Tomé and Principe, programme relevance is constrained by dependence on two major sources of funding, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

In some countries that have transitioned to middle-income status, UNDP has sharpened the relevancy of its country programming. In Viet Nam, it has emphasized upstream policy-oriented support. In Albania, programmes have been increasingly aligned with national European Union accession priorities, and have raised attention to crucial gaps in social inclusion and youth employment.

Sharing best practices, high-quality policy advice and innovation are all critical in supporting middle-income countries. The ADRs have stressed that UNDP interventions need to become even more innovative, and urge UNDP not to confine its role to that of a ‘fund manager’. UNDP needs to strengthen its intellectual/technical leadership and advocacy work, so that it can continue to be a leading voice in development debates at all levels.

Sharing:
- Best practices
- High-quality policy advice
- Innovation

Critical in supporting middle-income countries

Delivering as One
UNDP continues to support coordination among United Nations organizations, including through the system of Resident Coordinator’s offices. In the Dominican Republic, the Resident Coordinator assumed a key role as spokesperson for the United Nations country team after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Since then, members of the country team have increasingly collaborated, including in joint activities with UN organizations in Haiti.

In Albania and Viet Nam, two of the eight countries where pilots of the UN Delivering as One approach to coordination have taken place, multiple UN agencies work together to achieve results outlined in common programming frameworks. While this has increased synergy to some extent, in Albania, the ADR found a degree of fragmentation causing increased workloads and unnecessary duplication among programmes.

In Viet Nam, under the UN One Plan, UNDP has led the work of various joint programme groups, such as on governance, climate change, and inclusive and equitable economic growth. Further work is needed, however, to strengthen partnerships between these and stakeholders outside the UN system. In Ethiopia, a Delivering as One ‘self-starter’ since 2008, the ADR noted UNDP’s leadership in the roll-out of a Business Operations Strategy and other operations-focused joint initiatives that have demonstrated cost savings.

UNDP strategic positioning: longer term strategy and sustainable interventions

Many of the ADRs stressed the need for long-term strategies that can generate transformational and sustainable development results. In Mauritania, in the absence of an overall strategy or vision, UNDP has supported specific actions and processes, including small-scale infrastructure development, without truly strengthening national capacities or addressing structural issues.
Sustainability has been weak. In Ethiopia, the ADR recommended well-defined exit strategies at the outset to enhance sustainability. In Albania, the short-term nature of interventions hindered the momentum required to achieve transformational results.

The ADR in Viet Nam recommended that UNDP shift to a more programme-focused approach. In Zimbabwe, it commended recent joint efforts of the UNDP team with the national Government, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other partners to launch a long-term national programme to improve food security and build greater resilience to extreme climate events.

Evaluability challenges
A common methodological challenge shared by all ADRs was unsatisfactory ‘evaluability’, primarily due to a lack of explicit theories of change, baseline data and documentation as well as weak indicators. This made it difficult to measure inputs, outputs and outcomes, and changes in indicators, especially those related to the MDGs. Some projects adopted integrated approaches that contributed to more than one outcome, which complicated the analysis. Shifts in country contexts added a further dimension of complexity.

2.1.3 Progress on ADR reform
In 2014, the IEO commissioned papers on the history, use of and lessons from a meta-synthesis of ADRs. Drawing on these inputs, the approach to ADRs was revised in 2015. Alignment with the 2014-2017 UNDP Strategic Plan, use of outcome-based analyses, and greater attention to assessing gender equality and women’s empowerment were notable features. An internal IEO workshop assessed these changes and updated ADR guidance.

ADRs are now aligned with both the evolving global development agenda and with UNDP’s role at the country level, including in UN country teams. Disentangling UNDP’s contributions to development goals under shared UN outcomes, however, has proved an ongoing challenge. The IEO will continue to improve methods to address this issue, while aiming to reduce the time to conduct an ADR and increase coverage of country programmes.

2.1.4 Joint evaluations
Conducting evaluations in partnership with other UN organizations provides an opportunity to enhance ownership and quality. Two joint UNDP-GEF evaluations completed in 2015 included one focused on the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) administered by UNDP.

Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme
The GEF created the SGP in 1992. Its explicit aim is to develop community-led and community-owned strategies and technologies for reducing threats to the global environment, while addressing livelihood challenges. The principal strategy is to provide small grants—up to $50,000—to needy communities to support practices and technologies that benefit the global environment. To date, the SGP has provided over 18,000 grants to communities in more than 125 countries.

The evaluation covered the period from 2008 to 2014 (a previous joint evaluation
was conducted in 2008). It examined the SGP’s current role, and the extent to which it has contributed to global environmental benefits while addressing livelihoods, poverty and gender, and accomplished broader uptake of programme outcomes locally and beyond. The evaluation considered strategic positioning and efficiency issues, with particular attention to the upgrading of country programmes and related policies, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Dubbing SGP projects effective, efficient and relevant, the evaluation nonetheless concluded that the global longer term vision of the programme has not been updated. An ‘upgrading’ policy introduced in 2006 for countries benefitting from the SGP for more than eight years and related policies have increased resources, but brought challenges. Notably, the criteria for selecting countries for upgrading should be revisited. SGP governance and management structures have been adequate but are increasingly strained by a rapidly changing context. UNDP should ensure that the SGP is implemented under a single, coherent, global programme framework. With guidance from the GEF Secretariat, UNDP and the Central Programme Management Team, the strengthening and streamlining of monitoring and evaluation should continue, including to ensure a sharper community focus.

Impact Evaluation of GEF Support to Protected Areas and Protected Area Systems

Since 1991, the GEF, in collaboration with UNDP and the World Bank, has provided $4.8 billion in grants and mobilized an additional $17.9 billion in co-financing from public, multilateral and private sources for 1,167 biodiversity conservation initiatives. These have largely involved non-marine protected areas, area systems and adjacent landscapes.

The GEF and UNDP undertook a joint evaluation to answer three broad questions: What were the impacts and contributions of GEF support to biodiversity conservation in protected areas and their immediately adjacent landscapes? What were the contributions of GEF support to the broader adoption of biodiversity management measures at the country level? Which GEF-assisted projects were most significant in enabling or hindering the achievement of biodiversity management objectives?

The evaluation concluded that GEF support fosters biodiversity conservation by helping lower habitat loss, and it noted that GEF strategies have increasingly targeted development pressures in areas adjacent to protected areas. The GEF and its partner agencies, including UNDP, have helped build capacities for biodiversity conservation and improve biodiversity governance.

2.1.5 Hosting the Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity

The Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 26 to 30 October 2015, on “Blending Evaluation Principles with Development Practices to Change People’s
Lives.” It was the largest global evaluation event, with 450 participants from governments and other national institutions.

The conference was a first on many levels for the IEO and UNDP. It marked the first time UNDP formally partnered with a professional evaluation association—the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS). This helped in bringing in expertise from civil society, academia and the research community. Other firsts included 12 training workshops; the engagement of UNDP staff from country offices, including Resident Representatives, as well as regional bureaux and the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support; and the participation of all three international evaluation networks to discuss their roles in national evaluation capacity development as partners of UNDP. Representatives attended from the UNEG, the Evaluation Cooperation Group of the multilateral development banks and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

Dialogue on building national evaluation capacities tackled the challenge of not only monitoring indicators, but evaluating the SDGs. Participants concluded by endorsing the Bangkok Declaration, geared towards guiding joint action in future national evaluation capacity development, including in support of the SDGs.

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The Bangkok Declaration

1. This declaration seeks to capture an emerging body of shared understanding on lessons and priorities for evaluation practice in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to help guide joint action in future support of national evaluation capacity.

2. We the participants at the Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity, convened by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) and the Global Assembly 2015 and the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) here in Bangkok, 28-30 October 2015 declare to the evaluation community.

3. Representing evaluation users and producers, from 100 countries and members of national governments, national, regional and international organizations and networks; comprising professional practices that span from government, private and non-profit sectors; from internal management consultancy through formal independent oversight to academic research; we have shared our diverse experience and sought common understanding on challenges and opportunities for evaluation practice to support the SDGs. We stand ready to bring our collective and cumulative expertise to bear upon success in service to the SDGs as a transformational vision of a world of universal respect for human rights and dignity, equality, non-discrimination, democracy and the rule of law.

4. We understand the 17 SDGs and targets to have the potential to transform societies and mobilize people and countries. Achievement of the SDGs will need to be founded upon effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, sound policies and good governance, and we share the conviction that the evaluation function and profession has great potential in responding to the challenges at hand. Beyond evidence-based reflection embedded in evaluative findings and recommendations per se, the evaluation function can, if undertaken without deference to authority alone, bring legitimacy of duty bearers’ engagement with stakeholders to development.

5. We note that the SDG’s intentions for follow-up and review processes are specifically guided by objectives that evaluation function directly responds to (inter alia):

   - identify achievements, challenges, gaps and critical success factors
   - support the identification of solutions and best practices and promote coordination and effectiveness of the international development system.
   - be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people
   - build on existing platforms and processes,
be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data
require enhanced capacity-building support for developing countries, including the strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programs

6. We observe that the SDGs agenda shall be country-led and tailored to respective national priority setting. Evaluations can contribute to the process of setting country-level SDG priorities through evaluability assessments and other tools and techniques. We recognize that there are different evaluation approaches, visions, models and tools available and appropriate to each organization and each country, in accordance with their respective circumstances, priorities and stakeholder engagement and governance models. We recognize that countries will lead and shape their own evaluation needs and approaches to this universal agenda, with both traditional development cooperation and ‘South-South’ collaboration partners in eventual support.

7. We recall the United Nations’ General Assembly resolution 69/237 on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level and call for national and international stakeholders, to support efforts to further strengthen the capacity for evaluation, in accordance with national policies and priorities. We note the SDGs call for global partnership and international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building and to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources. We appeal to governments, bilateral and multilateral development agencies to embrace national evaluation capacity as central priority in their programmatic and resource plans.

8. As professionals of development and evaluation, we seek to attain and uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct and professionalism. Whilst undertaking our function in response to multiple and variable jurisdictional needs and expectations; we derive our legitimacy through independence and from ultimate accountability to those impacted by development interventions. At the same time we conduct our work in transparent recognition of different roles and interests of evaluator, evaluation subject or evaluand and commissioning parties.

9. We note that statistical monitoring and reporting are important but insufficient as vehicle for learning, accountability and decision-making. We also note that ‘big data’ and technological innovation will bring new voices, volume and validity to data collection, records management and quality control. Whilst relying upon good administrative and contextual data streams and monitoring reports; evaluation is often most effective if kept as a separate and distinct governance function and professional discipline founded upon a tolerance for critical review.

10. In moving forward in support of national evaluation capacity, we recognize the following types of efforts and initiatives as among options that warrant consideration:

- Conduct of country-level ‘SDG evaluation needs’ reviews and diagnostic studies
- Evaluability assessments pertaining to individual country or sector SDG goals and targets
- Fostering of evaluation as component of national governance and public sector management reform
- Establishing national evaluation legal frameworks - legislation and policies
- Developing clear national and local sub-national level mechanism for independent evaluation of progress against the SDGs
- Assigning resources (a percentage of the initiatives’ costs) for the conduct of evaluations when realigning national plans with the SDGs and when designing/approving projects/programmes/policies
- Strengthening national and local data systems to monitor SDG progress
- Establishment of frameworks of formal competencies and professional evaluation standards
- Establishing evaluation training programmes within academic and public sector professional training institutions
- Creating opportunities for local, young and emerging evaluators
- Developing systems to promote transparent follow-up of evaluations recommendation
- Support to national, regional and global evaluation professional organizations
- Support for international forums of exchange between users and producers of evaluation, via the right of access to information, including regional workshops and web-based platforms for knowledge management

Bangkok, 30 October 2015
The conference was co-hosted with the Government of Thailand, with support from the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. In a closing ceremony, Vichit Chitimarn, Acting Director-General of the Thailand International Cooperation Agency, handed the EvalYear Torch to Shyam Prasad Bhandari, National Planning Commission, representing the Government of Nepal; Dorothy Lucks, representing EvalPartners; and Mallika Samaranayake, representing the Conclave for the Community of Evaluators of South Asia.

Engagement and commitment from UNDP regional bureaux and the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support ensured the representation of all UNDP regions, and fostered possible networking opportunities for future knowledge exchange. Several UNDP participants returned to their countries calling themselves evaluation champions, enthusiastic about prospects to enhance national evaluation capacities. Overall, 89.8 percent of participants said they were satisfied with the conference. Participants strongly endorsed its organization and design, and affirmed that sessions were relevant in light of the SDGs.

2.1.6 Evaluation policy review and revision

The UNDP Executive Board has mandated a periodic independent review of UNDP’s 2006 evaluation policy. The first review took place in 2010, and the Board approved a revised policy in 2011. A second review was conducted by an external consulting firm in 2014, and was discussed by the Board in 2014 and 2015. It assessed the performance of the UNDP evaluation function since 2011, the extent to which the organization has responded to the requirements of the evaluation policy and the status of policy implementation. It set out recommendations that require policy changes or management decisions to improve evaluation.

Elements receiving particular emphasis included the overall UNDP evaluation function, independent evaluations and decentralized evaluations. Given recurring weaknesses in the coverage and quality of decentralized evaluations, the review paid extra attention to this area, exploring reasons for the weaknesses and suggesting an appropriate course of action. Both UNDP management and the IEO issued responses to the review. The Board requested that findings and recommendations be reflected in a revised evaluation policy, which has yet to be adopted.

2.1.7 Evaluation Advisory Panel guidance and insight

The Evaluation Advisory Panel or EAP, established in 2013, is an independent external group of 11 eminent international experts on evaluation and development. It provides critical guidance and intellectual insight into the work of the IEO, helping to advance its strategic impact.

Annual deliberations with the Evaluation Advisory Panel were held from 4-7 May 2015. Several full-panel sessions tackled the most pressing issues in evaluation relevant to the IEO’s work. Training and outreach sessions open to UNDP colleagues and external
stakeholders covered topics including big data, complexity and unintended outcomes. Strategic sessions with IEO staff focused on ongoing thematic evaluations and other IEO initiatives central to the office’s programme of work. The final plenary discussion was a closed session including the IEO Director, Deputy Director and full Evaluation Advisory Panel; it recapped the meetings and discussed the IEO’s strategic direction in the coming year.

Panel members also advised on a wide array of activities throughout 2015. They:
- Reviewed inception and draft final reports of thematic evaluations;
- Provided methodological guidance, and participated in key events linked to thematic and country-level evaluations; and
- Offered guidance on staff professionalization and capacity.

The panel has helped the IEO to systematically establish consistent practices and ensure the overall quality of its work. The use of the panel will be revisited in 2016 to reflect on lessons learned from the first three years, differentiate between advisory work and quality assessment, and assure full geographical representation.

2.1.8 Support to the UNEG

The UNEG is a voluntary professional association of 46 United Nations funds, programmes, specialized agencies and affiliated organizations. The Director of UN Women’s Independent Evaluation Office chairs the group from 2015 to 2017, and the UNDP IEO Director serves as one of the Vice-Chairs. The UNEG strategy for 2014-2019 has four strategic areas of focus: (a) evaluation functions and products that uphold UNEG norms and standards; (b) evaluation in support of accountability and programme learning; (c) United Nations system-wide initiatives and emerging demands; and (d) UNEG benefits from and contributions to an enhanced global evaluation profession.

In 2015, a major focus was on the celebration of the 2015 International Year of Evaluation and advocacy of evaluation in the new global 2030 Agenda. The UN General Assembly recognized 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation through resolution 69/237, “Capacity building for the evaluation of development activities at the country level.” The global evaluation community celebrated the year with the aim of advocating and promoting evaluation and evidence-based policy-making at all levels. Over 80 events took place, and involved the passing of an Evaluation Torch. A key achievement was the inclusion of evaluation in the 2030 Agenda, with the UNEG playing a critical role in advocating the importance of evaluation during intergovernmental negotiations to shape it.

The IEO has consistently provided technical and financial services to the UNEG. In 2015, the IEO Director, as the UNEG Vice-Chair responsible for work related to strengthening evaluation functions, guided a process of updating UNEG norms and standards first developed in 2005; updating the 2008 evaluation technical competencies; and conducting peer reviews in three member agencies (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the International Trade centre, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). IEO staff participated in various UNEG working groups, including on the SDGs and evaluation, and in the newly formed Decentralized Evaluation Group.
The IEO hosts the UNEG secretariat, at an approximate cost of $291,931 in 2015 for staff (a full-time Programme Specialist, 20 percent staff time of a Executive Coordinator, and 5 percent staff time of an IT Specialist and Operations Specialist). Additional costs are incurred for office space and operating expenses.

2.1.9 The UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Since 2012, the IEO has provided inputs to the annual UN-SWAP on the extent to which UNDP evaluations approach or meet requirements in terms of integrating gender. In 2014, the UNEG updated its technical guidance note on the UN-SWAP’s Evaluation Performance Indicator.

In accordance with this, the IEO commissioned a meta-evaluation of 25 evaluation reports produced in 2015, the second assessment of its type. It improved on previous practice by adapting the analytic techniques developed for the 2015 UNDP gender evaluation, and deploying the GRES. The sample included 7 independent and 18 decentralized evaluation reports. Evaluations were coded according to the four UN-SWAP criteria on a four-point scale: 0 for missing requirements, 1 for approaching requirements, 2 for met requirements and 3 for exceeding requirements. In addition, evaluation results were coded using the GRES, which assesses results according to their quality: gender negative, gender blind, gender targeted, gender responsive and gender transformative. The composite score for all of the evaluations was ‘approaches requirements’. Using a thematic focus, UNDP’s conflict prevention and recovery and energy and environment programme areas had the highest number of reports with ‘missing requirements’. Democratic governance had the highest number of strong evaluations, and the poverty and the MDGs area was mixed. Decentralized evaluations had a lower composite score compared to independent evaluations, but also had the highest scoring as well as the weakest evaluations.

The two reports that exceeded requirements were the evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in Kyrgyzstan, and the final evaluation of the Joint Programme for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Uganda. The report with the weakest rating was the evaluation of capacity development for disaster risk management at the national, regional and local levels in Chile from 2013-2014.

The independent evaluations had a higher composite score and less variation in quality compared to decentralized evaluations. The Zimbabwe ADR was the strongest in the sample, followed by the Ethiopia ADR and the global evaluation of the Human Development Reports. The MDG evaluation report fell short with a low score of 4. Evidence of less variation in quality may be due to recent IEO criteria that support attention to gender equality in evaluation. For example, in the ADRs, a how-to note was developed in 2014 to help evaluators better assess gender mainstreaming, and gender equality and women’s empowerment considerations.

Multiple evaluations had gender dimensions included in their terms of reference, but the evaluations were gender blind, pointing to the need for greater screening of evaluation consultants on gender awareness and capacity to conduct gender-responsive evaluations. In a few cases, the terms of reference
minimally covered gender, but the evaluation report went into detail on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

This is the second year that UNDP has received the low-end UN-SWAP rating of ‘approaches requirements’. Deeper attention needs be paid organization-wide to this issue, if UNDP performance is to move towards the highest rating of ‘exceeds requirements’.

2.1.10 Evaluation Resource Centre
The Evaluation Resource Centre, or ERC is a publicly accessible online repository and data-bank of all UNDP evaluations. Managed by the IEO, it allows the public to better understand UNDP and how it performs, and facilitates UNDP’s efforts to strategically plan and effectively use evaluations for accountability, management for results and knowledge management. The repository was developed in 2002 to share all UNDP evaluations along with their plans, terms of references and management responses, it currently contains over 3,500 evaluation reports.

The IEO has periodically upgraded the Evaluation Resource Centre, keeping up with new technologies and platform capabilities. In 2015, several new features and modifications were planned to make it more user-friendly. The upgraded and revamped platform went live on 1 March 2016.

2.1.11 Communication and outreach
In 2015, the IEO effectively reached targeted audiences, enhanced awareness of its work and disseminated evaluations and other products through various communications channels. These included the Web, social media, newsletters, the Evaluation Resource Centre and webinars. To reach new audiences, and encourage broader sharing and uptake of evaluations, the IEO developed a series of innovative products. Evaluation summaries, data visualizations and micro-videos drew attention by concisely and creatively repackaging findings and highlights. Analytics for all outreach platforms indicated increased audience rates. Social media accounts tripled their growth in followers, and traffic on the IEO website was double that of 2014.

As part of championing EvalYear, the IEO coordinated several knowledge-sharing events in partnership with universities and evaluation associations. The events presented the IEO’s work and built greater awareness of the role of evaluation.

2.2 Budget and human resources
The IEO’s 2015 expenditures for evaluations and other institutional activities totalled $7.85 million, not including shared general operating expenses, of which $7.41 million came from regular resources and $439,565 from other resources. The office again came close to fully utilizing its allocation from the regular resources budget (99.8 percent of its core funding), maintaining the trend from previous years (above 95 percent).

The total volume of expenditure declined 13 percent from 2014, owing to a 6.2 percent reduction in regular UNDP funding plus a further adjustment following the decision to create a financial reserve. In addition, at the beginning of 2015, a multi-year contribution agreement with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation or NORAD came to a close. The IEO spent 86.1 percent of its total general operating (non-post) budget of $3,159,444 on activities directly related to evaluations.

The total cost of the IEO’s work in 2015 was the equivalent of approx. 0.16% of UNDP’s combined (core and non-core) annual budget.
As of January 2016, the IEO has 21 staff members, including 15 international professionals and six general service staff. In November 2015, a temporary appointment post was approved for one professional at the P3 level to strengthen the research function. In addition, the office had two P5 posts vacant for the second part of 2015, while the position for the Deputy Director was filled by May. This situation put a heavy workload on existing staff and affected the timeliness of deliverables in a few cases.

The IEO strives to achieve gender parity. Women in 2015 made up a majority of staff (64.2 percent), holding nine profession and six support staff posts. There was general parity in the recruitment of consultants. Continued strong commitment to staff development manifests in the devotion of 5 percent of staff time to learning.

### 2.3 Moving forward

#### 2.3.1 IEO programme of work, 2016-2017


#### A. THEMATIC EVALUATIONS

During the period 2016-2017 the office will continue its planned series of thematic evaluations (three have commenced, and two are in the planning stages), as follows.

**Anti-corruption**

This evaluation will examine UNDP support to anti-corruption and transparency, accountability and integrity measures for equitable governance. It will assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability at the country level against the expectations in the strategic plan in terms of (a) changes in macro policies and awareness; (b) changes in capacities of state and non-state actors; and (c) improved governance quality.

The evaluation categorizes UNDP support to anti-corruption and governance integrity under three broad streams of activity: strengthening anti-corruption policies and institutions; addressing drivers of corruption; and bringing changes in governance practices. The evaluation will be presented to the Executive Board at its second regular session 2016.

**Institutional effectiveness**

The medium-term plan includes a thematic evaluation covering UNDP institutional effectiveness, which relates to chapter V (Transforming institutional effectiveness) of the UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017. Recognizing that institutional effectiveness is important in both audit and evaluation functions, the Independent Evaluation Office and the Office of Audit and Investigations are conducting the assessment jointly, using both audit and evaluation methodologies and tools. This constitutes the first effort of UNDP to link evaluation and audit functions in this way. The objective is to assess the extent to which organizational measures taken have enhanced, or have the potential to enhance, the ability of UNDP to deliver higher-quality programming. The assessment will be presented to the Executive Board at its first regular session 2017.

**Disabilities-inclusive development**

The Office included an evaluation of the UNDP contribution to disabilities-inclusive development in its medium-term plan. In approving the plan for this evaluation, the Executive Board recognized the importance of ensuring that development support from UNDP includes and emphasizes assistance to poor and marginalized populations, in which the disabled are disproportionately included.

The work of UNDP relating to the rights and services for persons with disabilities will be considered through the four overarching principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: non-discrimination; participation and inclusion; accessibility; and accountability. These are at the core of the UNDP strategy and vision. The evaluation will consider the extent to which these principles are embraced within UNDP support to partner countries and the extent to which UNDP applies them in its own operations. It will assess results from direct
support programing, and how UNDP is mainstreaming the rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities across its poverty alleviation, capacity-building, sustainable development, and resilience programing. It will also assess whether UNDP operational and staffing systems enable and support the contributions of persons with disabilities. This evaluation will be presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session 2017.

Strategic plan and global and regional programme evaluations

The evaluation plan, 2014-2017, identifies a series of evaluations to be carried out and presented to the Executive Board at its annual session 2017:

(a) Evaluations of the five UNDP regional programmes;

(b) Evaluation of the global framework for policy support, 2014-2017;

(c) Evaluation of the UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017; and

(d) Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to South-South and triangular cooperation.

This series follows past practice, in that similar evaluations were carried out and presented to the Board at its annual session 2013. In the current plan period, the Office plans to condense and synthesize the work into two evaluations, one focused on the UNDP global and regional programmes, the other on the UNDP strategic plan. Both will be presented at the annual session 2017.

The global and regional programmes evaluation will combine the five regional programmes into one synthesis evaluation, together with an assessment of the UNDP global programme. The evaluation will consider operational and managerial as well as programmatic aspects, including: policy support; service delivery to country offices; cooperation with regional institutions; changing expectations of scope after the structural review; and resource mobilization.

The strategic plan evaluation will include a South-South cooperation module and will require a series of parallel assessments corresponding to the key outcomes delineated in the strategic plan. The primary objectives are to:

(a) Assess the performance of UNDP during the period covered by the strategic plan;

(b) Assess the usefulness of the strategic plan as a tool for guiding UNDP and managing its activities;

(c) Facilitate learning from UNDP experience during the strategic plan period; and

(d) Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UNDP overall strategy and the strategic planning process.

B. ASSESSMENTS OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

During the first half of 2016 the Independent Evaluation Office began six assessments of development results to be readied for consideration by the Executive Board in 2017. These cover Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico and Pakistan.

During 2017, the Office intends to carry out 10 more assessments (to be identified in collaboration with UNDP management) that will be ready for submission to the Executive Board in 2018, giving a total of 16 assessments for the 2016-2017 period.

2.3.2 IEO budget, 2016-2017

The IEO’s costed programme of work for 2016 is based on a UNDP Executive Board approved multi-year budget for 2015-2016 of $9.277 million per year. The Office of Financial Resource Management has allocated $6.738 million for the IEO in 2016. This amount includes a 10 per cent ‘holdback reserve’, as well $0.692 million for shared general operating expenses. The 2016 budget is $0.6 million less than the 2015 allocation. Additional funding from external sources should amount to $0.5 million in 2016. These budget reductions will leave a shortfall of nearly $1.4 million in 2016, necessitating commensurate changes in the work plan of the IEO.
The IEO estimates that its budget represents 0.16-0.18 percent of the UNDP overall (core and non-core) budget. If the total cost of decentralized evaluations is also factored in, combined organizational funding for evaluation is in the region of 0.55 percent of UNDP’s combined budget. The IEO is working with UNDP to revise its budget for evaluation to reach a 1 percent threshold for total evaluation expenditures, in line with commitments being set by other UN agencies. The proposed budgets for 2016 and 2017 are needed for the office to revamp its decentralized evaluation work, increase its workload in terms of country-level evaluations, and carry out analysis needed for regional and global programmes, and strategic plan evaluations due in 2017. The budget request is set out in Annex 1, and summarized in Figure 1.

* The allocation of regular resources funding for 2017 has not been determined. This figure is provided to show the projected shortfall if the IEO allocated the same amount of core funding in 2017 as it expects to receive in 2016.
chapter three

DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS

3.1 Overview of evaluations commissioned by country offices, and regional and policy bureaux in 2015

In 2015, 90 UNDP country offices (66 percent) commissioned 241 evaluations: 39 outcome evaluations, 183 project evaluations, and 19 UNDAF and other programmatic evaluations (Figure 2). Of these, 90 (37 percent) focused on GEF-funded projects. Regional bureaux and the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support carried out an additional 9 evaluations, bringing the total number of decentralized evaluations in 2015 to 250.
While the total number of decentralized evaluations increased from 2014, the number of country offices conducting at least one evaluation fell by 9 percent, from 75 percent of the total in 2014 to 66 percent in 2015. The breakdown of decentralized evaluations by type is consistent with past years, with three-quarters (76 percent) focused at the project level, and 16 percent at the thematic programme outcome level. The remainder include other programmatic and joint evaluations (Figure 3). While 90 country offices conducted at least one evaluation, 46 did not undertake any evaluations (Figure 4). Data since 2011 from across all regions are presented in Annex 3, Table A3.
The breakdown of the nine evaluations conducted by UNDP’s regional and policy bureaux in 2015 are presented in Figure 5. The Bureau for Policy and Programme Support completed four project evaluations, two of which were global UNDP-GEF project evaluations. The remaining five evaluations were carried out by the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Bureau for the Arab States and the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Regional Bureau for Africa and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific did not conduct evaluations in 2015.

### 3.1.1 Evaluation plan compliance

In accordance with UNDP policy, all evaluations included in evaluation plans are mandatory and require a management response. Of the 241 evaluations in 2015, 207 or 86 percent had a management response, yielding 1,805 key follow-up actions. By the
end of 2015, 21 percent of the actions had been completed, 50 percent were ongoing, and 1 percent were no longer applicable. Fifteen percent had already passed indicated due dates, and 14 percent did not have clear due dates (Figure 6).

Since 2011, country programme evaluation compliance has been measured at the end of the programme period, and based on completion of all planned evaluations. As indicated in Figure 7, of the 26 country programmes concluded in 2015, 11 or 42 percent were ‘fully compliant’ (90 percent to 100 percent of all planned evaluations were completed); 15 or 58 percent were ‘partially compliant’ (40 percent to 89.99 percent of planned evaluations were completed); and none were ‘not compliant’ (less than 39.99 percent of evaluations completed). The share of fully compliant country programmes steadily increased from 2011 to 2014, but in 2015, the share of partially compliant programmes sharply increased (Figure 8).
FIGURE 7. Evaluation plan compliance among completed country programmes, 2015

- Number of compliant country programmes
  (completed 90-100% of planned evaluations)
- Number of partially compliant country programmes
  (completed 40-89.99% of planned evaluations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of compliant programmes</th>
<th>Number of partially compliant programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Evaluation Resource Centre data as of 31 January 2016


- Fully compliant
- Partially compliant
- Not compliant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fully compliant</th>
<th>Partially compliant</th>
<th>Not compliant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Evaluation Resource Centre data as of 31 January 2016
3.1.2 Management responses

All evaluations carried out and commissioned at UNDP require a management response publicly posted in the Evaluation Resource Centre. In 2015, the 26 concluded country programmes had a total of 411 planned evaluations, 351 of which were completed (85 percent). Of these, 332 (95 percent) received a management response, an increase from 88 percent in 2014 (Annex 3, Table A1).

The implementation status of total key actions planned in response to evaluation recommendations since 2006 shows that 50 percent have been completed, 16 percent are ongoing without a due date and 29 percent are overdue (Figure 9). Among overdue actions, 46 percent have been delayed by less than three years and 20 percent have been overdue for more than five years (Figure 10).

### Figure 9: Implementation status of planned key actions by evaluation type, 2006-2015*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Completed evaluations</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Ongoing without due date</th>
<th>Ongoing with due date</th>
<th>Overdue</th>
<th>No longer applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADR</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1,246</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2,443</td>
<td>1,227</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>11,310</td>
<td>5,588</td>
<td>1,808</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>3,349</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>499</td>
<td>15,389</td>
<td>7,772</td>
<td>2,395</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>4,429</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include joint, UNDAF and other types of evaluations.
Source: Evaluation Resource Centre data as of 28 March 2016

### Figure 10: Distribution of overdue key actions by evaluation type, 2006-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More than 5 years overdue</th>
<th>3 to 5 years overdue</th>
<th>Less than 3 years overdue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADR</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>1,153</td>
<td>1,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>864</td>
<td>1,524</td>
<td>2,041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Evaluation Resource Centre data as of 28 March 2016
### 3.1.3 Monitoring and evaluation specialists

One indication of decentralized evaluation coverage is the number of UNDP staff who carry out evaluation-related tasks. Typically, country offices and bureaux hire staff to handle a mix of M&E functions. Between 2012 and 2014, the number of country offices with at least one full-time M&E specialist and the total number of M&E specialists in country offices increased. In 2012, 51 countries had M&E capacity, rising to 71 in 2013 and 105 in 2014. In 2015, in the midst of significant structural change at UNDP, this upward trend ended; just 71 country offices reported having M&E capacity.

Another useful proxy for decentralized evaluation follow-through is the total number of M&E staff, recognizing that some country office M&E specialist have more than one. As shown in Figure 11, the total number in country offices is now 83, including both full-time and part-time staff.

Despite a corporate reorganization that emphasized expanded technical expertise at the regional level, the number of M&E staff in regional bureaux declined from 15 staff in 2014 to 12 in 2015 (Figure 12).
### 3.1.4 Evaluation resources

The total UNDP budget for decentralized evaluation in 2015 can be estimated by tabulating the budgets of all decentralized evaluations reported by bureaux and country offices to the Evaluation Resource Centre, and adding the estimated time allotment for evaluation-related activities of M&E advisers in the regional bureaux and country offices. In the past, only the decentralized budgets were reported. This underestimated total financial support and could not be compared to IEO budgets—which cover both general operating expenses and staff costs. When also taking into account staff time and related costs, UNDP spent an estimated $20.35 million on decentralized evaluations in 2015, representing approximately 0.39 percent of overall UNDP expenditures. Adding in expenditures from the IEO of $7.8 million to cover general operating expenses and staff costs, total evaluation expenditures for independent and decentralized evaluations were $28.2 million, 0.55 percent of all UNDP expenditures (Figure 13).8

![FIGURE 13. Expenditures for independent and decentralized evaluations](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>Evaluation cost ($ millions)</th>
<th>Human resource cost ($ millions)</th>
<th>Total ($ millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Country offices</td>
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<td>18.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEO</td>
<td>4.65</td>
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<td>7.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.01</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.2 IEO decentralized evaluation assessment strategy**

In 2016, the IEO proposed that the UNDP Executive Board approve scaled-up support to decentralized evaluation, an area of work largely suspended in 2014 in light of the evaluation policy review process. It noted a number of challenges and weaknesses in decentralized evaluation, highlighting inconsistencies in management and insufficient budgeting, leading to concerns over impartiality, uneven quality and variable utility. The IEO decentralized evaluation quality assessment system has not been sufficiently robust to focus attention on these issues.

In response, UNDP management has decided to ramp up monitoring and support for decentralized evaluation across the organization. A new global programme, “Strengthening UNDP country-level capacities for evaluation,” aims to ensure that:

1. UNDP standards, business processes and tools are in place to enable effective decentralized evaluations;

2. Quality assurance mechanisms for decentralized evaluations are established in UNDP regional centres;
3. Country office capacities and processes to design and undertake high quality evaluations are in place; and

4. Global UNDP initiatives/projects in support of national monitoring and evaluation capacities are designed and approved.

In accordance with the UNDP evaluation policy, the IEO, on behalf of UNDP and its associated funds and programmes: a) sets evaluation standards for planning, conducting and using decentralized evaluations, and assesses the quality of evaluation reports; b) disseminates methodologies and good practice standards for evaluation management; c) provides a roster of evaluation experts; d) supports a network of evaluation practitioners; and e) maintains a public repository of evaluation resources to facilitate shared knowledge. The IEO continued in 2015 to carry out most of these responsibilities, except the decentralized evaluation quality assessment work, given the 2014 suspension.

The IEO held off revising the decentralized evaluation system in 2015, anticipating that the Board would approve a revised evaluation policy at its annual session, and thereby clarify roles and responsibilities for decentralized evaluation. Although a revised policy has yet to be adopted, it is likely that the IEO’s central role in decentralized evaluation will continue and may expand. The IEO intends to move forward in 2016 to reinstitute an improved decentralized evaluation quality assessment system.

In August 2015, the IEO informally presented to the Executive Board a strategy to strengthen and restart its decentralized evaluation work. It includes:

1. Ex ante reviews of country office evaluation plans;
2. Upgrading and maintaining the evaluation consultant roster;
3. Upgrading and maintaining the Evaluation Resource Centre;
4. Comprehensive ex post quality assessments of decentralized evaluation reports;
5. Greater inclusion of UNCDF and UNV in the decentralized evaluation assessment system;
6. Development of decentralized evaluation guidance and the evaluation-related sections of the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results;
7. Development of evaluation training for M&E focal points at the headquarters, regional and country office levels;
8. Monitoring of UNDP follow-up/implementation of evaluation recommendations; and
9. A meta-level assessment of decentralized evaluations, including a synthesis of key lessons learned.

In line with this strategy, the IEO plans to use existing staff and consultants during 2016 to revise and renew its work in two activities:

- Quality assessment of all decentralized evaluations, including through providing feedback to regional bureaux and country offices on strengthening this work, and highlighting exemplary examples; and
- Ex ante reviews of country office evaluation plans, with recommendations on improving these to maximize learning.

Starting in 2017, the IEO proposes to expand its decentralized evaluation work to cover the rest of the strategy. Doing so will require additional financial and human resources, and the IEO intends to reconfigure its workforce to create a dedicated unit to focus on decentralized evaluation.
3.3 Achievements, challenges and strategies in decentralized evaluation conducted by UNDP policy and programme units

This section presents key achievements and challenges in 2015 as reported by UNDP’s policy and programme units. Their ongoing and future strategies for improving the quality of decentralized evaluations are discussed, together with potential implications.

3.3.1 Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

Key achievements and challenges

The Bureau for Policy and Programme Support is responsible for policy development and advice, data analytics and reporting of results, setting quality standards for programming (including social and environmental standards, and those related to gender equality and capacity development), development of policies and guidance on design and implementation of programmes and projects, risk management, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management. As part of continuous efforts to strengthen results-based management concepts and practices, the bureau has rolled out the new Project Quality Assurance System—a tool to improve planning, design and M&E. This quality assurance system in combination with a new UNDP monitoring policy will contribute to the enhancement of the measurability of results and evaluability of projects. In addition, the bureau has developed a strategy for improving the quality of decentralized evaluations, which will be implemented throughout 2016-2017. This strategy focuses on:

- Strengthening norms and guidelines for evidence-based, results-oriented strategic planning, programme implementation and decision-making, so as to enhance the basis for evaluation;
- Supporting capacity development in monitoring, reporting and evaluation that produces relevant and accurate evidence on organizational effectiveness, results and impacts;
- Supporting the use of evaluations in achieving better organizational effectiveness, results and impacts through higher quality and impartial decentralized evaluations; and
- Enhancing policies, processes, capacities and systems to better capture, collect, share and use evaluation knowledge, and support organizational learning.

The bureau’s evaluation activities in 2015 involved finalizing six thematic evaluations and three GEF-funded project evaluations.

Strategy for improving evaluation quality and implications

In 2016, the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support will coordinate implementation of key actions of the UNDP strategy for improving the quality of decentralized evaluations. This will commence with the design of a quality assurance system for decentralized evaluations, followed by the development of new guidance for decentralized evaluations in close collaboration with the IEO. In addition, the bureau will work closely with the IEO in developing the system and processes for generation, extraction and validation of evaluation lessons learned, and stimulating their use for quality programming and achievement of results. These efforts will be supported by the dedicated knowledge network established for UNDP evaluation practitioners.
3.3.2 Regional bureaux

Among UNDP’s five regional bureaux, overall findings from 2015 included:

1. Efforts to strengthen results-based management approaches and promote an evaluation culture have gained momentum. Collaboration with the Development Impact Group in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support has encouraged application of decentralized evaluation analytics. Training workshops for country office staff on improving monitoring and evaluation focused on effective reporting for the results-oriented annual report system, inputs to integrated resources and results frameworks, better indicators for country programme documents, responding to assessment criteria as required by project/programme appraisal committees and preparation of evaluation plans.

2. The lack of country office staff capacity in evaluation, a small pool of good evaluators, and the limited availability of quality data have continued to be common challenges. Several regions reported that UNV experts will be deployed to regional hubs to supplement M&E capacity.

3. A number of concrete actions and approaches have been planned or are underway to bolster evaluation quality in countries, including through improved evaluator rosters, the engagement of experts in reference groups, strengthened technical support and quality assurance, and steps to enhance knowledge management.
Key achievements and challenges

In 2015, the Regional Bureau for Africa’s Results-Based Management Team facilitated the implementation of evaluation recommendations by country offices, adjustments of evaluation plans and submission of management responses based on Decentralized Evaluation Analytics. A preliminary performance analysis of UNDP’s global, regional and country level portfolio served as a concrete step towards a corporate commitment to reform the decentralized evaluation function.

After the analytics showed that some evaluation criteria were not rated, the Results-Based Management Team drafted a methodological approach to rate all criteria. When this is finalized, approved ratings will be standardized across all evaluations.

The team developed a lessons learned report on all country programme documents and country programme action plans, based on evaluations conducted between 2012 and 2015. The report showcased what worked, what did not and why, and drew lessons and made recommendations on the way forward. This will be used for future programmatic decisions and broader knowledge generation on related policy and programming work.

A database of evaluators is being developed to update the evaluation roster in the Evaluation Resource Centre. The regional bureau is actively seeking to include new evaluators who can contribute fresh perspectives and innovative approaches.

Challenges in the region include:

- The link between evaluations and outcome areas is missing. As observed in the Evaluation Resource Centre, some evaluations still did not indicate connections to outcome areas of the UNDP Strategic Plan. Some programme cycles are still aligned with the previous Strategic Plan. Effective communications with country offices will support greater alignment.
- Completing evaluations as planned in the Evaluation Resource Centre still poses a challenge for most countries. In some country offices, this may be due to capacity limitations or political challenges. There are cases where constant reminders have to be sent before the process is initiated.
- Weaknesses in project monitoring mechanisms in country offices indicate a lack of disaggregated basic data to support evaluation conclusions and analysis.

Strategy for improving evaluation quality and implications

To strengthen results-based management and M&E, the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa has developed a strategy to improve decision-making, and results-based planning and reporting, and ensure that all country offices are fully equipped to deliver strong results corroborated by evidence and data. The strategy will cover five areas:

1. **Strategic advice and support to regional and country programmes** to ensure strong links between overall bureau strategy and programme implementation. This area supports effective programme design at the planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation stages. It also backs timely and informed decision-making through the monitoring and analysis of data on key policy and programme issues, and the provision of strategic advice.

2. **Tracking performance and compliance** will entail improving awareness of UNDP evaluation policy and upholding adherence in planning, monitoring and evaluation. The process will ensure that corporate standards and requirements are reflected in results-oriented annual reports, integrated work plans and project quality assurance.

3. **Capacity-building and partnership** will include advising bureau senior
management on an effective regional strategy; overseeing country office plans to improve capacities for basic results-based planning, data collection and survey methods; guiding proactive interventions with country offices facing particular challenges in setting up results measurement frameworks, including in designing indicators, baselines, milestones and targets against the Strategic Plan integrated resources and results frameworks and their respective country programme documents; and building the capacity of the Countries Support Team to assure the quality of results frameworks, M&E plans, integrated work plan monitoring data and results reporting.

4. **Knowledge management and codification of lessons learned** will focus on leading regional communities of practice and other knowledge management mechanisms to actively promote exchanges of experiences and good practices in planning monitoring and evaluation.

5. **Networking and information sharing** includes working with thematic clusters and the knowledge management and communications team to share lessons and best practices.

To build a strong results-based management culture and improve the quality of programmes and project planning, the Results-Based Management Team and the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support/Development Impact Group conducted training workshops in results-based management and corporate planning for all country offices in the region. More than 90 staff members involved in programme management developed capacities and knowledge to ensure their country offices can meet corporate project quality assurance standards. The training covered topics related to the new corporate planning system, including integrated work plans, results-oriented annual reports, the development of evidence exercise, decentralized evaluations, and the new format of the country programme document and its assessment criteria. There has been marked improvement in developing terms of reference for as well as monitoring evaluation processes.

As part of the training, a presentation was made on changes to the Evaluation Resource Centre. Feedback showed a willingness to start using the system. The Results-Based Management Team is continuing to test and evaluate functionality as more and more country offices try the platform.

A M&E capacity needs assessment survey of country offices is in process. It is expected to indicate needed capacities to improve decentralized evaluation and accountability for results.

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**Regional Bureau for Arab States**

**Key achievements and challenges**

As part of the rollout of corporate tools to implement the UNDP Strategic Plan, and building on progress at the programme alignment workshops in 2014, the Regional Bureau for the Arab States convened a workshop for all 18 country offices on results-based management in 2015 to brief them on new corporate standards and supporting tools and systems. The workshops included the following elements:

- An introduction to relevant standards, plans and policies, such as the UNDP Strategic Plan and integrated resources and results framework, programme and project quality assurance, the new monitoring and evaluation policy, and social and environmental standards, with a focus on how these reinforce each other.

- An introduction to new tools, such as the country programme document template, project document template, programme appraisal committee process, results-oriented annual report format, Gender Marker, etc., emphasizing how these are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.
• An introduction to corporate planning systems and links to Atlas, the Evaluation Resource Centre, the quality assurance site, the International Aid Transparency Initiative space, the integrated work plan, the results-oriented annual report site, etc., emphasizing the one system approach.

Several sessions addressed the M&E policy. A session on decentralized evaluations discussed evaluation compliance and covered Evaluation Resource Centre requirements. A rich discussion ensued on country challenges with compliance, commissioning evaluations and producing quality reports.

The Regional Bureau for the Arab States is investing in improved country office capacities for planning, monitoring and reporting, which will eventually lead to better data that can enrich evaluations. Increased focus by the bureau on results-based management will contribute to this end as well.

Throughout 2015, the bureau played a significant role in advising country offices on various results-based management initiatives/exercises, which resulted in improved data and compliance:

1. Support to country programme document preparation: Strong emphasis was placed on the use of evidence, building on the programme alignment methodology.

2. Integrated results and resources framework: Guidance and technical support were provided on programme/project links and various indicators, with attention to how to collect data and report on indicators.

3. Country programme indicators: Guidance and technical support during the review of indicators helped country offices have a more solid basis for evaluation.

4. Evaluation plan review and compliance with the Evaluation Resource Centre: As part of the 2015 integrated evidence review reports, and during the results-based management workshop and the results-oriented annual report exercise, comprehensive feedback was provided on the centre and required steps for compliance.

5. 2015 results-oriented annual report: Comprehensive feedback on quality covered all country office data in the corporate planning system (indicator data, project status data, etc.) as well as the use of evidence, including evaluations.

6. Project Quality Assurance Pilot—Phase II: Half the country offices took part in the second phase of the pilot, with a focus on applying social and environmental standards. A total of 134 projects were quality-assured with standards harmonized with the evaluation criteria, focussing on strategy, relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, social and environmental standards, management and monitoring, etc.

Despite good progress, challenges remained, including:

1. Limited capacity in results-based management in some country offices, resulting in poorly designed projects and results frameworks, and inadequate use of evidence in programme design and planning.

2. Poor understanding of key components of decentralized evaluations, in particular manifesting in the unclear design of evaluations; lack of clear communication of objectives, expectations or standards; and limited data provided to the evaluator. Evaluation terms of reference often lack an outline of key elements of the evaluation report, such as the need to include lessons learned, project ratings, and particular analyses of partnerships and an enabling environment.

3. Insufficient funding for conducting planned outcome and thematic evaluations, which are frequently perceived as UNDP reports; national counterparts and donors tend to prefer project evaluations.

4. Insufficient funds for studies to gather baseline data as well as a lack of funds for
required assessments of social and environmental standards to inform planning and design.

5. **Country offices often replace outcome evaluations with ADRs**, but some of these recently have taken more than two years, resulting in findings no longer being relevant for the next programme cycle, particularly in rapidly changing crisis contexts.

6. **Limited capacity of implementing partners and civil society organizations in results-based management**, project monitoring, data collection and management, resulting in weak reporting and a shaky foundation for evaluations of projects and programmes.

7. **Lack/low availability of national data, especially in crisis contexts**, where data collection is not an immediate priority.

8. **Limited availability of qualified evaluators and especially Arabic-speaking evaluators.** The Amman regional hub is currently exploring a regional roster based on a strong call for this from country offices. One country office that hired a vetted consultant from the global evaluation roster found the quality of products very poor. It would be useful if the IEO reviewed its roster and institutionalized a feedback mechanism for country offices. The roster needs be regularly updated.

9. **Insecurity imposes major** challenges to evaluations and evidence in general. Further guidance is being requested on how to manage these situations, such as how best to use third-party data sources, what kinds of sources are acceptable, etc.

10. **Workload challenges** related to numerous initiatives being rolled out at the same time, including on results, the results-oriented annual report, the ongoing update of the Evaluation Resource Centre, etc.

11. **A lack of harmonization between the Evaluation Resource Centre and other UNDP systems, including the results-oriented annual report**, means that often country offices provide the same information in different systems.

**Strategy for improving evaluation quality and implications**

The regional bureau will continue to focus on **improving country office understanding of results-based management**, and capacities in planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. It will emphasize proper **planning** in the formulation of country programme documents and the development of projects. Dedicated support to countries devising their country programme documents is currently being provided with a focus on theories of change and improved results and resources frameworks aligned to the UNDP Strategic Plan. Evaluation plans are being reviewed as part of the country programme document approval process.

The bureau will continue to bolster country office **monitoring and reporting** capacities by providing technical support to improve data for the corporate planning system and results-oriented annual report. It will emphasize the use of evidence during the entire programme and project cycle, and give extra attention to building capacities for decentralized country evaluations.

The **Results-Based Management Specialist in Amman will be joined in 2016 by a UNV M&E Specialist** to increase support to country offices. The regional bureau’s Results-Based Management Team will continue to play a critical role in strengthening evaluation capacities, designing results frameworks and ongoing monitoring. It will provide day-to-day support and long-term capacity building, including through knowledge sharing and trainings. Another results-based training workshop is planned for 2016. The team will also work closely with desk officers and the regional programme team to ensure hands-on support for the design of evaluations.
Key achievements and challenges

In 2015, there were four key achievements in strengthening the evaluation function and quality in Asia and the Pacific:

- Improving the quality of UNDAF evaluations through more active participation by the United Nations Evaluation Development Group in Asia-Pacific—a network of evaluation specialists from UN regional offices. UNDP co-chaired the group in 2015 as it provided technical support and guidance to UN country teams in Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam. This was in addition to the regional five-day “Evaluation in the UN Context” training conducted in September 2015 for 30 UN staff from the region. Targeted training sessions were also delivered to UN country teams in Cambodia and Lao People’s Democratic Republic; the former to jumpstart the M&E system of their UNDAF and the latter to contribute to UNDAF formulation. The ADR in Malaysia, which informed its country programme document, was approved by the UNDP Executive Board in September 2015, and widely shared and used to position the UNDP future programme there.

- Joining the IEO to co-organize the Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity in Bangkok in October 2015. The conference brought to the fore the role of evaluation in the SDG roll-out. Feedback from participating governments has informed formulation of the UNDP SDG service offering in Asia and the Pacific.

- Conducting a regional and first of its kind meta-evaluation of UNDP results in Asia and the Pacific, with the final report expected to be circulated in 2016.


There have been challenges in the region in identifying qualified consultants, with several country offices noting they received technically weak bidding proposals. A few offices had issues with ensuring timely and meaningful follow-up on evaluation findings, and using these for evidence-based decision-making and programme/project course correction.

Strategy for improving evaluation quality and implications

Going forward, the regional bureau will continue implementing its strategy from 2015, with a special focus on:

1. **Stronger quality assurance of country programme document/country programme action plan evaluations** in the penultimate year of the country programme, complementing ongoing efforts on the UNDAF evaluations mentioned above, and promoting coordination between UNDP country programme/outcome and UNDAF evaluations;

2. **Providing technical support to improve the quality and use of evaluations**, including by looking into ways to ensure the quality of decentralized country office evaluations, to the extent possible given limited capacity and resources. This will include provision of advisory services to review terms of reference; reviewing inception and draft evaluation reports based on requests from country offices; exchanges of good practices, tools and knowledge; and training.

Some selected approaches by country offices will bolster the overall regional strategy:
• Include a representative from the national evaluation association in the evaluation reference group to improve evaluation quality;

• Involve professional evaluation officers from national ministries in the evaluation reference group;

• Include different target groups in designing and conducting evaluations, and disseminating findings, which will help ensure that these processes are more valid, current and relevant;

• Developed a web-based M&E system covering all aspects of the project life cycle. An ‘evaluation’ module will include a complete database of survey data (with GPS coordinates for online verification of surveyed households/individuals), online profiles of studies/evaluations conducted, a database of evaluation recommendations, management responses, agreed actions, timelines and responsible individuals.

Corporately, the regional bureau sees the need for improvements in the consultant roster available through the Evaluation Resource Centre. It should be expanded to include qualified evaluation consultants with specific expertise in different subregions.

Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS

Key achievements and challenges

2015 was the last year of the programme cycle for 11 country offices: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. These transitioned to a new programme cycle, developing new country programme documents based on thematic areas and guiding principles of the UNDP Strategic Plan. Offices held trainings and workshops related to new templates and requirements, including on results-based management, monitoring and evaluation. Positive impacts of the trainings were reflected in stronger country programme documents, as assessed by the programme appraisal committees.

Alignment to the Strategic Plan was relevant for other offices as well. Corporate programme alignment guidance, mainly aimed at improving the quality of programmes, including through results-based management, monitoring and evaluation, was presented in dedicated workshops for 12 country offices: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

A project quality assurance tool was piloted in 10 offices: Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan and Turkey. It will be launched in all offices in the region in 2016 to improve project quality and evaluability.

The Istanbul Regional Hub has two vetted rosters related to country programme and UNDAF development, and monitoring and evaluation. These were reviewed and expanded in 2015 to ensure that country offices have quick and easy access to expertise.

In 2015, the mid-term review of the regional programme began; it will feed into the mid-term review of the UNDP Strategic Plan. Preliminary findings suggest that ongoing efforts to strengthen monitoring and quality assurance are resulting in improved quality of programme management, greater development effectiveness and better delivery of results. In 2016, the Istanbul Regional Hub will work on the management response to follow up on review recommendations.

Follow-up on the final terminal evaluation of the first phase of the project “Improving environmental monitoring in the Black Sea”
resulted in addressing recommendations within the second phase, mainly on strengthening cooperation and creating better synergies with partners working on similar issues.

A regional delegation participated in the Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity in 2015. It identified four critical challenges to monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs in the region: data, coordination (vertical and horizontal), capacities and resources. It mapped targets for 2030, which included better coordination of efforts, nationally driven evaluations, greater public awareness and engagement, improved M&E capacities, higher quality data and evidence-based policy-making.

**Strategy for improving evaluation quality and implications**

Subject to funding, the Istanbul Regional Hub will have additional staff capacity in 2016, including a new UNV M&E Officer to help improve the quality of decentralized evaluations in country offices. A review of existing M&E capacities and functions in country offices will be conducted and options suggested to ensure capacities are adequate. Appropriate mechanisms will be established in line with the Development Impact Group Plan for improving decentralized evaluations.

There is a recurring need to support and strengthen the M&E capacities of country offices, particularly those without dedicated M&E officers. This applies to both programme and project evaluations, particularly in linking UNDP contributions to UNDAF annual reviews/mid-term review processes, and strongly connecting and measuring project contributions to programme results.

Regional meetings, training in country offices, and peer-to-peer support between offices will contribute to capacity development.

Corporate initiatives to reform programme and project management guidance are critical in improving evaluations. They will assure better quality programmes and projects with greater evaluability. The roll-out and follow-up quality assurance of reforms in the region will be initiated and closely managed. The regional bureau will also try to identify entry points for innovation in project management, explore and test these with selected country offices, design tailored tools to operationalize them and develop a training plan for staff to use them.

In 2016, the regional bureau will roll out the newly designed Knowledge Management Hub, with a specific focus on information management and social networking. It will serve as a platform for facilitating ongoing learning on results-based management, monitoring and evaluation.

Key achievements and challenges

The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean continued its role of facilitator of exchanges among country offices through the M&E Officers Network, and addressed concerns regarding evaluation practices by narrowing information gaps, including those related to other UN entities and key regional partners.

The bureau continued to support decentralized evaluations by country offices and the 2014-2017 regional programme with a Monitoring and Planning Regional Adviser who took office in September, and a Monitoring and Planning Unit (previously the Evaluation Unit). The unit provided advice and technical support to 26 country offices and the regional programme to strengthen the quality and use of evaluations and develop capacities in results-based management. Through a regional network of experts, the bureau identified resources for quality evaluations and programming.

As a part of the Interagency Work Group on Evaluation, managed by the regional office of the United Nations Development Group, the regional bureau supported the design and management of UNDAF evaluations. At
country and regional level, UNDP is involved in the design and quality assurance of joint evaluations based on common UN standards and guidelines.

The bureau also engaged proactively in the Project Quality Assurance pilot, programmatic alignment with the UNDP Strategic Plan and the integrated resources and results framework, and the publication of data on the International Aid Transparency Initiative portal.

Some key challenges include:

- The workload of M&E officers and focal points in country offices is in many cases overwhelming, often at the expense of exchanging good practices. Even as the M&E function has become a very strategic position in many offices, everything related to it is typically assigned to one person on a part-time basis.

- There is a need to enhance country office M&E capacities on sustainable development topics and initiatives.

- Many country offices have had difficulties finding qualified consultants to conduct decentralized evaluations, even with the support of the regional bureau. The financial situation of many offices has increased pressure on the evaluation function to show results, but with fewer resources for quality evaluations. The new M&E policy should help alleviate this concern.

- Outcome evaluations do not have adequate funding as they do not have specific project or country office funding, an issue that should be addressed in the new M&E policy.

- There needs to be additional follow-up on management responses to decentralized evaluations to use lessons learned and enhance programme quality.

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The regional bureau will continue to support the evaluation function and practices defined in the UNDP evaluation policy. It will strengthen a results-based management culture, support programme quality assurance and enhance the quality of country office evaluations.

Better programming:

- Support country offices in applying results-based management and programme quality assurance, and in improving theories of change, indicators, results frameworks and results chains through face-to-face trainings, webinars and individual follow-up.

- Support countries in applying and contributing to the UNDP strategic plan, integrated results and resources framework indicators, and country programme document monitoring.

Evaluation plans:

- Engage with country offices in the development of new country programme documents to incorporate coherent theories of changes, better indicators and feasible evaluation plans.

- Follow-up on compliance with country office evaluation plans and update the Evaluation Resource Centre platform (elaboration of a periodic evaluation plan status report).

Management of decentralized evaluations:

- Reflect technical support to the design of decentralized evaluations in the terms of reference, in particular for outcome evaluations, according to the norms and guidance of UNDP and the UNEG.

- Provide methodological support for evaluations managed by country offices, including guidance for the evaluation reference groups, reference materials, virtual meetings to discuss methodologies, recommendations on evaluation management tools and technical feedback on evaluation products (especially inception reports).

Use of evaluations:

- Encourage country offices to use recommendations in management responses to improve programming.
• Promote use of findings and recommendations in country office reports and discussions with counterparts and partners.

• The regional bureau will continue to participate in the selection panels of new country office M&E officers as requested. It will provide structured inductions (virtual or face-to-face) to M&E officers/focal points on UNEG and UNDP guidelines and corporate tools on topics such as results-based management, quality assurance and evaluation for results.

• A new roster of pre-approved experts in results-based management and evaluation will be launched in 2016, superseding the Regional Associate Expert Network. Country offices face difficulties finding evaluators with knowledge in the different subregions; who can manage the different languages of the region (Spanish, English, French or Portuguese); and who understand UNDP’s standards and policies, especially for outcome evaluations. The roster of pre-approved experts will facilitate the process and be enhanced on a regular basis.

• The regional bureau will continue to facilitate the Regional Community of Practice on Evaluation to encourage the exchange of experiences and knowledge.

3.3.3 Examples of exemplary evaluations as reported by UNDP’s five regional bureaux

Regional Bureau for Africa

Final Evaluation of the Multifunction Solar Platform Project to Combat Poverty in Mauritania

• The multifunction solar platform project aims to establish 24 multifunction solar platforms for fighting rural poverty. It is jointly funded by UNDP, the United States Agency for International Development, the United States Embassy and the Government of Mauritania, and implemented in collaboration with the National Agency for Universal Access, with total funding of $1,568,000. Areas selected for the project are among those with high poverty rates and the most limited access to energy.

• The project’s target groups are people living in extreme poverty and female-headed households. The project has been widely replicated in Africa, but the Mauritanian experience was the first to become entirely solar (other platforms use diesel).

• The conclusions and recommendations of a project evaluation are being used to develop a large-scale national programme on multifunction solar platforms. Platform modules are also being integrated in some country office development projects to support income generation.

• Beneficiary communities have welcomed the platforms as providing income activities that have improved their lives, with changes in living conditions particularly significant among women. Major signs of progress include higher revenues and financial capacities, stronger associations and technical capabilities, and growing adherence to the concept of multifunction platforms.
Regional Bureau for Arab States

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ecovillage Project in Senegal

- The project aims to develop and test a model of an ‘ecovillage’ that meets human needs and contributes to biodiversity conservation and low-emissions development. It entails planning land use, testing methods of community management of natural resources, reducing greenhouse gases and increasing carbon sequestration in 10 ecovillages. It also involves job creation and improved living conditions through the management of natural resources and enhancement of ecosystem services.

- Assessing the first model ecovillage has been important in terms of sustainability and scalability. This is an integrated project that seeks to address environmental issues (rational use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation), social issues (organizational management committees) and economic issues (development of income-generation activities).

- Initially, 10 ecovillages were planned. The mid-term evaluation proposed raising this target to 84 ecovillages, to avoid polarizing neighbouring communities. The evaluation also stressed concentrating on core business through a priority action plan, and abandoning activities that are no longer relevant.

End-of-project Evaluation of the Sudan National Adaptation Plan of Action Follow-up Project

The project objective was “to implement an urgent set of adaptation-focused measures that will minimize and reverse the food insecurity of small-scale farmers and pastoralists, thereby reducing vulnerability of rural communities resulting from climate change, including variability.” The project operated in four regions and had three outcomes:

- Resilience of food production systems and food insecure communities in the face of climate change;

- Institutional and individual capacities to implement climate risk management responses in the agriculture sector strengthened; and

- A better understanding of lessons learned, and emerging best practices captured and up-scaled at the national level.

The project evaluation sought to determine whether or not the project achieved its intended outcomes, with a focus on effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness. It also highlighted issues requiring attention in similar programmes, and presented lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. The evaluation is important because it affirmed that the project could be scaled up and documented several recommendations for future programming. A management response plan was agreed upon and is on track.

Conducted in March 2015, the evaluation subsequently helped shape a new Canadian International Development Agency funded programme in October 2015. It will be evaluated by the end of 2016/early 2017 to capture further lessons learned and share best practices. To improve project monitoring, evaluation and reporting, an M&E officer was recruited to better monitor and document project implementation and results. The officer helped as well as to refine the project’s logical framework, including through a thorough review of project indicators.
The ART GOLD Lebanon programme is part of the ART global initiative designed by a group of UN entities under UNDP leadership (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Development Fund for Women; World Health Organization; United Nations Institute for Training and Research and United Nations Office for Project Services). ART GOLD is based on a cooperation framework between local, national and international partners interested in combining and coordinating efforts to achieve the MDGs, and to contribute to local governance, decentralization and balanced socioeconomic development in the medium and long term.

The ART GOLD Methodology relies on the following basic principles:

- Participatory approaches, ensured through the active involvement of local working groups, thematic working groups and regional working groups in decision-making, needs identification and prioritization, strategic planning, etc. While ART GOLD’s participatory approach is not an end in itself, it is nevertheless its core means to achieve long-term and sustainable human development.

- Implementation of actions and projects in the framework of local and regional development objectives and strategies shared by local actors, hence avoiding financial dispersion and scattering of initiatives.

- Links between local actions and planning, and national initiatives and policies, in issues of local development.

- Multilateralism, which harmonizes efforts, and enables several donors and partners to support and actively participate in projects and processes, in line with the mult donor framework adopted by the programme.

- Decentralized cooperation, the main partnership modality advocated and adopted by ART GOLD, as it involves social and economic actors from both North and South, in an egalitarian relationship.

- Local economic development support, through valorizing typical products, ensuring their qualitative improvement for territorial marketing, and establishing a comprehensive territorial system for supporting long term socioeconomic development, such as through local economic development agencies.

ART GOLD was the main arm of UNDP support to local development in Lebanon. The UNDP country office used the recommendations and lessons from the final evaluation to shape participatory methodologies for linking humanitarian and development objectives in the context of the Syrian crisis.

The working group methodology, for example, proved to be a successful tool during stable periods and was transformed into a rapid, efficient assessment methodology for crisis response. Referred to as the Maps of Risks and Resources methodology, it is conflict-sensitive, and can facilitate dialogue and collaboration among local stakeholders to identify risks, needs and resources; establish priorities and identify solutions. To ensure the participation of communities as a whole, municipal working groups are formed, involving local authorities, civil society and the private sector. The result of the assessment is a community action plan with priorities for each sector. Around 140 of the most vulnerable communities with the highest shares of refugees have been assessed.
Impact Evaluation of the Community Resilience Project in Swat, Pakistan

The Malakand community resilience project was designed in the wake of the 2009 military operations in Swat followed by the 2010 floods. Both events caused major devastation in the district. UNDP, with the financial assistance of the Saudi Fund for Development, launched a community infrastructure project in six tehsils, with a social mobilization component to engage communities, increase their ownership and foster social cohesion.

An impact evaluation was conducted for the period 2012-2015, during which 623 community infrastructure schemes, such as link roads, small bridges, culverts and drainage/irrigation channels, were rehabilitated. The evaluation had a well-formulated plan and process, developed through intensive consultations between UNDP and the consultancy firm. The evaluation report covers all aspects anticipated by the project. The sample size was carefully selected, and the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods helped triangulate the findings.

Key lessons learned and recommendations are incorporated in the project annual work plan for 2016, such as greater inclusion of local councils and line agencies, broader community participation in the social mobilization process to avoid community conflicts, and increased coordination with government line departments.

Outcome Evaluation in the Practice Area of Energy and Environment in Kazakhstan

The Evaluation Plan of UNDP Kazakhstan for 2010-2015 stipulated an outcome evaluation to assess the impact of UNDP’s development assistance under Outcome 3 of the Country Programme Action Plan 2010-2015, in the area of the environment and climate change. This stated that: “The Government, industries and civil society take steps to adapt to climate change and mitigate its impact through energy efficiency measures and climate change adaptation policies.”

The evaluation commissioned for this task covered seven projects:
1. Removing barriers to energy efficiency in municipal heat and hot water supplies;
2. Energy efficient design and construction in the residential sector;
3. Development and probation of the Housing-Municipal Building Maintenance Services’ Modernization and Management Model for small populated areas to ensure safety, improve quality of life and environmental protection;
4. Demonstration of improved energy efficiency in public buildings per the example of School No. 25;
5. Promotion of energy-efficient lighting;
6. City of Almaty sustainable transport; and
7. Assistance to the Republic of Kazakhstan in strengthening interregional cooperation for the promotion of green growth and implementation of the Astana ‘Green Bridge’ Initiative.

The outcome evaluation aimed at fine-tuning UNDP’s environment programme, including by providing the most optimal portfolio balance and structure for the 2016-2020 programme cycle. The seven projects had different sources of funding, but an extensive share of financial resources came from the GEF.
Outcome evaluation in the Practice Area of Energy and Environment in Kazakhstan (cont’d)

The evaluation report clearly outlined the main objectives and methodology, provided descriptive overviews and analysed UNDP’s contribution based on set criteria. It drew on ample data from various sources, including UNDP staff, government stakeholders and non-governmental organizations. Tools for data collection were desk reviews, interviews with stakeholders and field visits. The process built a substantial foundation for the report and contributed to different angles of analysis, culminating in concise conclusions and recommendations.

With the new country programme document containing an urban development output, the evaluation has been useful in developing new, results-focused projects. Substantive recommendations, both operational and thematic, focused on how UNDP should adjust its partnership arrangements, resource mobilization strategies, working methods and/or management structures. Changes being implemented include:

- The country office will make partnership-building a major priority, and fully include related activities in work plans.
- Programme and project teams will diversify support to national partners in aligning with the SDGs. Indicators on social and human development will direct more attention to the ‘spillover’ effects of energy-related pilots in order to evaluate more comprehensively impacts on institutional and social development, and employment.
- The evaluation proved that the energy efficiency portfolio is fully in line with government priorities to promote sustainable development, and strengthen economic and energy independence through resource efficiency and climate resilient growth. The country office has many opportunities to provide support, and will be proactive in engaging government and parliamentary representatives, and using well-designed communications strategies.

Supporting the Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities in Albania

The project supports the integration of the Roma and Egyptian communities into mainstream society in Albania. Activities involve:

- Participatory local preparation of community development plans and implementation of small-scale infrastructure projects;
- Strengthening Roma and Egyptian civil society capacities to combat discrimination and engage in financial support schemes;
- Providing vocational training and assistance to income-generation activities;
- Supporting implementation of the Roma Decade Action Plan by strengthening capacities in the Social Inclusion Department;
- Facilitating the access of Roma and Egyptian communities to the Office of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination; and
- Raising awareness among Roma and Egyptian community members about policies, strategies and instruments for their social inclusion as well as advocating their acceptance in mainstream society.

The country office and its partners considered the evaluation as solid and valuable for guiding work on the social inclusion of vulnerable communities. Findings were in line with those of an independent evaluation undertaken by the European Commission.

Recommendations, including on employment and income generation, were taken on board during the formulation of a new project financed by the European Union in support of vulnerable Roma and Egyptian communities. Geographical areas were modified according to evaluation findings as well.
The project took place under the Ministry of Housing, Land and Environment through the Climate Change Division of the National Directorate of Environment in close collaboration with the six coastal local governments (the departments of Colonia, San Jose, Canelones, Montevideo, Maldonado and Rocha). Funding came from the GEF; UNDP was the implementing agency. The development objective was to reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts on coastal ecosystems. The project aimed to establish adaptation policies and practices to increase resilience, and to integrate climate change into baseline risks, in terms of planning and land-use and management initiatives in coastal areas.

The final evaluation was broadly participatory, and conducted in line with UNDP and GEF guidelines. Some key conclusions include:

- The project helped to position the issue of climate change impacts in national and departmental agendas and in public opinion, and demonstrated the importance of adaptation measures to reducing the vulnerability of coastal ecosystems.
- The project capitalized on the results of previous and ongoing interventions, many of them sponsored by the GEF. Its achievements will likely feed into several new initiatives.
- The project favoured the consolidation of the system to respond to climate change. It contributed to institutional changes including transformation of a unit to a division.
- The project was fully aligned with national and departmental policies and plans, and actively involved various actors.
- Project actions contributed to increasing social and human capital to support the preservation of ecosystems. Communication and collaboration among people and local institutions, departmental and national governments, and civil society and academia was visible.
- High-quality scientific products were generated and reflected in academic papers and studies.
- There was significant public involvement among coastal residents who gained knowledge on adaptation measures (a paper on what is desirable with a user-friendly guide was generated).
This joint project by UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF and UN Women was funded through the Central Emergency Fund. It addressed the needs of women, youth and girls from indigenous and afro-Colombian communities who are at risk of sexual and gender-based violence, and had been displaced or are at risk of displacement in the Department of Choco.

The evaluation emphasized evidence and constructive use of its recommendations and lessons learned. Some of the findings included:

- The project showed consistency in its design, with well-structured hierarchical results consistent with the needs of the target population. The strategy was well delineated in terms of the theory of change. In a complex emergency, the project articulated a number of specific early recovery activities in areas not covered by other humanitarian agencies (livelihoods, community infrastructure and resilience). The gender approach was explicit and helped position gender-based vulnerabilities as inhibitors of vital recovery mechanisms.

- Technical expertise, selection of implementing partners, the mechanism to disburse grants and the coordinating role of UNDP favoured development efficiency.

- Interagency coordination helped articulate a comprehensive framework in which each entity contributed from their specific experiences; this provided the highest quality to each outcome. It has also been effective in complying with the principle of do-no-harm, and avoiding fragmentation, duplication and re-victimization.

- The project has contributed in a conceptual and programmatic respect to gender equality in the humanitarian context. It positioned discrimination based on gender as a social factor and demonstrated how it reduces resilience and recovery.

- The project showed that early recovery interventions that encourage the strengthening of assets (social, cultural and productive), create and coordinate partnerships, advance multisectoral approaches, and enhance institutional/organizational ownership can reduce vulnerabilities, threats and risks to displaced people, particularly women and youth.

- There are obvious signs of local ownership in services and products promoted by the project, as is the case with self-protection systems and emergency sexual and reproductive health services. Infrastructure protection has been mostly undertaken by communities, mainly groups of displaced women at risk.
4.1 Key achievements and challenges in 2015

UNCDF in 2015 completed a mid-term evaluation of the MicroLead programme, on expanding savings-led microfinance institutions in 10 countries, and a final evaluation of the YouthStart programme, on fostering financial inclusion among young people in 8 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Two other evaluations began: one on a local economic development programme targeting improved food security in Niger and another supporting the development of inclusive finance in Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

Within UNCDF, the Evaluation Unit continued to provide methodological support to programme directorates in applying an internal programme assessment tool with evaluation good practices. At the request of UNCDF’s Executive Secretary, the unit conducted an internal review of the performance
of a Swedish Government-funded mechanism providing targeted non-core financing to a UNCDF portfolio of innovative financial instruments in areas such as clean energy, digital finance and climate adaptation in the least developed countries.

The unit continued to play an active role in the UNEG, co-hosting the 2015 Evaluation Week in New York, and co-chairing sessions during the Evaluation Practice Exchange. It participated as a member of a three-agency UNEG and OECD/DAC external peer review of the evaluation function of UNRWA.

Total expenditure on evaluation was approximately $665,000 in 2015, drawn from both core and non-core resources. This included the costs of the two completed programme evaluations, the staffing costs of one Evaluation Specialist and one Evaluation Officer, and the running costs of the Evaluation Unit.

The main challenge to evaluation activities remained the lack of core resources to fund a third staff member in the unit. This meant postponing a planned thematic evaluation assessing the performance of UNCDF’s local development approach across its whole portfolio over the period 2005 to 2014.

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### A Final Evaluation of YouthStart

YouthStart fostered financial inclusion among young people aged 12 to 24 in eight sub-Saharan African countries: Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and Uganda. With a total budget of almost $12 million, the programme provided grants and technical assistance to 10 financial service providers from 2010 to 2014 to pilot financial products, mainly for savings, and offer financial education to 515,000 young clients, more than double the original target.

A final evaluation commissioned in 2014 was conducted by Microfinanza and Microfinanza Rating over a six-month period. It followed a theory-based approach with findings backed by a comprehensive set of descriptive, qualitative and quantitative analysis tools. The key evaluation questions included a focus on changes in the financial and organizational performance of partner financial service providers in providing youth-targeted products and services; programme influence on broader youth financial inclusion at both the policy and market levels; and likely impacts in terms of changes in economic and/or social conditions of the clients of the financial service providers.

The evaluation team visited six of the eight YouthStart programme countries, applying a comprehensive data collection and analysis toolkit, including a quantitative tool to assess changes in the financial performance of the financial service providers, and a variety of qualitative tools such as individual client interviews, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews with both provider staff and broader country-level stakeholders. The evaluation issued individual country reports to situate the programme more specifically within the countries where it intervened as well as to support UNCDF programming more generally going forward.

The evaluation came at a timely moment for UNCDF, as it looks to expand its work assisting young people in the least developed countries. Findings and the management response helped bolster UNCDF’s position in advocating for youth financial inclusion as a priority for funders in line with the SDGs. They also informed the follow-up programme: YouthStart Global. It aims to link young people to concrete economic opportunities through partnerships with such organizations as technical and vocational training institutions.
4.2 UNCDF strategy for improving evaluation quality, and pursuing innovation and learning

During 2015, the UNCDF Evaluation Unit continued to focus on improving its evaluation practices, increasing the average budget of evaluations to around $100,000 each, and stepping up its focus on the quality and rigour of methods and tools used to underpin findings. This brought UNCDF more in line with quality standards for evaluation reports used in the 2014 external review of the UNDP evaluation policy.

In 2016, with a view to strengthening the independence and credibility of its evaluation function, UNCDF will request that the IEO systematically include its evaluations in the assessment of UNDP’s decentralized evaluations. UNCDF will also ask that the IEO conduct an evaluation of its Strategic Framework 2014-2017, following the recommendation of the 2014 external review. UNCDF will continue to prioritize sufficient funding for evaluation, including a third Evaluation Officer post, as part of its core resource mobilization efforts.
5.1 Key achievements and challenges in 2015

UNV in 2015 carried out three major decentralized evaluations on “Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future,” “UNV’s Online Volunteering Service” and the “ECOWAS Volunteers Programme.”

The evaluations focused on the overall key OECD/DAC principles of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, with emphasis on lessons learned, best practices and recommendations. All projects rated high on relevance, and are aligned with national development plans and priorities. They had measurable impacts on intended target groups as well as on the volunteers themselves. Sustainability, however, remains one of the main challenges, depending largely on a complex set of internal and external conditions. Financial austerity and reduced
project funding were major inhibiting factors. The UNV budget for evaluation in 2015 totaled around $483,000 from core and non-core resources, including special voluntary funds. The mid-term evaluation of the “Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future” programme covered the period from 2012 to 2014 and targeted five countries, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. Being a formative evaluation, the aim was to provide strategic and project-specific recommendations to improve programme design and performance.

Evaluation of the UNV Online Volunteering Service

The evaluation of UNV’s Online Volunteering Service was a pioneering effort in many ways.

The Online Volunteering Service was launched in 2000 in partnership with NetAid, a joint initiative of CISCO Systems and UNDP to “help end poverty by realizing the power of the Internet.” UNV took full managerial responsibility for the service in 2004.

Over the years, the service has created a global volunteer pool of more than 450,000 people, with a breadth of expertise and skills that is unparalleled. In 2014, 60 percent of participants in the Online Volunteering Service came from developing countries, directly contributing to South-South development; 37 percent were private sector employees.

The 2011 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report refers to online volunteering, online activism through social media and micro-volunteering as new potential spaces to engage people in contributing to global development, and as allowing greater flexibility and inclusion for those who have restricted mobility or physical access.

The evaluation of the service was a pioneering one in many ways. While the scope was to assess the outcomes of the service’s activities, the more general quest was to track the overall value-added of this innovative programme. The evaluation applied a customized theory of change based on contribution analysis, using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Findings verified many comparative advantages of the service, across all regions and stakeholders, due to its ability to:

- Deliver high calibre, timely and valued technical services with high levels of satisfaction;
- Leverage quality applicants through its association with the United Nations; and
- Forge valued South-South partnerships.

In general, the evaluation found that the service has helped to foster stronger commitment to global volunteerism and spread online volunteerism around the world. The service leverages the transformative nature of the Internet in increasing the depth and breadth of civic engagement, and tapping expertise from a large, diverse pool of people. Volunteerism opportunities have expanded for people living with disabilities, women, youth, retired professionals and volunteers from developing countries.

The effectiveness of the service was confirmed among both volunteers and the organizations using them. The former emphasized benefits such as high personal satisfaction, a unique global engagement and skills development. The organizations, particularly civil society groups with limited resources, commended the tailored technical expertise, cost effectiveness and flexibility. Without the service, organizations stated that they would have had difficulties meeting their own peace and development outcomes.

The evaluation recommended that UNV continuously engage in advocacy and fundraising with international partners, governments and donors to expand online volunteering, develop a structured dialogue among UN agencies and external stakeholders to encourage uptake, and create online training for volunteers. Evaluation findings and recommendations have significantly informed and shaped a new project proposal that has received substantial interest by various stakeholders of the Online Volunteering Service.
generate knowledge on good practices, and inform future UNV youth programming approaches.

In its findings, the evaluation affirmed the relevance of the programme’s tailored approach to youth in each country. It recognized the critical timing of the programme, conceived in response to youth calls for inclusion at the outset of the Arab spring. The overall participatory nature of the programme proved to be highly relevant to youth aspirations. It built youth capacities, strengthened their self-confidence and motivation, and increased inclusion. The evaluation, however, advised the adoption of a more country-oriented management approach, rather than a regional one, so that project partners can more efficiently react to specific country needs.

The evaluation of the pilot phase of the “ECOWAS Volunteers Programme” dealt with the placement of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) volunteers in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The evaluation testified to positive effects on volunteers and youth groups engaged in promoting peace through volunteerism, including enhanced personal development and employability among youth. Community level beneficiaries recognized improvements in health and education. A key recommendation for the future was to increase the position of the ECOWAS Volunteer Agency as a first actor for advancing regional integration, peace and development.

5.2 UNV strategy for improving evaluation quality, and pursuing innovation and learning

In 2015, UNV’s Results Management Support Section continued providing technical support and quality assurance to decentralized and joint evaluations, focusing on capturing the value added of UN Volunteers, other volunteers and volunteerism to peace and development programmes and projects.

Technical support to project development aimed at operationalizing the five priority area of UNV’s Global Programmes by using lessons learned and best practices from previous evaluations to enhance organizational learning and achieve better results.

One of the priorities for 2016 will be the development and implementation of the 2016-2017 evaluation plan, featuring thematic, outcome, partner and decentralized evaluations and reviews. UNV’s evaluation capacity will be bolstered by adding an Evaluation Specialist post and a dedicated envelope of resources to carry out planned evaluations. Stronger partnership with other UN entities will be geared towards systematically capturing the impact of UN and other volunteers as well as volunteering within joint programmes.
### ANNEX 1. Itemized, fully costed programme of work for 2016-2017 (estimates)

#### Costed programme of work for 2016-2017 (estimates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year of submission to UNDP Executive Board</th>
<th>In $ thousands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Governance and accountability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual reports on evaluation</td>
<td>Annual Report on Evaluation, 2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Advisory Panel and peer review</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Conduct of evaluations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADRs</td>
<td>In 6 countries (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Jordon, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, and Pakistan)</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In 10 countries (to be decided)</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic evaluations</td>
<td>Anti-corruption and governance integrity</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional effectiveness</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(jointly with the Office of Audit and Investigations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic plan</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Global and regional programmes</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Next set of thematic evaluations (to be decided)</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thematic guidance and methods development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3. Support to decentralized evaluation

- **Total**: 2390
### Quality assessments
- Year of submission to UNDP Executive Board: 2017
- Cost: 250

### Evaluation guidance and training
- Year of submission to UNDP Executive Board: 2016, 2017
- Cost: 150, 150

### Evaluation roster
- Year of submission to UNDP Executive Board: 2016
- Cost: 40

### Evaluation Resource Centre
- Year of submission to UNDP Executive Board: 2016
- Cost: 25

### Total
- Cost: 425, 465

#### 4. National evaluation capacity development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fourth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacity follow-up</td>
<td>230</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of pilot countries to national evaluation capacity development</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National evaluation capacity conference 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5. Other activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership and knowledge management</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations reform</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEG secretariat</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other UNEG activities</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEO management</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration support, office development and infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total—other activities</strong></td>
<td>590</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### 6. Staff salary and ‘shared’ general operating expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff salary and operating expenses</td>
<td>4,650</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General operating expenses</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total costed programme of work, 2015-2016</strong></td>
<td>9,277</td>
<td>9,351</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional funds</th>
<th>Norway, Switzerland</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required regular resources funding</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9,342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ANNEX 2. Key activities of the Evaluation Advisory Panel in 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Evaluations</th>
<th>Other activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rachid Benmokhtar Benabdellah</td>
<td></td>
<td>Methodological guidance ADR, thematic evaluations, Evaluation Advisory Panel week participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Zhaoying</td>
<td>Assessment of Development Results (ADR) Vietnam</td>
<td>Evaluation Advisory Panel week participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Funnell</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation Advisory Panel week participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayati Ghosh</td>
<td>Evaluation of the Role of UNDP Supporting National Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals</td>
<td>Evaluation Advisory Panel week participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (2008-2013)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zenda Ofir</td>
<td>Assessment of Development Results (ADR) United Republic of Tanzania</td>
<td>Strategic direction, Evaluation Advisory Panel week participation, evaluation policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Rist</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic direction, ADR methodology, thematic evaluations, national evaluation capacity conference, Evaluation Advisory Panel week participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Schwandt</td>
<td>Evaluation of UNDP’s contribution to anti-corruption and governance integrity</td>
<td>Evaluation Advisory Panel week participation, evaluation policy, ADR methodology, thematic evaluations, evaluation policy review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliot Stern</td>
<td>Evaluation of the Contribution of the Global and Regional Human Development Reports to Public Policy Processes</td>
<td>Evaluation Advisory Panel week participation, evaluation policy, ADR methodology, strategic direction, upgrading quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel Szekely</td>
<td>Evaluation of the Role of UNDP Supporting National Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals</td>
<td>Evaluation policy, Evaluation Advisory Panel week participation, ADR methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Weiner</td>
<td>Joint Impact Evaluation of GEF Support to Protected Areas and Protected Area Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ANNEX 3. Decentralized evaluation data

### Table A1 Evaluation compliance among country programmes concluded in 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Programme unit</th>
<th>Evaluation plan period</th>
<th>Number of evaluations planned</th>
<th>Number of evaluations completed</th>
<th>Number of evaluations with management response</th>
<th>Evaluations completed</th>
<th>Evaluations with management response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>2012-2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>2008-2015</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>2012-2015</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>2013-2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Kosovo*</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and the CIS</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>2008-2015</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>2012-2015</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>2012-2015</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>411</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Evaluation Resource Centre data as of 31 January 2016.

* Per UN Security Council resolution 1244.
### Table A2 M&E Capacity at country and regional levels, 2012-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UNDP global</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Arab States</th>
<th>Asia and the Pacific</th>
<th>Europe and the CIS</th>
<th>Latin America and the Caribbean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of country offices</td>
<td>136 136 137</td>
<td>46 46 46</td>
<td>18 18 18</td>
<td>24 24 24</td>
<td>22 22 23</td>
<td>26 26 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries with M&amp;E capacity, %</td>
<td>52% 60% 45%</td>
<td>52% 50% 57%</td>
<td>50% 100% 50%</td>
<td>63% 71% 38%</td>
<td>32% 27% 17%</td>
<td>62% 69% 54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of M&amp;E specialists</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23 26</td>
<td>14 28 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of regional M&amp;E specialists</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data from UNDP regional bureaux as of 31 January 2016, and from 2013 and 2014 annual reports.

### Table A3 Evaluations commissioned by UNDP country offices, 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of evaluations conducted</th>
<th>All regions</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Arab States</th>
<th>Asia and the Pacific</th>
<th>Europe and the CIS</th>
<th>Latin America and the Caribbean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of countries</td>
<td>136 137 140 139</td>
<td>46 46 46 47 46</td>
<td>18 18 18 18 18</td>
<td>24 24 24 24 24</td>
<td>22 22 23 25 25</td>
<td>26 26 26 26 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total evaluations</td>
<td>241 244 298 245 226</td>
<td>71 81 89 48 63</td>
<td>32 28 30 20 16</td>
<td>50 45 53 56 59</td>
<td>40 38 63 64 40</td>
<td>48 52 63 57 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>39 23 33 28 63</td>
<td>18 9 14 5 31</td>
<td>5 1 5 3</td>
<td>3 2 3 7 14</td>
<td>9 6 8 5 10</td>
<td>4 6 7 6 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>183 193 249 192 144</td>
<td>46 58 70 40 26</td>
<td>25 26 27 14 10</td>
<td>45 40 48 42 43</td>
<td>27 29 54 57 29</td>
<td>40 40 50 39 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDAF and other programmatic</td>
<td>19 28 16 25 19</td>
<td>7 14 5 3 6</td>
<td>2 2 2 1 3</td>
<td>2 3 2 7 2</td>
<td>4 3 1 2 1</td>
<td>4 6 6 12 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluations with management response</td>
<td>207 191 266 234 188</td>
<td>62 55 76 45 61</td>
<td>28 20 22 16 13</td>
<td>40 40 52 54 48</td>
<td>36 36 55 63 36</td>
<td>41 40 61 56 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries conducting at least one evaluation</td>
<td>90 102 102 89 90</td>
<td>21 34 32 20 25</td>
<td>11 12 11 9 6</td>
<td>23 17 18 17 19</td>
<td>12 18 20 21 18</td>
<td>23 21 21 22 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation funded by GEF</td>
<td>90 96 88 80 78</td>
<td>29 26 16 12 12</td>
<td>11 9 11 20 20</td>
<td>14 22 19 19 18</td>
<td>17 15 27 35 34</td>
<td>19 24 15 14 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data from UNDP regional bureaux as of 31 January 2016, and from 201, 2012, 2013 and 2014 annual reports.
ENDNOTES


3 Gender negative: Result had a negative outcome that aggravated or reinforced existing gender inequalities and norms. Gender blind: Result paid no attention to gender, and failed to acknowledge the different needs of men, women, girls and boys, or marginalized populations. Gender targeted: Result focused on the number or equity (50/50) of women, men or marginalized populations who were targeted. Gender responsive: Result addressed differential needs of men or women and addressed equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status and rights, but did not address root causes of inequalities in their lives. Gender transformative: Result contributed to changes in norms, cultural values, power structures and the roots of gender inequalities and discrimination. The aim was to redefine systems and institutions where inequalities are created and maintained.

4 The 2014 UN Joint Inspection Unit assessment of the evaluation function in the UN system indicated that organizations dedicated between 0.5 percent and 3 percent of their expenditures to evaluation, depending on the mandate, size and role of the function in the organization. WFP has committed to 0.8 percent in its recent policy revision. UNICEF in its 2013 policy revision stated it will allocate a minimum of 1 percent of overall programme expenditure to evaluation.

5 This is typical, as the GEF requires terminal (end-of-project) evaluations for all large and medium-sized GEF projects that UNDP and other implementing organizations carry out. There are 10 GEF agencies and 8 GEF project agencies; UNDP implements over 40 percent of all GEF projects.

6 Out of a total of 140 UNDP country offices.

7 As these structural changes continue, it is expected that regional bureaux will take on more M&E staff.

8 Based on an overall UNDP programme budget of $5.172 billion.

9 UN Security Council resolution 1244.