

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UNDP Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in Botswana covers the period from 2003 to 2008 and includes the period of the current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDP country programme. It focuses on effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, which refer to the assessment of development results and programme-level analysis, as well as on relevance, responsiveness, equity and partnerships, which relate to strategic positioning and analysis at a strategic level.

Botswana is well known for having one of the world's highest economic growth rates since it gained its independence in 1966. The government macroeconomic strategy for future National Development Plans (NDPs) is premised on reducing the proportion of diamond mining in relation to other sectors of the economy, and there are promising trends towards diversification of the economy. Botswana still needs to translate its huge wealth from diamonds into a sustainable level of poverty reduction. Botswana's health sector faces significant challenges mainly due to the negative impact of HIV/AIDS. An assessment of progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) conducted in 2004 indicated significantly good progress by the Government of Botswana (GoB). Botswana is widely considered to be one of the leading countries in Africa with regard to good governance, which is a reflection of its generally high quality of institutions, its independent legal system and a relatively low level of corruption.

Botswana's remarkable economic performance has resulted in it becoming a middle-income country. As a consequence, several development partners have either ended or reduced their aid programmes in Botswana. In recent years, the official development assistance (ODA) has been at approximately half a percent of the gross national income. The biggest donors to Botswana

in 2005-2006 were the European Commission, the United States and Japan, followed by Germany, Norway and Canada. The importance and need of aid coordination along the principles agreed upon in the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, has become increasingly clear to the government and to its development partners, and Botswana has many prerequisites for successful donor coordination.

The UN contribution to the development of Botswana has a long history. The current priority areas of action are: achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty; energy and environment for sustainable development; and responding to HIV/AIDS. In addition to these practice areas, the current UNDAF defines the following cross-cutting issues: fostering democratic governance; institutional capacity building / human resource development; gender equality and women's rights; and education, human rights, health, youth and population issues. The United Nations System (UNS) in Botswana is currently preparing the UNDAF for 2010-2016 and the new UNDP country programme will start in 2010. So far, GoB, civil society organizations (CSO) and the UNS have identified five priority areas for the forthcoming UNDAF: HIV/AIDS and other major diseases; governance and capacity development; gender equality, youth and women's empowerment; economic diversification and poverty reduction; and sustainable environment and climate change.

The UNDP country office (CO) in Gaborone is headed by the Resident Representative (RR) who also acts as the UN Resident Coordinator. The UNDP programme portfolio is structured according to the four practice areas that are managed by the respective programme units. UNDP Botswana employs a total of 65 full-time persons. This includes both professional and administrative personnel, of whom 35 are located

in the CO at UN Place in Gaborone and 30 are in various partner organizations. The CO has succeeded in developing and maintaining a satisfactory overall capacity, with adequate systems and structures. The annual volume of the UNDP Botswana portfolio has been approximately USD 15 million of which approximately 60 percent comes from GoB. In other words, most of UNDP's work consists of undertaking development support services for GoB. This has important implications for the CO's strategic positioning. UNDAF and Country Programme Document (CPD) objectives are compatible with GoB goals and support their achievement.

In the **practice area** of poverty reduction, the key programme is the Support to the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction. The HIV/AIDS and gender practice area also has one major programme, Gender Sensitive Multi-sector Response to HIV/AIDS. Governance is the most recent of the four practice areas and currently the governance programme unit is managing the governance programme. Unlike the other three practice areas, energy and environment includes several projects. While the overall performance has been adequate in all practice areas, there is room to sharpen the focus of work in some areas, as well as to define clearly the relationships with the strategic objectives of UNDAF, the country programme and GoB's development plans.

During the assessment period, funds were distributed among the UNDP practice areas as follows:

- Poverty reduction – 10 percent
- HIV/AIDS – 44 percent
- Governance – 8 percent
- Energy and environment – 38 percent

UNDP-supported interventions have generally been effective, although the impact has often been limited to target groups that include a fairly small number of people. In the practice area of HIV/AIDS, the most notable achievements have taken place in strengthening institutional capacity.

However, sustainability of the achievements continues to be a key challenge. Governance is the most recent of the UNDP practice areas. Its achievements are promising but not entirely fulfilled. The implementation of the governance programme is driven mainly by GoB through a strategy of capacity enhancement of officials already working for the government, thereby enhancing the sustainability of the programme. In poverty reduction and economic diversification, UNDP has supported activities that are pertinent and well-conceived. Their impact has been limited by constraints in GoB capacity and policy factors. In energy and environment, UNDP support has been instrumental and decisive for the entire sector. However, the high number of interventions and their subsequent work load have brought about challenges in maintaining the focus of the practice area.

Overall, stakeholders and partners are satisfied with the performance of the UNDP CO in Botswana. The UNDP country programme has contributed significantly to addressing the development needs of Botswana. The focus areas of the UNDP country programme correspond well with the development needs and priorities of Botswana. This is largely due to the active role of GoB in the preparation process of UNDAF. Most UNDP-supported projects are relevant to the development needs of Botswana and the government. The participatory and transparent UNDAF process is a key instrument to this. The importance and relevance of UNDP support is highlighted by the fact that UNDP is the only active development partner in most of its practice areas.

The projects in all practice areas have been reasonably **efficient**, when measured with disbursement rates, implementation of activities and production of outputs. Capacity constraints in the CO have caused administrative delays, but most of the stakeholders do not consider these to be serious.

Competent and experienced human resources are a key asset of the CO and are largely responsible for the CO's satisfactory performance and

delivery. Changes in senior management may have adversely affected the CO's effectiveness, but it seems that the situation is improving in this regard. UNDP's bureaucracy and procedural delays have been criticized by some of its counterparts and partners. While some criticisms may be based on a poor understanding of roles and responsibilities, it is important that the CO clarifies the use of systems and mechanisms to its counterparts and partners. Technical assistance provided by the UNDP is generally appreciated for its good quality and relevant contributions. However, its effect on strengthening national capacities and its sustainability are often questioned. Technical assistance currently absorbs a sizeable share of the project funding. UNDP has been instrumental in supporting key CSOs in Botswana. In spite of this, some stakeholders feel that CSOs should have greater and more meaningful involvement in the country programme. To enhance the efficiency of the projects and the country programme as a whole, financial monitoring and reporting should be strengthened. Evaluations should make more extensive use of that information.

Sustainability is a cross-cutting concern in all UNDP interventions. Nevertheless, it has not always led to genuine national ownership. Capacity constraints in the government are a challenge to sustainability. While some projects do have a sustainability strategy, others do not. In community-level interventions, the need to build on the beneficiaries' needs and priorities is a continuous challenge. In institutional projects, adequate capacity-strengthening activities, such as training events, have taken place, but not always within the framework of a comprehensive strategy. The weaknesses or absence of effective monitoring and evaluation systems in most institutions and projects has probably hindered the observation of this problem.

Regarding **relevance**, there is an adequate match between GoB policies, as defined in the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and the NDP, and the objectives of the UNDP country programme. The correspondence is ensured by the UNDAF

process in which the government plays a key role. However, the practical interventions do not always fully support the achievement of objectives. The identification of core problems for projects and the definition of subsequent project purposes are not always clear. Institutional frameworks have not always been successfully selected, which may explain the lack of buy-in by national counterparts in some projects. In spite of the generally appreciated relevance, it is not obvious that all the projects respond accurately to the needs of their target groups. UNDP practice areas do not include major missed opportunities.

The CO has included gender equality and mainstreaming in the interventions and activities it has supported. To further strengthen this critically important cross-cutting issue, an explicit strategy and specific human resources are needed. Although not defined as an area of work in the CPD, aid coordination is an area in which UNDP could have played a bigger role during the evaluation period. There are signs that the Resident Coordinator is now assuming this role. Stronger focus on the principles of the Paris Declaration and aid effectiveness could enhance UNDP's delivery of development support. A particular area in which UNDP can strengthen its strategic role is HIV/AIDS. The CO could take proactive steps to dialogue with key players in the field.

Most of the consulted actors considered UNDP to be responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Responsiveness to the government's needs stems from the fact that a large amount of the programme funding comes from GoB (although GoB's share in environment is smaller than in other practice areas, due to the high volume of GEF funds). As a rule, all projects have a steering committee to include stakeholders in the decision-making process. Some stakeholders commented that technical support by UNDP was insufficient. This criticism may be based on a misunderstanding of the roles and responsibilities within a project. There are several interventions that enhance equity although the conditions have not always been conducive.

Regarding **partnerships**, UNDP is a key development partner in Botswana. It is visible and respected. This visibility is partly due to the small number of development partners in the country but also to the CO's participatory approach and strong relationship with the government. UNDP is also recognized for its publications, such as the human development report. The situation in donor coordination is shaped by the decrease in the number of donors supporting Botswana and in 2008, the government-led donor coordination was given a boost. The cooperation and coordination between UN agencies has been relatively effective. UNS working groups are functional and inter-agency linkages are operational. The basic work of UNDP in its practice areas is widely recognized.

In formulating the new country programme, UNDP and its partners will need to define an appropriate role for the CO. For this purpose, the

ADR team has identified four main issues around which the **future positioning of UNDP Botswana** could evolve:

- capacity building;
- aid effectiveness;
- added value to the government; and
- civil society partnerships

The CO should ascertain the implications of these for the office itself, in various areas: structure, financial resources, human resources, systems and procedures, and the country programme. These need to be analysed in a holistic manner and a consecutive corporate strategy with subsequent actions plans needs to be formulated. The CO needs a partnership strategy in which it should define its position and principles of relationship vis-à-vis UN agencies, CSOs, and other development partners.