

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary briefly sets out the Assessment of Development Results objectives and method, presents the findings, and notes the main conclusions and recommendations.

OBJECTIVES

In line with the Terms of Reference, the main focus was on assessing: (1) UNDP's strategic position in Turkey; (2) the organization's performance in contributing to development results in the country; (3) past performance in a forward-looking manner, thus supporting the ongoing preparation of the next programming cycle in Turkey.

METHOD

A set of evaluation questions guided the assessment of UNDP's contribution to development results in the different focus areas by looking at the evaluation criteria of responsiveness, relevance and programme design, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency; and by exploring the UNDP added value, approaches, UNDP additional roles and functions, social equity and partnerships.

While the assessment focused on the level of the focus areas, a selection of 29 projects and related non-project activities were reviewed to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the UNDP portfolio in Turkey. The assessment made ample use of programme and project-related documentation. However, direct interviews with stakeholders across Turkey provided the most valuable insights for the Assessment of Development Results. Some 150 interviews were conducted throughout July and August 2009, involving 71 institutions.

FINDINGS

The following points outline the main findings for the focus areas of democratic governance, poverty reduction, environment and sustainable development, and for a series of horizontal and cross-cutting issues.

- **Democratic Governance:** UNDP has made a strong contribution to local government reform by assisting the Turkish government in adopting a more participative approach to local decision-making. UNDP support for strengthening the participation of women in politics is considered to have contributed to the increase, albeit modest, of women parliamentarians in the last general elections. Moreover, thanks to strong UNDP advocacy, youth issues now figure more visibly on the political agenda. In the emerging justice cluster, there are first indications that UNDP support is contributing to judicial reform. In relation to internally displaced persons, UNDP support has contributed to Turkey's development results via focused capacity development and policy work. Overall, the area of democratic governance is characterized by a strong focus on vulnerable groups and successful advocacy work.
- **Poverty Reduction:** UNDP has contributed to the development of pro-poor policy by providing support for enhanced social assistance coordination and policy. The organization has also made a direct contribution to reducing poverty via its regional development initiatives targeting the country's least developed regions. Substantial training for the regions' private sector has been complemented with the establishment of market entries, thus enhancing sustainability. Successful experimentation on the ground has helped shape government policy.

UNDP's private-sector work has been instrumental in introducing and consolidating the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility in Turkey. Overall, UNDP interventions in this area strongly centred on vulnerable groups, and most interventions have concentrated on Turkey's least developed regions. Interventions have also been characterized by successful private-sector engagement.

- **Environment and Sustainable Development:** UNDP has made a substantial contribution to the Country Programme Outcome 'The conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is strengthened'. However, limited progress with project implementation has constrained UNDP's contribution with regard to the second Country Programme Outcome 'Access to sustainable energy services is increased'. UNDP support has been instrumental in shaping Turkey's climate change policy and international negotiation towards Post-2012, which resulted in the preparation of the National Climate Change Strategy and integration of sustainable development principles into sectoral policies. Moreover, through a series of pilot projects, UNDP has significantly increased awareness on biodiversity, climate change and water issues. UNDP's strong engagement of the private sector is considered a particular added value of its support in this focus area. Moreover, interventions have been successfully supported by UNDP's advocacy work.

- **Horizontal and cross-cutting issues:** During the period under review, UNDP has made a strong contribution to social equity under its three main focus areas. This was either achieved by directly focusing on vulnerable groups (e.g., democratic governance) or implementation in Turkey's least developed regions (e.g., poverty reduction), or by raising awareness on sectoral policy implications for poverty (e.g. environment and sustainable development). With regard to gender, UNDP efforts have been instrumental in promoting the concept of gender mainstreaming in

Turkey, while specific projects focusing on gender equality have contributed to increasing women participation in politics. On cooperation for development, evaluation findings confirm the potential for assistance to LDCs in particular but as well for exchanges with other upper-middle-income economies facing similar challenges in the environmental and poverty reduction focus areas, as well as with regard to gender. Finally, UNDP's systematic advocacy work has facilitated visibility and dissemination of project outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation findings led to the following conclusions:

Conclusion 1: During the period under review, UNDP support has continued to meet its Turkish partners' development needs.

In delivering the country programme, UNDP has been highly responsive to accommodate emerging needs, both at the sectoral level (for example, in the area of justice), as well as within ongoing interventions (through a pragmatic approach to adapting project activities to needs identified during implementation).

Conclusion 2: UNDP assistance has effectively contributed to development results in Turkey.

However, in some cases, it has been constrained by a lack of thematic concentration as a result of UNDP being too responsive and because of comparatively small-scale UNDP support which is very much focused on pilot and preparatory assistance projects and complementary initiatives.

Development results have mainly been achieved by assisting the Turkish partners in establishing a more conducive environment for attaining national development targets and the MDGs. Particularly important contributions have been made with regard to raising awareness on development needs (e.g., youth), enhancing capacities for policy formulation and implementation (e.g.,

local government, sustainable development, climate change, etc.), and directly contributing to poverty reduction via the development of human resources (e.g., the regional development initiatives). However, effectiveness has, in some cases, been constrained by a lack of thematic concentration within the focus areas. This is particularly so with regard to the focus areas of democratic governance and the environment and sustainable development, which includes an ambitious list of priorities.

As in other middle-income countries, UNDP support in Turkey is to some degree characterized by small- to medium-scale interventions with modest project budgets and short implementation periods. This has been explained with the intention to first test pilot initiatives before intervening on a larger scale (some are preparatory assistance projects and complementary initiatives) as well as UNDP focus on capacity development. The evaluation team found that this approach risks putting a burden on limited partner resources for project activities. It does, however, test the Government's commitment and can encourage greater national ownership in the longer term. The Assessment of Development Results also notes that between 2006 and 2008, the number of small-scale projects has decreased.

UNDP has made a strong contribution to social equity under its three focus areas. This was achieved either by directly focusing on vulnerable groups or implementation in Turkey's least developed regions, or by raising awareness on sectoral policy implications for poverty. With regard to gender, UNDP efforts have been instrumental in promoting the concept of gender mainstreaming in Turkey, while specific projects focusing on women have contributed to increasing their participation in politics and decision making processes. On Turkey's cooperation for development, there is potential for assistance to LDCs in particular but as well for exchanges with other upper-middle-income economies facing similar challenges in the environmental and poverty reduction focus areas, as well as with regard to gender.

Conclusion 3: UNDP outcomes have in general a high degree of sustainability, with exceptions.

UNDP has, with some exceptions, emphasized sustainability at an early stage of project implementation. Sustainability was supported by establishing concrete instruments that project partners were enabled to use beyond the completion of UNDP assistance, or by ensuring that human resources development was delivered with a view to direct application in the market. Moreover, strong advocacy work ensured the required visibility to motivate political support and contributed to country-wide dissemination.

However, the evaluation team has also come across cases of more limited sustainability. The main causes include efficiency issues (e.g., delayed project activities due to lengthy and complex corporate procurement procedures), and lack of critical mass, limiting the scope of project activities and failing to generate strong national engagement.

UNDP has successfully addressed its constraints of limited core resources by brokering and establishing strong and effective development partnerships with the Turkish government, multilateral and bilateral partners, and the private sector. These four groups now account for over 90 percent of UNDP's programme budget in Turkey. The increasing government and private-sector contributions also demonstrate the successful inclusion of all relevant actors to contribute to Turkey's development results.

UNDP's contribution to development results has been supported by information sharing and coordination efforts, both at the sectoral level (e.g., thematic working group on gender issues, youth, etc.), and with regard to specific groups of partners (e.g., briefing meetings with the bilateral partners). However, despite recommendations under the 2004 Assessment of Development Results, some of the coordination work was only initiated in 2008 and 2009, and there remains further scope for supporting nationally led sectoral coordination should national partners call for this.

Conclusion 4: Despite the strong 2004 Assessment of Development Results recommendations, the overall UNDP monitoring and evaluation practice remains weak; this hinders UNDP from doing justice to its generally effective contribution to development results.

While the office has developed best practices for monitoring and evaluation (e.g., for the regional development initiatives), corporate UNDP monitoring and evaluation practices generally are less comprehensive than those adopted by other multilateral organizations such as the World Bank or the EC. This is largely explained by the lack of adequate funding for project monitoring and evaluation. The country office, for example, does not have a specialized monitoring and evaluation specialist. Weak monitoring and evaluation fails to do justice to UNDP's generally effective contribution to development results in Turkey. Thus, the many success stories cannot be substantiated with evidence from monitoring and evaluation, which threatens to constrain UNDP's partnerships with organizations with stronger monitoring and evaluation requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations address the programming and the operational levels. It should be noted that this section focuses on more strategic recommendations. Specific focus area or project-related and other punctual recommendations have been made in Chapters 4 and 5 (underlined text).

PROGRAMMING LEVEL

Recommendation 1: Ensure a strong programmatic thematic focus. Yet a strong thematic focus does not prevent UNDP from developing innovative partnerships which are in line with its policy on MICs.

The emphasis on developing a more programmatic approach is not intended to limit UNDP responsiveness in areas not directly covered by the programmatic approach; however, such interventions should be limited to areas where there is clear

mandate and added value to UNDP intervention and/or synergies with existing programmatic content. Considering the very strong presence of both multilateral and bilateral partners in the focus area of environment and sustainable development, UNDP's effectiveness in contributing to development results is likely to benefit from a stronger programmatic approach (e.g., with a focus on climate change, capacity development for climate resilient economy and eco-system and engaging the private sector to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of water resources, low emission economy and energy efficiency). Also, within the focus area of democratic governance, the development of the justice sector would require continued careful preparation and coordination with UNDP's partners in order to avoid duplication.

Recommendation 2: UNDP country office should ensure balance between policy advice at the central level and project implementation work on the ground, guarantee stronger integration of social equity considerations at both programmatic and project levels, and pay greater attention to existing capacities regarding individual interventions.

Within the focus areas, there should be a balance between policy advice at central level and project-level work on the ground. For example, the focus area of poverty reduction has benefited from a strong element of cross-fertilization between policy work and project-level implementation on the ground. It is important to maintain this balance across the board. Considering the increasing volume of EC interventions, such as the establishment and development of regional development agencies and business centres, UNDP can add value by intensifying cooperation with its Turkish partners at the central level to develop capacities for formulating and coordinating poverty reduction policy. Moreover, when selecting specific interventions, and following the example of the UNDP country office practice established with regard to gender mainstreaming, a similar practice for the consideration of social equity is likely to strengthen programming in line with

UNDP's mission statement, and help avoid the inclusion of projects of less immediate relevance to the three focus areas. For example, considering the country office's particularly successful engagement of the private sector in poverty reduction and environment and sustainable development, there might be further potential for strengthening such contribution by focusing activities more strongly on Turkey's least developed regions. The recent stronger focus on Turkey's less developed regions should be pursued. This shift could be supported by establishing a stronger presence in one of the emerging business capitals in Turkey's Eastern regions, while maintaining a presence in Istanbul for liaison purposes.

Recommendation 3: Tangible outcomes, especially in politically sensitive areas, require resource-intensive and long-term interventions vis-à-vis budget and time lines. Therefore, UNDP, corporately, should consider financial and human-resource investments in these fields.

UNDP engagement at a relevant level (to engage in policy dialogue with government partners) requires considerable capacity within the office and within the organization. Balance between what UNDP corporately wants and what the organization needs at the country office has to be ensured; the country office standard model does not work in countries like Turkey. For example, it is noteworthy that the emerging thematic area of justice and internal affairs is sustained with limited expertise at the country office level. If it is decided to further consolidate this area, the country office is advised to not only continue using in-house senior-level expertise (made available mostly by the Regional Centre in Bratislava) but also invest in senior expertise to be based at the country office.

OPERATIONAL LEVEL

Recommendation 4: UNDP country office should continue strengthening consultation and coordination mechanisms with both national and international partners.

As recommended by the 2004 Assessment of Development Results, UNDP country office programming in the three focus areas would benefit from more in-depth annual consultations with the State Planning Organization and other relevant governmental, NGO, academic and private-sector partners. The existing senior-level annual review meetings could become a more substantive platform for providing feedback on planned future interventions and effectiveness of ongoing or completed interventions. Moreover, considering the presence of other multilateral partners in the thematic area of justice, the UNDP country office is advised to continue strengthening partner consultations with a view to ensuring synergies and avoiding overlaps (e.g., establishment of a thematic working group). Finally, during the Assessment of Development Results consultations, the bilateral partners expressed a strong interest in receiving more systematic information on UNDP's interventions in Turkey. More regular briefings should be organized with the bilateral partners, in particular with those that have a specific development cooperation or sectoral interest in cooperation with Turkey and are therefore more likely to engage in longstanding cooperation with national partners.

Recommendation 5: UNDP country office should continue its efforts in poverty reduction with a more widespread partnership with the private sector.

UNDP has made an important contribution to improving social equity by directly targeting the most needy population segments (vulnerable groups and the least developed regions of the country). However, there appears to be a strong potential for strengthening UNDP's contribution to social equity in the thematic area of private sector partnership. Furthermore, UNDP has made a substantial contribution to the development results and to the governance structure for Global Compact in Turkey. UNDP should continue to facilitate and mobilize the private sector's role in corporate social responsibility in line with the Global Compact principles to achieve the MDGs.

Recommendation 6: UNDP should continue combining its simultaneous efforts for gender mainstreaming and gender-specific project support along with strengthening cooperation among UN Agencies and investing in South-South cooperation.

Turkey's *General Directorate on the Status of Women* is likely to benefit from additional assistance to strengthen gender mainstreaming coordination capacities, including on gender equality and women's empowerment. There is also potential for strengthened cooperation with other UN agencies, e.g., for the women's participation in local politics project, continue making use of UNFPA's experience on media issues in view of UNDP's own plans to instrumentalize the media for gender mainstreaming or UNDP's gender equality projects in poverty reduction which have the potential to yield more sustainable results should there be a cooperation with ILO in the field of decent work for women. In this sense, the gender thematic group could be strengthened to act as a "working group" to ensure complementarities between the different 'actors' interventions.

Moreover, now that the different Turkish actors are ready to move to a new stage in terms of institutional capacity development, UNDP could consider developing new gender-related initiatives and expanding existing initiatives, e.g. gender budgeting. Finally, considering Turkey's generally poor gender performance, there should be significant scope for South-South cooperation with other upper-middle-income economies with more successful gender experiences.

Recommendation 7: UNDP should systematically develop sustainability and exit strategies.

With growing partner capacities, and considering its own limited resources, UNDP is advised to address the issue of how institutions take ownership of development, how the results of the partnerships can be sustainable over time.

Recommendation 8: Ensure systematic monitoring and consider a more systematic follow-up on agreed Assessment of Development Results recommendations.

The effectiveness of UNDP's contributions to development results is likely to benefit strongly from more systematic monitoring, thus enabling new interventions to build on a sound understanding of past experience, and facilitating evaluation and assessment of development impact. The UNDP country office will require additional resources (e.g., RBEC advice) to support the establishment of high-quality monitoring mechanisms across its focus areas, including the design of indicators that can be monitored, verification mechanisms and training on monitoring practice.

As noted throughout this report, there has been limited systematic follow-up on Assessment of Development Results 2004 recommendations validated by the subsequent country programme. To enhance the Assessment of Development Results' effectiveness in contributing to UNDP accountability, follow-up should be integrated within the country office's annual reporting. Ultimately, UNDP should be looking at national M&E systems and how it may use those systems to assess whether the organization is making a contribution.