

EVALUATION BRIEF

JUNE 2009

UNDP played an important role in supporting Tajikistan in its reconstruction efforts and its path to development. In the context of transition, UNDP quickly established itself as a capable and reliable implementing agency of the government and donors. The government of Tajikistan considers UNDP as a trusted partner. UNDP has contributed to policy development and dialogue, and played a key role in incorporating the MDGs and pro-poor concerns into national development planning. UNDP support to infrastructure development has been important in addressing social service needs in rural areas.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Following the national independence and civil war, Tajikistan faced formidable challenges in political restructuring, reorganizing the economy, and responding to the socio-economic needs of the people. The development strategy pursued by the government is aimed to lower the poverty and extreme poverty rates, create employment, increase school enrolment levels, reduce maternal and child mortality and the number of infectious diseases, and enhance social and gender equality. While there has been an overall decline in poverty level, the percentage of the population living below the poverty line remains high. The civil war contributed to the deterioration of the physical infrastructure and an already weak institutional capacity. A landlocked country, Tajikistan also remains highly dependent on its rich natural resources. Recurrent humanitarian crises have slowed down development and diverted the focus from long-term development issues.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

UNDP contribution has been significant in the post-war reconstruction and transition. The programme emphasis corresponds to the development needs perceived by the government and civil society.

UNDP programme in Tajikistan has been implemented in an environment of challenging post-civil war reconstruction and transition, weak government systems and evolving political economy. The programme aimed to provide policy and programme support, share best practices and support government efforts to build capacity to address development challenges. Considering

that the impact of the civil war was severe in rural areas, UNDP made a considered decision to work at the district and sub-district level. Local infrastructure development and poverty alleviation at the household and community level have been key areas of UNDP interventions. A determined effort was made to develop the water infrastructure and it has been highly relevant considering low public spending for infrastructure development in rural areas.

UNDP has played an important role in furthering pro-poor policies in development planning and in supporting the government to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters and infectious diseases. Sustained efforts are required to strengthen government systems and capacities to ensure national ownership and enable development results in these areas.

UNDP, along with other international agencies, supported the government in designing PRS-I and II and the NDS. At the macro level, UNDP was successful in bringing MDGs into national development strategies. While the government was forthcoming in owning the process and ensured that it was reflected in national strategies and action plans, more efforts are required to ensure that commitment is translated to action. UNDP has been significant in enabling the government to access the GFATM to strengthen the health infrastructure and minimize the risk of HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB. The Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) forms a substantial proportion of the ODA and is crucial for controlling the incidence of Malaria and TB in Tajikistan. Further efforts are needed to strengthen health administration and service delivery to sustain the results of these interventions.



ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS
EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION

MANAGING FOR RESULTS
COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
TARIKISTAN
MANAGING FOR RESULTS
COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

UNDP has a comparative advantage in addressing social development issues in Tajikistan. However linkages were not systematically established between micro interventions of UNDP and government planning and policy.

UNDP approach has often been *ad hoc* and project oriented, not giving adequate attention to sustainability of interventions or informing government practices and policies, particularly regarding governance and disaster management. There were also limitations in government ownership, and the timeframe was not realistic for achieving outcomes. Considering limitations in resources UNDP should confine its work to areas where it can contribute to policy, reforms and institutional development.

UNDP through its various interventions at the national and local level has addressed issues related to poverty and sustainable livelihood. However, the synergy between poverty alleviation interventions and other areas of the programme (such as disaster management and environment) was not adequately established. The programme was less systematic in addressing gender related concerns and issues pertaining to large scale migration of working population to other countries.

Addressing issues of livelihood, rural development, and the MDGs has been core to UNDP interventions in Tajikistan. Concerted effort was made to reduce poverty through community level interventions. UNDP contribution is significant in promoting Resolution 111, which permits farmers to opt for the crop of their choice. Considering that

a large component of the UNDP interventions involved working directly with the community, there was considerable opportunity for UNDP to address issues of gender, migration and cotton farming and link them to policy discussions. The poverty and MDG initiatives did not sufficiently address the dimension of migration of a large working population to countries such as Russia.

Use of direct implementation modality for programmes is an issue of concern in Tajikistan, where a large proportion of programmes are implemented by UNDP. This has implications for the sustainability of development results and strengthening the capacities of the national institutions.

One of the recurrent issues during the evaluation was the programme implementation modality followed by UNDP. With exceptions, UNDP interventions in Tajikistan were entirely implemented by the country office with different levels of involvement of government counterparts, mainly due to concerns about efficiency of government systems and corruption levels. There were no indications that the country office was planning to shift to national implementation modality. While government representatives were brought on board as required, UNDP managed or implemented the programme. Concerns about national administration systems and finance systems and ways to address them were not adequately incorporated in the design and action plans of the projects. Capacity development is an important component of UNDP support and direct execution curtails opportunities to strengthen weak government systems.

TAJIKISTAN

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should emphasize policy support and strengthening government systems.
- Interventions in the area of governance should be further strengthened.
- UNDP should be more responsive to governance needs in the country and coordinate with other agencies working in the area.
- There should be more substantial support to the government in the area of MDGs.
- UNDP should strengthen its role in advocating for implementation of pro-poor policies and strategies.
- Use programme partnerships to strengthen donor coordination for achieving development results.
- Implement programmes through government agencies.
- Integrate environment and climate change issues into poverty and disaster management interventions.
- Take adequate efforts to strengthen micro-macro linkages.



The UNDP Evaluation Office (EO) provides systematic assessment of UNDP's contribution to development results by conducting independent thematic and programmatic evaluations.

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