



**Evaluation of UNDP's
Regional Cooperation Framework
for the Arab States (2002 – 2005)**

United Nations Development Programme

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FOREWORD

In 2004 the Executive Board requested that UNDP's Evaluation Office conduct independent evaluations of regional programmes in the future. The evaluation of the second Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF) for the Arab States (2002-2005) is the first of such evaluations. This evaluation assesses the contributions of UNDP through the RCF to development results, and looks forward to strengthen the formulation of the next Regional Programme for the Arab States.

The RCF was designed to support the commitment made by the Arab States to human development and to poverty reduction. Managed by the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS), it provided a framework for the implementation of regional projects and a provision of policy and knowledge-based advisory services to the UNDP country offices and partners through a multinational approach, focusing on common priorities and challenges in several Arab States.

The evaluation indicates that overall UNDP is on the right track. The RCF has gained much attention and credibility for UNDP in areas where external agencies have not demonstrated significant results in the past. In a region where external involvement in policy making has been highly controversial and frequently rejected, the RCF has served to analyze human development trends through the Arab Human Development Reports and identify some of the critical constraints to development effectiveness in the region. It has been successful in raising the debate on a range of politically sensitive issues, such as governance, the quality of education at the tertiary level, access to ICT, the need to address the spread of HIV/AIDS from an integrated human rights approach and the importance of empowering women politically. The regional programme has also provided a platform to generate regional declarations that could contribute to future policy coordination and development in the region.

However, the evaluation points out that UNDP needs to build greater coherence among its thematic interventions and to involve government and other national partners more effectively as driving partners in its interventions. The evaluation also underscores the importance of strengthening linkages between the Regional and Country programmes and institutional capacity at country level to ensure that governments, beneficiaries, and other national partners can build on the development contributions of UNDP.

EO would like to express its gratitude to all the partners, institutions and individuals who participated in this evaluation exercise. We would also like to extend our thanks and deep appreciation to Rajeev Pillay, General Partner, and Souad Dajani, Evaluation Consultant, of Abacus International Management LL.C., who conducted the evaluation.

Special thanks go to Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, and Nada Al-Nashif, Chief, Regional Programme Division, RBAS. Their openness and support, despite the exigencies of a tight schedule in connection with the launch of the Arab Human Development Report for 2004, was extremely valuable. The work of our evaluation team both at headquarters and in the programme countries visited would not have been possible without very active support on the part of Walid Badawi, Azza Karam, Madi Musa and Mary Jreidini, who ensured that all documents, data and staff we requested were made available to us.

We also owe a great debt of gratitude to Ali Al Zátari, Antonio Vigilante, Sophie de Caen, Christine McNab and Emmanuel Dierckx de Casterlé from UNDP for the time that they spent sharing their perspectives in connection with the country missions. All of the Regional Programme Coordinators and in particular Khadija Moalla, Najat Rochdi, Isam Naqib and their staff must be thanked for their support. Finally, we would like to thank Khaled Ehsan, the EO Task manager for this evaluation, and other members of EO for their assistance.

We hope that this report will contribute to the debate on policy and development cooperation for promoting human development, adding value to current UNDP efforts on governance and poverty reduction in the Arab region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Saraswathi Menon", is positioned above a vertical red line.

Saraswathi Menon
Director
Evaluation Office

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AHDR	Arab Human Development Report
ANGAD	Arab Network on Gender and Development
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
CAWTAR	Centre for Arab Women Training and Research
CCF	Country Cooperation Framework
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIB	European Investment Bank
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EO	Evaluation Office of UNDP
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HARPAS	HIV/AIDS Regional Programme for Arab States
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTDAR	Information and Communications Technology for Development in the Arab Region
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LAS	League of Arab States
MBC	Mediterranean Beneficiary Countries
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
METAP	Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme
MYFF	Multi Year Funding Framework
NAP	National AIDS Programmes
PAPP	Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People
POGAR	Programme on Governance in the Arab Region
RANAA	Regional Arab Network Against AIDS
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
RBAS	Regional Bureau for Arab States
RBLAC	Regional Bureau for Latin American Countries
RCBP	Regional Capacity Building Programme
RCF	Regional Cooperation Framework
ROAR	Results Oriented Annual Report
RP	Regional Programme
RPD	Regional Programme Division (RBAS)
RSC	Regional Service Centre
RSWMP	Regional Solid Waste Management Project
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
SURF	Sub-regional Resource Facility
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNAIDS	United Nations Agency for AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WSIS	World Summit for the Information Society
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive Summary

This evaluation has been undertaken at the request of UNDP's Executive Board in preparation for the next regional programme for the Arab States. The evaluation used the RCF document and individual programme documents as a frame of reference and adopted a meta evaluation methodology, building on outcome evaluations of individual programmes already undertaken.

The RCF (2002-2005) for Arab States has been used innovatively as an instrument for UNDP to adopt independent positions on human development issues for the region, to draw attention to needs that are difficult to address because of their sensitivity, to seek consensus or partial agreement on them and to advocate for change. It has been used quite effectively to draw policy makers and leaders of civil society out of their national contexts and to foster dialogue on policy issues pertaining to human development that could not be discussed within the confines of domestic constraints. The regional programme has succeeded in positioning UNDP effectively in sensitive areas such as HIV/AIDS, information and communications technology and governance. Indeed, it has been used skilfully to gain credibility and trust on the part of UNDP in a region where the UN has been viewed with considerable suspicion

In terms of results on the regional level, the regional programme has served to analyse the current state of human development in the region, to identify some of the critical constraints to generating sustainable progress and to generate debate and dialogue on issues that have previously remained relatively untouched. The quality of education at the tertiary level and the promulgation of access to ICT and their role in raising the competitiveness of countries in the Arab States, the existence of HIV/AIDS in the region and the need to address it in a humane and understanding manner with a view to curtailing its spread, and the need to empower women politically, economically and socially have all been the subject of debate in the press, regional workshops with influential policy makers and even in national policy-making forums as a consequence of the regional programme. Key issues pertaining to good governance including particularly sensitive issues such as independence of the judiciary, the role of women in government, corruption and accountability and liberal democracy have all been the subject of discussion at the regional level and it could be stated that the regional programme has contributed to greater awareness on the part of policy makers and the public of comparative systems of governance as well as the rights of individuals. The regional programme has also served as a platform to generate regional declarations on several of the above issues that can serve as a basis for policy coordination and development in the future.

The Arab Human Development Report (AHDR) has, since 2002, been the flagship programme of the UNDP for the region. It has at times served as the vanguard for other projects and programmes in the RCF, informing the design of regional programmes and also benefiting from stock-taking and analytical work undertaken by them; there has been a healthy exchange of ideas between them. Based on the AHDR, the RCF has addressed issues not within UNDP's corporate areas of focus including areas that are generally acknowledged to be within the competence of other multilateral organizations.

In a region where external involvement in policy making has been frequently rejected, the RCF has rightly emphasized the use of regional capacities, enabling the programmes to more readily gain traction and acceptance. On the other hand, failure to involve policy makers in the design of

the programme from the very outset has limited the degree to which the RCF has been able to generate institutional change.

More could be done to utilize the results of the Regional Programme to effectively position UNDP at the country level and vice-versa. Weak linkages between the Regional and Country Programmes have resulted in lost opportunities; particularly in thematic areas such as governance in which UNDP also has rather extensive programme activities at the country level (conclusions and key recommendations are highlighted from 53 to 61).

Coherence and the relationship between the three thematic pillars (globalization, governance, and knowledge) of the RCF themselves is unclear and while some programmes could be said to address multiple pillars, this has perhaps been more by chance than by design. The principal emphasis of programmes under the RCF has been on stock-taking and advocacy; national ownership from the very outset has therefore not been a principal driving force, and with a few exceptions, nor has sustainability of activities been a central tenet or objective. The programmes are, instead designed to provoke discussion on key developmental issues, to foster and promote civil society networks for the purpose of dialogue and advocacy and to create momentum for policy change.

The RCF for Arab States was largely designed in New York and subsequently submitted for consultation and support from potential participants. Country office involvement in the original design of the programme was not strong. The process followed has enabled the RCF to address issues of considerable sensitivity (e.g. aspects of democratic governance, gender and HIV/AIDS) that almost certainly would not have been included if government priorities and clearances had been sought *a priori*. It would appear that in most instances this has not proved a significant problem and governments have subsequently agreed to participate in the UNDP programmes. Indeed most of the flagship programmes have achieved very high-level participation and have subsequently also received very high levels of entry within individual countries.

Two out of three thematic pillars have yielded results, as have some of the programmes, such as the HIV/AIDS programme, that fall outside the three pillars. Projects under the globalization pillar were launched briefly, but were closed shortly thereafter and have not had any lasting results. The regional programme has demonstrated results in the area of thematic or sectoral stocktaking and analysis, advocacy and the fostering of dialogue. There have been relatively few long-term, sustainable results in the area of capacity building or piloting. In some instances, this has been due to the relative emphasis of the programmes themselves and in others because of the short life of the projects to date.

The AHDR, the HIV/AIDS Regional Programme for Arab States (HARPAS) and the Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) have all made significant breakthroughs, creating awareness among key opinion-makers in the region as a result of their advocacy as measured by the nature and level of dialogue generated at the regional and in many cases, the national level as well. Direct causal linkages between advocacy and dialogue generated under the regional programme and actual policy changes are, however, difficult to establish with certainty. However, there are several instances of policy changes that have taken place after an open discussion, which happened for the first time under the UNDP regional programme, and therefore causality can be inferred. Other programmes such as Information and Communications Technology for Development in the Arab Region (ICTDAR) and Higher Education have also identified a large area of need and are in high demand.

The level of sensitivity involved has prevented the Regional Bureau for the Arab States (RBAS) from seeking and accepting external funding from several potential sources and the proportion of cost sharing has been relatively low despite strong international interest. However, it would appear that parallel funding of programmes by other donors has been high, demonstrating both the ability of the UNDP's regional programme to mobilize resources in support of causes that it has advocated as well as the high level of interest among partners.

The Regional Programme is managed in RBAS in parallel with relatively few, or no inter-linkages with the country programmes. Regional project managers report directly to regional programme advisers at RBAS headquarters in New York and are, in some instances, also supported by the Sub-regional Resource Facility (SURF) in Beirut. Regional programme managers, and indeed even regional programme advisers at RBAS headquarters, appear to have very limited substantive, planned interaction thereby reducing the overall coherence and synergies between programmes. Regional programme managers/coordinators usually deal directly with government, civil society and private sector contacts, often without keeping UNDP country offices informed or involved. The result is that while Resident Representatives and their staff are uniformly supportive and strongly praise the AHDR, their involvement in ensuring lasting impact of the RCF is limited.

Programmes tend to be more active in their host country and there is a perception among the countries that do not host programmes that they are "forgotten" and do not benefit from the RCF. Most projects are inadequately staffed and as a result cannot provide the necessary follow-up to ensure that momentum gained at the regional level is always translated into action on the ground.

While flexibility in design has enabled programmes to seize opportunities as they arise and as needs change, it has also led to insufficient long-term strategizing and planning. Some projects have continued to undertake advocacy for years without a phased approach to ensure that it translates into real change at the country level.

There is a general consensus that relatively little value added can be discerned from United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) execution. Support costs associated with UNOPS execution have also hindered resource mobilization in the form of cost sharing, thereby hindering the Regional Programme's ability to meet growing needs directly.

Monitoring systems are not explicitly provided for in project budgets and as a result the types of indicators that could provide information about outcomes and impact are not systematically collected.

PART I: BACKGROUND

I. Introduction and rationale for the evaluation

At the June 2004 session of UNDP's Executive Board, the Associate Administrator committed the organization to undertake an independent evaluation prior to submission of a Regional Programme for the next cycle with a view to assessing the effectiveness of the current RCF and its component regional programmes¹. The terms of reference of this evaluation are provided in Appendix III of this report.

This evaluation was placed under the supervision of the Evaluation Office (EO). It was decided that the actual exercise would take the form of a meta evaluation and would draw on and supplement individual outcome evaluations already undertaken by the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) of each of the main regional programmes that constitute the RCF. In this context, EO has been requested to report on the findings and recommendations of the meta evaluation on the development results achieved by the RCF to the Executive Board. It was felt that such an evaluation would be necessary to ascertain the value added from the RCF interventions and if the strategies used were the "best" ways to use scarce resources, and this evaluation has been carried out within this context.

Their main objectives of the evaluation are to: (a) assess performance of the RCF and specify the development results achieved in the area of policy advice, capacity development and knowledge management within the core results areas that the regional programme has focused on as well as assessment of the scope and range of strategic partnerships formed; (b) assess the achievement of the intended organizational goals and development results, highlighting key results of outputs and outcomes, lessons learnt and good practices; (c) based on the actual results, ascertain how the RCF has contributed to strategically positioning UNDP to establish its comparative advantage or niche as a major upstream global policy advisor for poverty reduction and sustainable human development and as a knowledge-based organization in the region; (d) ascertain the degree of innovation among the initiatives undertaken within the RCF programmed project portfolio, their value addition and contribution to generating and sharing knowledge within UNDP and with programme countries; and (e) develop specific recommendations for the next regional programme for the Arab States.

II. Methodology

II.a: The process

The evaluation exercise was overseen by the EO with relevant involvement of RBAS and was conducted applying a mix of direct and meta-evaluation techniques that utilized the findings of in-depth outcome evaluations of individual programmes conducted before the exercise. Outcome evaluations were available for five of the programmes (see Table 1). These were supplemented with the direct collection of monitoring data, structured and semi-structured interviews and the

¹ Statement by Associate Administrator to the Executive Board, 17 June 2004, Item 5: Country programmes and related matters, Executive Board of the UNDP and the UNFPA, 14-25 June 2004, Geneva.

review of relevant reports and papers – both produced by the projects themselves and by third parties wherever these were relevant to assessing outcomes and impact.

Information on programme outputs was collected from the project staff. Where individual outcome evaluations were not conducted, additional effort was devoted to the collection of project information from project personnel and from partners.

Review of documentation: All available project and programme documentation pertaining to results were reviewed including: the RCF, the AHDR and supporting papers, the evaluation report of the previous RCF, relevant Executive Board documentation, project documents, project work plans, strategy and concept papers, progress reports (where available), documentation pertaining to programme results, project outputs and reports where appropriate, documentation or project websites, surveys of perceptions in the region, and studies prepared by third parties that are of relevance to UNDP programmes.

The universe of projects considered: The evaluation covered programmes and activities designed in support of the ‘three pillars’ of the RCF (2002-2005) as well as those that fell outside the three pillars, but were developed as flagship programmes for the duration of the RCF. It also only included projects funded from regional TRAC for most of the RCF period. It therefore excluded²: i) regional programmes funded entirely under the global cooperation framework or the Global Environment Facility (GEF); ii) projects that were designed and implemented to support the broad objectives of previous RCFs and were financially completed prior to the mid-point of the current RCF cycle; and iii) minor projects that were intended for programme support.

The evaluation was based on the RCF itself and covered all programme activities outlined in the RCF document, excluding projects that were initiated during the previous RCF but were not mentioned as an integral part of the current RCF’s design. Bearing in mind UNDP’s effort to move further upstream and to measure results in terms of development outcomes including those beyond the immediate scope of individual projects, the evaluation focused on assessing the achievement of development outcomes to the extent that this was possible.

The frame of reference Establishing a frame of reference for measuring the performance of the RCF proved particularly difficult. The RCF document itself, individual programme documents and corporate strategic results framework (SRF) / results oriented annual reports (ROAR) that pertained to relevant years during the RCF were all considered as potentially viable bases for the assessment of performance. Further discussion of the issue may be found in section II.b, ‘Measuring results – in search of a viable frame of reference’.

Surveys and interviews Additional RCF-level information was obtained through the distribution of a questionnaire (see appendix IV) to all relevant country offices and regional programme managers. This was then supplemented with semi-structured interviews with UNDP programme staff in the RBAS, regional centres, regional programme managers, partners and other stakeholders (see appendix II).

Country office visits and consultations The evaluation team undertook visits to capitals hosting some of the key regional programmes. The team travelled to Egypt, Jordan and Syria³ where consultations were held with

- project personnel

² As a result analysis of the financial parameters of the RCF differs somewhat

³ Travel to Beirut was not possible because of security concerns.

- regional programme coordinators of projects hosted in the country
- project staff
- UNDP staff
- staff from key ministries involved with UNDP programme activities
- staff of regional institutions involved with the programme
- members of civil society organizations (CSO) involved with programme activities
- staff of other partner institutions

Telephone interviews were conducted with other offices including those that did not host any of the regional programmes but were participants/beneficiaries. Triangulation was used for the verification throughout.

Table 1: Outcome Evaluations Undertaken

Number	Title	Location	Description
RAB/99/005	Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR)	Beirut, Lebanon	Promotes good governance in the region including rule of law and participation, transparency and accountability through policy advice, capacity building and pilot projects.
RAB/01/005	Primary Education Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)	New York, USA	Collection of information on education at all levels in the region with a view to improving the quality and scope of education.
RAB/02/001	Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), Phase II	Tunis, Tunisia	Research and field studies on gender issues and the collection and analysis of statistics pertaining to women's economic, social and political conditions.
RAB/02/003	ICT for Development in the Arab Region (ICTDAR)	Cairo, Egypt	Awareness raising and stakeholder campaigns. Capacity building. Pro-poor growth and employment generation focusing on ICT in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). Digital initiatives for poverty reduction.
RAB/02/MO1	HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States (HARPAS)	Cairo, Egypt	Create heightened awareness and build commitment in the fight against HIV/AIDS. High priority, catalytic regional interventions to pave the way for country level follow-up.

II.b. Measuring results – in search of a viable frame of reference

Establishing a viable frame of reference for measuring results in terms of outcomes and impact of the RCF and its constituent programmes has proved to be perhaps the most significant challenge in undertaking this evaluation, particularly as data was not being collected and monitored for the purpose of assessing outcomes and impact.

In theory there exist at least four potential frames of reference within which performance of the programme could be assessed:

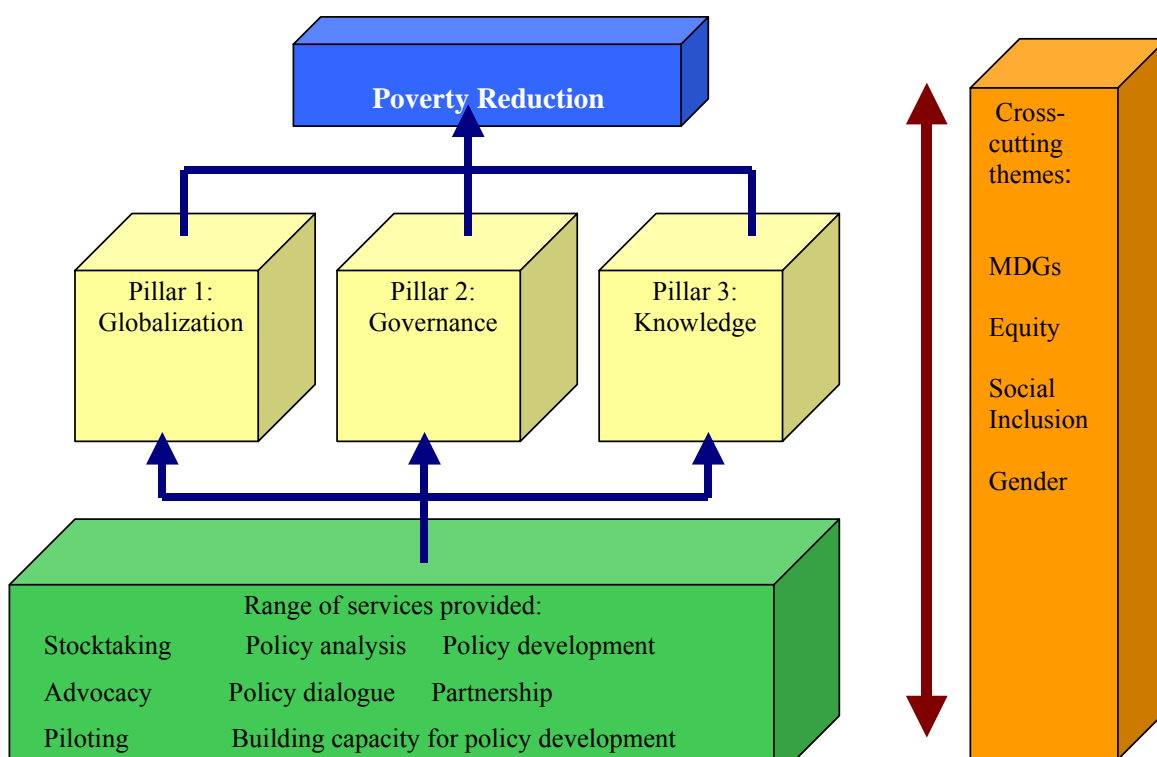
1. **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** Several RCF programmes could be said to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs and targets, particularly:
 - **Goal 1:** Reduction of poverty (the overall stated goal of the RCF)
 - **Goal 3:** Gender equality and empowerment of women, especially as it pertains to education (POGAR, Centre for Arab Women Training and Research - CAWTAR, TIMSS, higher education)
 - **Goal 6:** Reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS (HARPAS)

- **Goal 7:** Halve the proportion of people without access to safe water (Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme - METAP)
- **Goal 8:** Pertaining to employment of youth and the spread of new technologies (globalization, ICTDAR)

However, realistically speaking, the contribution of programmes of this magnitude and design would require a much longer period of implementation and substantially more resources in order to be reasonably expected to have an impact on MDGs.

2. **Objectives as stated in the RCF document** (see figure 1 below) These were considered to be too general to serve as a viable framework for monitoring and evaluating performance on their own and it was noted that no data was collected for the purpose.
3. **The corporate SRF/ROAR** It was noted that while internally the RCF results were presented in terms of the achievement of corporate SRFs, the latter had changed several times during the RCF cycle and were presented at such a high level of aggregation that causality between project outputs and intended SRF goals were difficult to ascertain and validate, even taking into account the efforts of partners that operate in the same sector or thematic area.
4. **Objectives and outputs stated in project documents** These provided a reasonable basis for assessing performance although none of the projects established baselines, defined indicators of performance or collected data pertaining to them, restricting themselves to enumerating the outputs produced.

Figure 1 STRUCTURE OF THE RBAS RCF (2002-2005)



It was decided that given the paucity of data, the only viable frame of reference would be to identify and assess the outputs produced within the context of each of the service areas identified in the RCF under each project and then assess how outputs were used and the outcomes that resulted from them (i.e. using a combination of 2 and 4).

Using this as a basis, if a regional project workshop on corruption adopted a resolution to establish independent anti-corruption commissions at the country level, did it result in further dialogue at the national level, changes in policy and/or the establishment of independent commissions, and if so, in how many countries? The regional workshop and its joint declaration would be considered outputs, while all of the latter would be considered outcomes (Impact would pertain to a measurable effect that the commissions would have on curbing corruption).

II.c: Methodological limitations

The absence of monitoring systems at the project or programme level to check the achievement of outcome level results as defined in the SRF/ROAR, RCF document, project documents or action plans presented a problem throughout, requiring the evaluators to identify potential indicators of performance and seek third party sources for the information collected or to attempt to define and collect information on a snapshot basis.

Relevant baseline data had not been defined or collected with the intention of measuring the performance of programmes from the outset of their implementation so progress could only be inferred through the secondary assessment of trends or particular events that were caused by activities undertaken under UNDP's regional projects.

The inability to aggregate quantitative indicators in a meaningful way presented a problem when attempting to measure performance. Where broad national indicators were used as measures of development, attribution to the UNDP programme was a problem, particularly given the relatively small size of UNDP programmes. Assessment of impact was also relatively difficult as most projects focused principally on advocacy and the promotion of dialogue and because causality was often difficult to verify.

The evaluation would have benefited from either more numerous country visits, or from extensive preparatory work to collect the required information and documents including those from secondary sources, and undoubtedly from more time in each country visited.

It should be noted that most of the individual programme evaluations undertaken did not contain information pertaining to outcomes or impact; most of the evaluations restricted themselves to an evaluation of relevance, design, implementation and outputs. In a few instances this may have been due to the fact that the projects were evaluated relatively early on in their implementation.

In accordance with the overall intent of the evaluation, it did not include much direct verification of programme outputs. This was left up to the evaluations that were already conducted. It therefore does not constitute a technical evaluation of the quality of work done. Rather, it is a general assessment of the development results generated through UNDP assistance in terms of outcomes and impact of the assistance provided through UNDP's regional programme.

PART II Analysis and findings

I. Profile of the regional cooperation framework

I.a: Conceptual design

Pillars The RCF for 2002-2005 is cast within the overall context of UNDP's mandate for poverty reduction, but focuses on **three strategic support areas or 'pillars'**, namely: globalization, governance and knowledge⁴. All three pillars are supposed to contribute to the reduction of poverty although it is not clear that poverty reduction has been an explicit criterion in the design of programmes in each of the pillars. There are also important flagship programmes such as RAB/03/001 HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in Arab States (HARPAS) and the Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme IV (METAP) that fall outside the three pillars and yet constitute an important feature of UNDP's regional programme.

Cross-cutting values Equity, social inclusion and knowledge (also a pillar) are stated cross-cutting values that are intended to thread all three pillars and permeate the RCF. The efforts to secure equity and social inclusion were to consist of a special emphasis on gender equality and the empowerment and participation of women - factors that would presumably permeate all of UNDP's regional programmes.

Services The UNDP programme is designed to deliver a **range of services** within the three pillars including:

- i) stocktaking;
- ii) policy analysis and development;
- iii) advocacy, policy dialogue and debate to build partnerships and momentum for positive change;
- iv) policy advice to provide well-informed options in follow-up to advocacy and dialogue;
- v) capacity building for policy formulation and implementation and to stimulate the policy debate;
- vi) innovative pilot activities with the potential for replication and scaling-up;
- vii) knowledge generation, dissemination and sharing; and
- viii) the creation of strategic partnerships.

Some projects were designed to deliver more than one of these services⁵.

⁴ EB/.../..., UNDP, regional cooperation framework for the Arab States, (2002-2005), first regular session 2002, 28 January – 8 February 2002, New York.

⁵ For example, according to the RCF, the AHDR was intended to contribute to advocacy, policy dialogue and debate. Regularly published during the RCF period, it was to also involve stocktaking, situational analyses and the provision of policy advice.

Partnerships: Partnerships in the implementation of the RCF were to include a host of Arab governments, civil society, academic and policy institutions. Cross-thematic strategic partnerships were to be established to coincide with the multi sectoral approach, the objective being to create synergy by capitalizing on the efforts and resources that UNDP and other organizations can bring to bear on regional development problems. Partnerships with regional organizations, particularly the Arab League and its affiliated institutions and associations, regional development banks such as the African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and the Arab Gulf Programme were to be of central importance. Partnerships with other UN organizations, the European Union (EU) and World Bank were also considered crucial.

Table 2: Below Lists the Main Flagship Projects that Constitute the RCF.

Table 2 REGIONAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK (2002-2005) – FLAGSHIP PROJECTS				
Pillar	Number	Title	Location	Description
Governance	RAB/99/001	League of Arab States (LAS)	Cairo, Egypt	UNDP/LAS partnerships for the promotion of human development and MDGs in the Arab States.
Governance	RAB/99/005	Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR)	Beirut, Lebanon	Promotes good governance in the region including rule of law and participation, transparency and accountability through policy advice, capacity building and pilot projects.
Knowledge	RAB/01/002	Higher education	Amman, Jordan	Improves the economic efficiency of university education, enhancing local and global competitiveness through linkages with global labour markets.
Governance	RAB.01/004	Human Development and Human Rights in the Arab States	Beirut, Lebanon	Builds regional capacity for advocacy and promotion of human rights-based development. Develops novel approaches to integration of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development in programming at the country level.
Knowledge	RAB/01/005	Primary Education Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)	New York, USA	Collection of information on education at all levels in the region with a view to improving the quality and scope of education.
Knowledge	RAB/02/001	Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), Phase II	Tunis, Tunisia	Research and field studies on gender issues and the collection and analysis of statistics pertaining to women's economic, social and political conditions.
Knowledge	RAB/02/003	ICT for Development in the Arab Region (ICTDAR)	Cairo, Egypt	Awareness raising and stakeholder campaigns. Capacity building. Pro-poor growth and employment generation focusing on ICT in SMEs. Digital initiatives for poverty reduction.
Other	RAB/02/MO1	HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States (HARPAS)	Cairo, Egypt	Create heightened awareness and build commitment in the fight against HIV/AIDS. High priority, catalytic regional interventions to pave the way for country level follow-up.
Other		Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistant Programme, (METAP) IV		Covers countries beyond the Arab States.

In terms of their focus on the different service areas identified under the RCF (see Table 3 below), the majority of the newer flagship project of the RCF focus heavily on: i) stocktaking and analysis; ii) knowledge sharing and dissemination; iii) advocacy and the creation of dialogue and iv) the fostering of partnerships and networks. Relatively few activities and resources are devoted to policy advice, policy development, capacity building and pilot projects.

Table 3: Services Areas of the RCF

	Project Number & Title	Stock-taking & Analysis	Knowledge Sharing & Dissemination	Advocacy & Dialogue	Partnerships & Networks	Policy Advice To Specific Clients	Policy Development	Capacity Building	Piloting
GOVERNANCE	RAB/99/001 League Of Arab States	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
	RAB/99/005 Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
	RAB/01/004 Human Development and Human Rights in the Region of the Arab States	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
KNOWLEDGE	RAB/01/002 Higher education	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
	RAB/01/005 Primary Education Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
	RAB/02/001 Centre for Arab Women Training and Research II (CAWTAR)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
	RAB/02/003 ICT for Development in the Arab Region (ICTDAR)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

GLOBALIZATION	RAB/02/005 Strengthening Capacities for Promoting Arab Economic Growth Under Globalization	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
OTHER	RAB/02/M01 HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States (HARPAS)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
	Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme, IV	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

This is probably appropriate as the programmes are focused on areas that have until recently rarely been in the official spotlight and have not been discussed openly. In the Arab region, several countries until recently refused to acknowledge the existence of poverty. Governance issues such as those pertaining to democratization, transparency and accountability, independence of the judiciary and the rule of law were essentially taboo as was discussion of the prevalence and the modes of HIV transmission and the nature and size of high risk groups. Even the quality of education was not extensively debated. Raising the profile of such issues and provoking a debate is therefore a major achievement in itself and requires considerable effort. Stocktaking, advocacy and dissemination of knowledge are particularly urgent and necessary before one can expect extensive policy reforms and changes in approaches.

A move towards policy shifts, development of institutional capacity and even the implementation of domestic resources will probably require more time as new ideas and approaches take hold. Furthermore, such programmes will probably require considerably more resources and a stronger presence at the national level than is currently available under the regional programme.

I.b: Financial structure and performance

Comprehensive financial figures⁶ for all projects under the RCF are presented in appendix V. A total of just over US\$20 million has been allocated in cost-sharing⁷ and TRAC to **governance** since 2002, somewhat over US\$14 million to **knowledge**, just under US\$4 million to **globalization** and US\$3.5 million to **'other'** projects including HARPAS (see Table 4 below). It should be noted that the total figure for globalization is somewhat deceptive, as although projects under the pillar have been terminated, the financial tables have re-phased unspent balances beyond 2005.

⁶ All financial information in this section and in the appendix were supplied by RBAS in consultation with UNOPS. Final expenditure figures were not yet available for 2004 from UNOPS, and therefore constitute estimated expenditures. Figures for 2005 are projections based on current RBAS expectations. All balances remaining have been shown as rephasings beyond 2005.

⁷ All figures pertaining to cost sharing include trust funds as well as third party cost sharing.

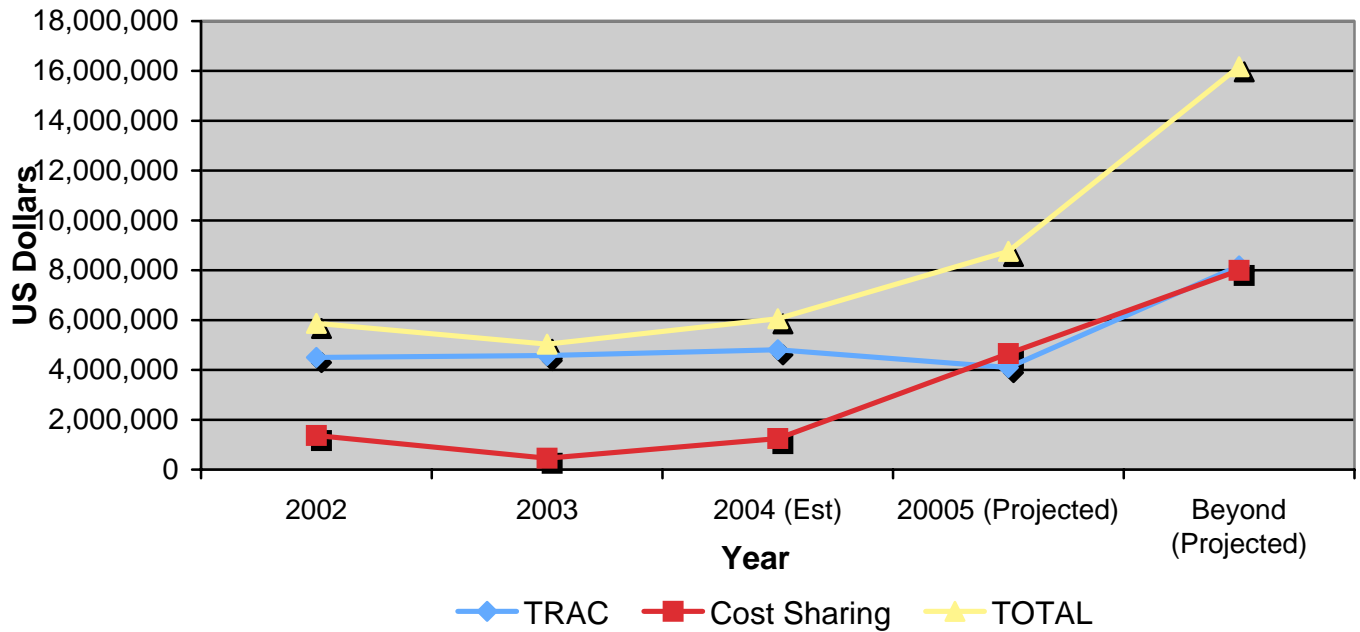
Table 4: Total Budgets by Pillar/US Dollars

	Project	Title	C/S	TRAC	Total
Governance	RAB/86/047	Administrative development of the Secretariat of the Arab League	0	-272,171	-272,171
Governance	RAB/01/001	AHDR	620,631	4,586,034	5,206,665
Governance	Rab/99/001	Cooperation with the LAS	0	255,758	255,758
Governance	RAB/96/007	Development of national gender statistics in the Arab countries	0	32,942	32,942
Governance	RAB/99/005	POGAR	10,615,671	3,897,010	14,512,681
Governance	RAB/01/004	Human development and human rights	0	414,554	414,554
TOTAL GOVERNANCE			11,236,302	8,914,127	20,150,429
	Project	Title	C/S	TRAC	Total
Globalization	RAB/02/005	Arab economic growth under globalization	0	3,500,000	3,500,000
Globalization	RAB/99/006	Globalization initiative	0	-29	-29
Globalization	RAB/95/003	Poverty in the Arab region	0	-74,684	-74,684
Globalization	RAB/96/005	Promoting technical and industrial culture	0	-115,578	-115,578
Globalization	RAB/97/004	Strengthening the finance sector	0	3,563	3,563
Globalization	RAB/96/001	Support to Arab States in pursuit of economic development	0	495,897	495,897
Globalization	RAB/99/004	Support to SMEs in the Arab region	0	1,831	1,831
TOTAL GLOBALIZATION			0	3,811,000	3,811,000
	Project	Title	C/S	TRAC	Total
Knowledge	RAB/94/004	CAWTAR I	0	353,182	353,182
Knowledge	RAB/98/002	CAWTAR II	34,965	54,383	89,348
Knowledge	RAB/02/001	CAWTAR III	580,000	1,245,707	1,825,707
Knowledge	RAB/02/003	ICTDAR	777,332	2,500,000	3,277,332
Knowledge	RAB/01/003	Intellectual capital development (ICD)	0	173,511	173,511
Knowledge	RAB/99/002	Preparatory assistance for IT build-up	0	-23,403	-23,403
Knowledge	RAB/01/002	Quality assessment of higher education institutes in the Arab countries	0	4,670,011	4,670,011
Knowledge	RAB/96/003	Strengthening and mobilizing the intellectual property system	0	7,520	7,520
Knowledge	RAB/01/005	TIMSS	0	3,901,437	3,901,437
TOTAL KNOWLEDGE			1,392,297	12,882,348	14,274,645

	Project	Title	C/S	TRAC	Total
Other	RAB/03/001	HARPAS Mediterranean Development Forum (MDF-3)	2,107,608	738,807	2,846,415
Other	RAB/00/001	Preparatory assistance for the Nile basin	20,000	63,257	83,257
Other	RAB/96/008	Promotion of sustainable human development (SHD) in the Arab States	0	46,813	46,813
Other	RAB/94/760	Regional Capacity Building Programme(METAP)	0	27,035	27,035
Other	RAB/96/002	RCF Programme cost-sharing	489,030	44,009	533,039
Other	RAB/96/888	Supplementary water management under rain-fed agriculture	481,012	-481,012	0
Other	RAB/90/005	Aqua culture development in the Mediterranean region (MEDRAP) II	0	77,897	77,897
Other	RAB/89/005	Surveillance of disease and germplasm enhancement for cereals and legumes	0	4,455	4,455
Other	RAB/91/007		0	31,569	31,569
TOTAL OTHER:			3,097,650	552,830	3,650,480
GRAND TOTAL			15,726,249	26,160,305	41,886,554

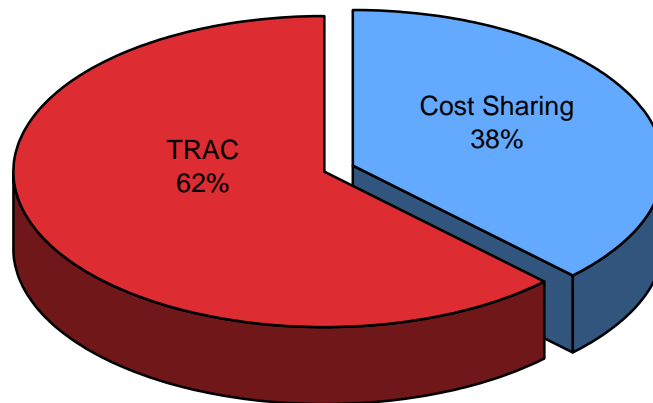
Total expenditures hovered around US\$5.5 million per year in 2002/2003 and then rose to US\$8.8 million in 2005. A total of US\$16.2 million (39 percent) or US\$12.7 million (30 percent) excluding the globalization pillar is being re-phased beyond 2005. This pattern of expenditure, with relatively slow start-up in expenditures and cost sharing budgets is perhaps typical of a new programme that is dependent on early advocacy. Perhaps not unexpectedly, overall delivery has been between 60 and 70 percent.

Estimated Annual Delivery (2002-2005)/US Dollars



Cost-sharing in the RCF under review totalled US\$15.7 million and was deployed in conjunction with US\$26.2 million in TRAC, a ratio of about 0.6 : 1. The largest volume of cost-sharing was received under the governance pillar. Despite the lengthy duration of most projects in the knowledge pillar, it received a relatively low volume of cost-sharing. HARPAS and other projects have had the highest leverage, mobilizing US\$5 of cost-sharing for every US\$1 of TRAC. It

Proportion of Cost-Sharing to TRAC for RCF Regional Programmes



should be noted that the regional bureau was hesitant to accept third party cost-sharing during the early years of the cycle to avoid accusations of being donor driven. Growing acceptance of the

content of the programme in member states of the region has enabled the regional bureau to accept much larger volumes of cost-sharing over time. The largest recipients of cost-sharing have been the projects given in Table 5 below.

Table 5: RCF (2002-2005) Projects with Most Significant Levels of Cost-sharing (in US Dollars)

Project	Title	2002	2003	2004	2005	After	TOTAL
RAB/01/001	AHDR	22,960	39,939	0	498,866	58,866	620,631
RAB/02/001	CAWTAR III	0	150,000	0	285,600	144,400	580,000
RAB/99/005	POGAR	165,587	0	816,649	3,000,000	6,633,435	10,615,671
RAB/03/001	HARPAS	158,209	262,398	227,165	300,000	1,159,836	2,107,608
RAB/02/003	ICTDAR	0	0	203,893	573,439	0	777,332
Total		346,756	452,337	1,247,707	4,657,905	7,996,537	14,701,242

Very high estimates of parallel funding were provided to the evaluation team by project and RBAS staff particularly in conjunction with flagship programmes such as POGAR, HARPAS and ICTDAR, all of which operate in thematic areas that are likely to be attractive to donors. However, in the absence of hard evidence of funding allocations by other donors, figures have not been presented here. Further assessments would have to be made in order to ascertain the extent to which there is a direct causality between the presence of a UNDP project and the allocation of parallel funding by other donors.

II. Design and strategic positioning

Regional programmes have, in the past, been used by Regional Bureaux at UNDP as a facility to address issues of cross-border significance that need to be jointly addressed by concerned countries. Technical programmes such as international telecommunications, civil aviation and management of river basins across multiple riparian states and other projects requiring international management have constituted the ‘bread and butter’ of regional programmes. Some of the older projects under this RCF, such as METAP, fall within this category.

Earlier regional programmes have also been subject to extensive *a priori* consultation and negotiation with governments of member states (for instance by soliciting project ideas from countries in the region and by holding ministerial conferences to seek endorsement of programme ideas and strategies) and have been managed jointly by the Regional Bureau headquarters and country offices. This has, however, tended to preclude them from addressing cutting edge development issues and to focus them on the creation and strengthening of international institutions of a regional or sub-regional nature.

The RCF (2002-2005) has made a bold break with this past in that it has:

- i. focused on **cutting edge issues** that are generally not officially acknowledged or discussed openly within countries of the region, but are of direct relevance to much of the population;
- ii. focused heavily on **stocktaking and analysis, advocacy** of best practices and policy positions that would serve to overcome critical human development deficits, creating vigorous dialogue at the regional and country levels and the promulgation of civil society partnerships to reinforce the effectiveness of the advocacy work; and

- iii. **managed the RCF almost exclusively from RBAS headquarters** with a view to ensuring coherence and strength of the message.

The RCF was mostly prepared within RBAS headquarters, with relatively limited discussion even with Resident Representatives and country offices. Unlike the case of earlier regional programmes, no extensive process of consultation was held with government officials to review and seek endorsement of the RCF prior to its submission to the Executive Board. Rather, individual programmes were submitted for governmental review and signature after they had been designed and drafted. Almost without exception, external consultants and UNDP staff drafted the project documents of flagship programmes. Signature by governments was, in most cases, obtained from the majority of countries and this was accepted as ‘buy-in’ on the part of the participating countries.

Box 1 ARAB HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS PUBLISHED (2002-2005)

- **AHDR 2002:** Provides an overall assessment of the human development deficits in the region, covering competitiveness of the labour force, unemployment, education, health and governance, among other issues.
- **AHDR 2003:** Building a Knowledge Society. Focuses on deficits in the quality of education in the region with its implications for competitiveness as well as access and flow of information in most countries.
- **AHDR 2004:** Towards Freedom in the Arab World. Focuses on shortcomings in governance, legislation and institutions throughout the region.

As such, the RCF (2002 – 2005) has been a bold experiment aimed at influencing and altering the policies and priorities for development in the region while eschewing *a priori* ownership and buy-in. It is a distinctive model for a ‘new UNDP’ that in addition to ensuring long-term capacity development with full national ownership, is also prepared to advocate strongly for issues of developmental importance despite early political resistance and where the regional programme, which traditionally has had less clearly defined ownership at the country level, is used as the instrument to lead the advocacy process.

The regional programme for Arab States is dominated by the AHDR. Indeed, as far as the “Arab Street” is concerned, it is probably fair to say that UNDP *is* the AHDR. While every AHDR has provoked a lot of controversy and criticism from the outset, including overt and not so overt efforts to stop their publication, it is remarkable how they have also become the centre of discussion at both the regional and national levels, and have rapidly gained currency as institutions in the region. Some governments have acknowledged the importance of the issues raised and have begun to work on them.

So far, three AHDRs have been produced during the RCF period, in 2002, 2003 and 2004 (see Box 1). Individual regional projects such as POGAR, Higher Education and TIMSS have all contributed to the preparation of one or more AHDRs through the collection, collation and analysis of information pertaining to their thematic areas (‘stocktaking’) and by having regional programme managers review draft sections of the AHDR and supporting papers. The AHDR, in turn, has served to draw attention to significant deficits in human development that have been subsequently addressed in individual regional projects.

The AHDR, funded under the RCF (principally RAB/01/001), has been the Regional Bureau’s policy and advocacy flagship initiative. It has been strongly led by the Assistant Administrator as well as the Regional Director for RBAS, who has devoted her considerable political and personal capital to the effort. As a result, the AHDRs, which have taken on cutting edge issues, have undoubtedly been the centre of controversy and debate throughout the Arab States and beyond. However, they have also strongly repositioned UNDP on the map of development policy in the region.

The success of AHDRs has been all the more impressive as the United Nations has been battling a perception on the ‘Arab Street’ that it is heavily influenced by a Western, if not an American, agenda. This view has been further fuelled by Security Council decisions pertaining to sanctions and the *post facto* recognition of the role of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. This perception of bias has in part been overcome by the AHDR’s frank treatment of issues in the reports (that have struck sensitive chords not just with Arab governments, but with Western governments and the US in particular), by the use of well established and respected authors from the region, by the use of a highly respected Advisory Board and through the effective and carefully orchestrated media campaign associated with the launch of each report.

There is no doubt that the AHDR has both used information gathered through the UNDP’s regional projects and has in turn served to position the UNDP RCF and its constituent regional projects effectively by creating space for them in the development sphere, more specifically precisely in the areas adopted as pillars of the RCF:

- **Governance:** participation, equity, women’s participation, transparency, accountability, independence of the judiciary, development of democratic institutions;
- **Knowledge:** work on improvement of the quality of education, creation of greater openness in the dissemination and exchange of information and the use of content-centred information technologies as an engine for development; and
- **Globalization:** maximising employment while freeing up trade regimes and fostering economic growth with equity in an increasingly globalized world; the growth of domestic industry with trade.

Regional projects have served to bring together academics, religious leaders, civil society organizations, the media, private sector and governments to further discuss the status of issues identified in the AHDR and to sow the seeds for dialogue at the country level. Fostering dialogue at the regional level has at times enabled circumvention of restrictions that most frequently operate at the national level.

Some regional projects, such as HARPAS, have adopted very bold and innovative advocacy strategies. Addressing an issue that is generally taboo in much of the region because of the nature of risk behaviours associated with it, is in itself a major achievement.

This overall combination of the AHDR with the regional programme has undoubtedly served to strongly position UNDP as a major interlocutor in the region’s development policy debates and to raise the level of dialogue on issues that are critical to development but that were previously rarely, if ever, discussed in officially endorsed fora.

While based on systematic analysis and identification of some of the most critical structural constraints to development in the Arab world, the pillars of the RCF have drawn UNDP into areas outside the corporate practice areas. While it has effectively positioned UNDP in the debate, UNDP’s own ability to follow through with programmes at the country level and to provide substantive backup from either the subregional resource facility (SURF) or the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) has been limited. In such instances, UNDP’s ability to follow up at the country level, beyond the limited number of pilot activities that could be funded from the RCF, was also severely limited. Follow up would therefore have to be carried out through partners and networks created in order to get relevant feedback into corporate policy. This is more

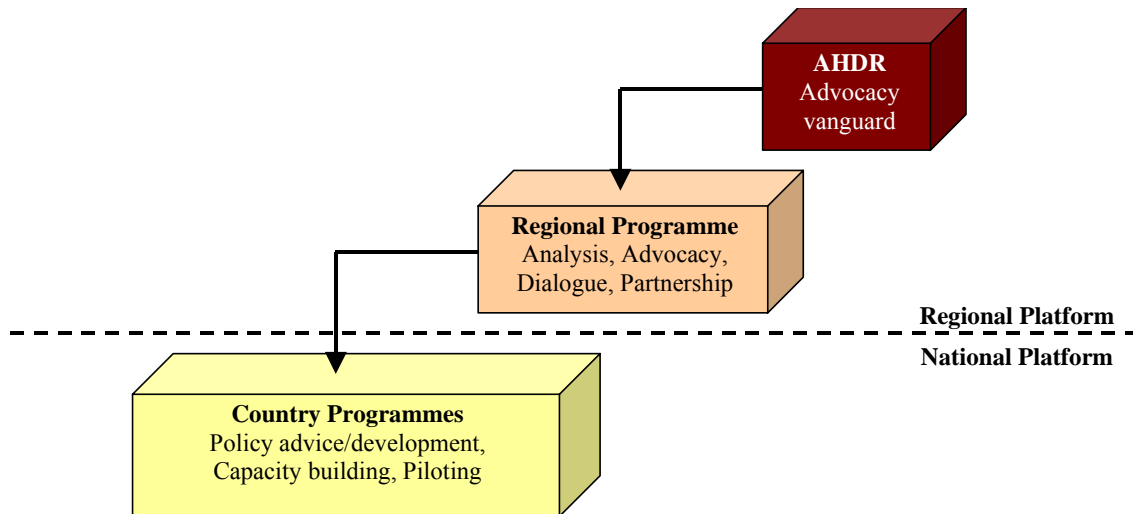
difficult to achieve and requires extensive strategizing and planning based on a thorough understanding of political, social and institutional dynamics, as well as of the range of stakeholders and potential partners in the sector and the issues that drive them.

It is also perhaps worth noting that as stated in the RCF, the common objective that all three pillars are supposed to contribute to is the reduction of poverty. Yet, it is not clear from the design of the individual programmes (with the possible exception of those under the globalization pillar) how precisely they are expected to address poverty except in the very long run; poverty reduction was therefore probably more political rhetoric than development objective. Furthermore, while some projects (HARPAS, ICTDAR and POGAR) have sought to promote joint activities during implementation, mutual reinforcement between pillars could perhaps have been more clearly designed into the RCF from the very outset in order to optimize the use of limited resources.

In summary then, the strategic content and positioning of the AHDR and RCF have created several 'dynamic tensions' that will need to be carefully managed by the Regional Bureau:

- i. between advocacy that pushes the envelope, and the ability to demonstrate concrete results on the ground in terms of national policy shifts, institutional change and institutional development;
- ii. between the need to respond to needs that emerge from the analysis of the AHDR and UNDP's own capacities and corporate directions; and
- iii. between UNDP's need to preserve its partnership and relationship of trust with government at the country level and under country programmes, and its ongoing effort to use the AHDR and the RCF as an advocacy vanguard to pursue new and crucial areas in the effort to create progress and development in the region.

While these are issues that need to be borne constantly in mind and actively addressed in the management of the RCF and the AHDR, they should not result in a shift away from a formula that: i) uses the AHDR as an advocacy vanguard; ii) informs an RCF that is focused largely on analysis, dialogue and partnership development; and iii) country cooperation frameworks (CCF)/country programmes (CP) that are focused on the provision of policy advice, policy development, capacity development, the implementation of pilot programmes and corporate practice.



Flexibility has been an important feature of regional programme design. None of the flagship programmes such as POGAR, ICTDAR, HARPAS, CAWTAR have adhered to a fixed strategy. Like all good advocacy programmes, they have sought opportunities and openings, which by their very nature are rarely static. On the other hand, several opportunities that have arisen require concerted, long-term action in order to be successful. These would benefit greatly from longer-term planning with a phased approach, beginning with advocacy and dialogue through partnership development, and ending in policy change, institutional reform and capacity development. Such longer-term planning would also enable better integration and programmatic dovetailing with country programmes that are better equipped to undertake the policy change, institutional reform and capacity development activities that require action at the country level.

III. Programme results

In overall regional terms, the regional programme has served to analyse the current state of human development in the region, to identify some of the critical constraints to generating sustainable progress and to generate debate and dialogue on issues that have previously remained unaddressed. The quality of education at the tertiary level and the promulgation of access to ICT and their role in raising the competitiveness of countries in the Arab States, the existence of HIV/AIDS in the region and the need to address it in a humane and understanding manner with a view to curtailing its spread, and the need to empower women politically, economically and socially have all been the subject of debate in the press, regional workshops with influential policy makers and even in national policy-making forums as a consequence of the regional programme. Key issues pertaining to good governance including particularly sensitive issues such as independence of the judiciary, the role of women in government, corruption and accountability and liberal democracy have all been the subject of discussion at the regional level and it could be stated that the regional programme has contributed to greater awareness on the part of policy makers and the public of comparative systems of governance as well as the rights of individuals. The regional programme has also served as a platform to generate regional declarations on several of the above issues that can serve as a basis for policy coordination and development in the future.

Yet, the regional platform in this RCF has been largely used as a vehicle to accelerate progress in human development at the national level as assessed by its impact on national policies and programmes. The principal focus of this evaluation has therefore been on the nexus between regional activities and results generated at the national level.

All activities under the globalization pillar were halted as there was an urgent need to reassess the overall focus and direction of activities in light of changes in the needs of the region, the role played by other multilateral actors and UNDP's own capabilities. An initial focus on microcredit and economic growth did not appear to be effective in the regional context. There were also problems in the selection of project personnel and in establishing project activities.

This section therefore outlines the results achieved under flagship projects of the other two pillars and these are summarized in Appendix IV.

RAB/99/005 – Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR)

Governance based on democratic principles has long been largely absent in the region. Publication of the AHDRs has, among other things, galvanized voices across the Arab region calling for reform, respect for human freedoms and good governance. Far from being the Western imposition that some have suspected (though the West retains clear interests in specific types of reform), such calls increasingly emanate from the Arab world itself; from among reform-minded political figures, intellectuals, CSOs and others. These calls for reform and democratization stem from a keen commitment to improve the lives of Arabs in their own countries and so to strengthen the position and ability of Arab states to prosper and compete in an increasingly globalized economic and social environment. As the third AHDR (2004) has clearly demonstrated, the Arab world is not devoid of progress in these areas, but much remains to be done.

Noteworthy trends in democratization in the Arab world include (but are not limited to) the following:

- CSOs spearheading the impetus to reform (for example, the Sana'a Declaration of January 2004 and the Alexandria Charter of March 2004);
- a commitment by the government of Morocco to address the disappearances of political opponents;
- a demand to investigate security forces responsible for inflicting torture on victims in Bahrain;
- calls for lifting states of emergency (Syria, Egypt);
- the licensing of CSOs in Syria;
- demands for improving the situation of minority groups and women in Saudi Arabia;
- movement for women's representation and participation in parliaments (Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, UAE);
- national and local elections in Saudi Arabia;
- elections in the Palestinian Territories;
- calls for greater transparency and for multiparty democracy in Egypt;
- participation of multiple political parties in elections in Egypt; and

- the conclusion of peace accords leading to broader and more equitable participation in Sudan⁸.

Ultimately, progress in democratization hinges on concrete reforms in key areas: independence of the judiciary, transparent and accountable governments, separation of the executive and legislative sectors, decentralization, respect for and implementation of human rights, respect for press freedoms, freedom of association, free and fair elections, and the right to form political parties, to name the most commonly cited indicators. Progress in the following areas is less uniform and less advanced in the Arab world:

- political parties are allowed in 14 Arab countries (but where they do exist, they are often strictly regulated);
- CSOs are subject to stringent controls (with the possible exceptions of Morocco and Lebanon);
- press freedoms are restricted by law in 11 Arab countries (laws allowing journalists the right to obtain news operate in Algeria, Sudan, Yemen, Egypt and Jordan);
- a disparity between written laws and their implementation in practice has compromised the independence of the judiciary in areas such as the right of citizens to fair trials in many Arab countries;
- the right to citizenship and who may benefit from the rights conferred by citizenship varies among Arab states; in many situations minority groups, migrants and even women are denied or restricted in their rights;
- consistency between state constitutions and human rights principles and instruments remains problematic in some Arab countries where language inserted into the constitutions sometimes reflects adherence to religious tenets over and above internationally recognized principles (for example, Yemen);
- centralization and monopoly of power by the executive in Arab states under emergency laws (for example, Egypt, Syria, Sudan) have inevitably resulted in weak judiciaries, compliant parliaments and passive and fearful citizenry.

POGAR is one of the longest ongoing projects in the RCF. It began implementation in November 1999 and operated from RBAS headquarters in New York until it was co-located with the SURF in Beirut in mid-2002. The project was originally executed by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and was subsequently transferred to UNOPS execution.

The project was understaffed at the very beginning of the operation, but since then has been reinforced with a number of consultants and operations personnel. They operate both out of POGAR's offices in Beirut as well as through an innovative approach that allows some staff to operate from their home bases in other countries (Egypt, Palestinian Territories and USA). For instance, POGAR's website is managed remotely.

Results

POGAR has focused its work on:

- **Rule of law** covering issues such as the modernization of Arab Public Prosecutors' Offices, human rights and human development in the Arab region;

⁸ Elections have also been held under very difficult circumstances for the first time in several decades in Iraq producing results that are largely undisputed. The extent to which this will foster the growth of democratic principles and institutions in a sustainable manner is still to be ascertained.

- **Participation** including election systems and frameworks in the Arab region and gender and citizenship in the region;
- **Human rights** addressing gender and human rights, citizenship and its implications for access to protection and human rights and development;
- **Transparency and accountability** covering general good governance for sustainable development, integrity in the civil services, the role and independence of the judiciary and enforcement of the law, the use of e-government for transparency, reform of the public sector, the management of public finance and the re-engineering of public services applying public/private sector partnerships;
- **Knowledge** and access to information pertaining to governance.

In addition to these areas, POGAR has contributed to the preparation of the first and third AHDRs by conducting studies that were used in the report and by having its staff review text and supporting papers. Most of POGAR's work has entailed:

- analysis of data pertaining to each of the areas mentioned above, including legislation and capacity;
- stocktaking and codification of information pertaining to each relevant sector and the publication of documents that explain the current state of each sub-sector or issue in the region;
- workshops and conferences to raise awareness of issues and needs in each sub-sector; and
- the establishment of clearing houses and databases to maintain and share information pertaining to the sector within a network of institutions in the region or beyond.

Capacity building -- according to the broad UNDP definition and in the institutional sense -- and actual pilot programmes have not figured extensively among project activities. Although some projects with capacity building components were developed in UNDP country programmes in the areas addressed by POGAR (e.g. in Yemen, Jordan, Egypt and Morocco), direct linkages to POGAR are difficult to establish. Several training activities were also designed and implemented under POGAR. These are identified in Table 6 above and consisted principally of seminars and workshops, but did not constitute capacity building in accordance with the broader definition used by UNDP.

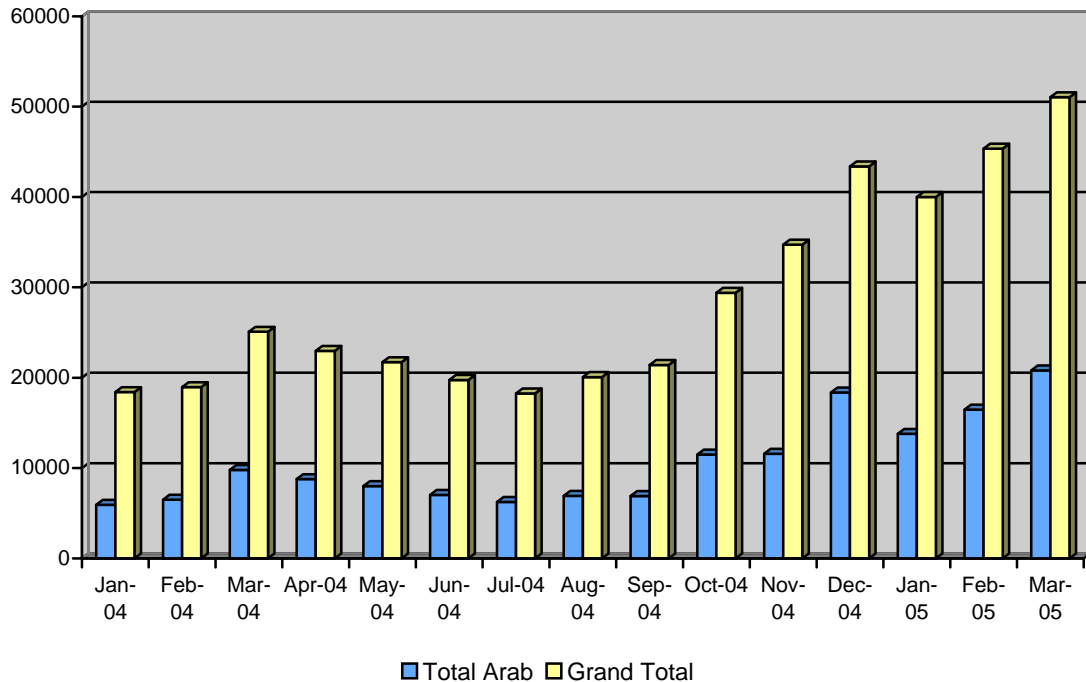
Five subsidiary projects have emanated from POGAR and remained under its umbrella until their completion:

- RAB/01/004 - Human Development and Human Rights;
- RAB//03/M02 - Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund for Strengthening Legislatures;
- RAB/03/H01 – Promoting Good Governance and the Rule of Law in Arab States and Implementing the AHDR; and
- RAB/03/H02 – Promoting Good Governance Through the Rule of Law.

These subsidiary projects have also entailed analysis, stocktaking and codification, workshops and conferences and the establishment of databases. The most significant workshops and publications produced under the POGAR project are enumerated in Table 6 above.

The POGAR website was established as a mechanism for the sharing of information pertaining to governance and as the statistics in the graph below show, there is continuous growth in its use.

Number of Monthly Visitors to POGAR Website



Other Remarks

POGAR has operated in a particularly sensitive sector; one in which the UN has gone from being perceived as neutral to being viewed as driven by the agenda of certain members of the Security Council. Despite this, participation in POGAR events has been both varied and at a high level.

The POGAR project has generated several subsidiary projects at the country level that have extended work done at the regional level. Activities under these subsidiary projects have mirrored those at the regional level - workshops, stocktaking, analysis and information dissemination.

Apart from the broad trends mentioned in Part 1, it is difficult to attribute specific policy shifts or institutional reforms to POGAR's activities. It is strongly recommended that a strategy to transform ongoing advocacy work into projects providing hands-on policy advice, policy development and capacity building be developed. This would probably be best done in close collaboration with UNDP country offices that in most instances have fairly extensive governance programmes.

Efforts to seek synergies between POGAR and other programmes have begun. Considerably more could be done, however in this regard. Collaboration with ICTDAR on e-governance programmes, with CAWTAR on women's participation in governance and with HARPAS on human rights are all areas that should be explored further, and will require the introduction of regular mechanisms for consultation and exchange between the regional projects.

POGAR has been accused of not working closely enough with country offices, failing to keep Resident Representatives sufficiently informed of activities in their countries and failing to seek

programmatic and policy coherence with country projects. More could certainly be done to ensure greater coherence and coordination between the regional and national level instruments of RBAS in this regard. This responsibility would fall to RBAS headquarters, country office staff and POGAR staff themselves.

RAB/ 02/M01 -- HIV/AIDS Regional Programme for Arab States (HARPAS)

HIV/AIDS has been a largely under-reported, formally ignored disease in the Arab region. The official line has been that HIV/AIDS is not a significant problem in the area and that high-risk behaviours are alien to the culture of the region. Sentinel testing has not been systematic and most official estimates have placed the incidence of HIV/AIDS below two percent. HIV/AIDS has been a taboo topic in Arab societies and as is the case in other regions of the world, discussion of high-risk groups and behaviour has also been taboo. Though official statistics suggest that rates of HIV/AIDS infection are lower than in other regions, conditions are ripe in a number of Arab countries for rapid proliferation of the disease. Furthermore, in the absence of open debate and discussion, prevalence estimates are unreliable. Population displacements through conflict, labour migration and international contact have increased the risk of the spread of HIV/AIDS. Governments have been slow, indeed reluctant, to recognize the potential and to respond. Yet immediate action is needed to raise awareness, remove stigmas, protect the vulnerable and treat those infected.

UNDP's HARPAS project has been implemented with a view to drawing attention to the problem and galvanizing opinion -makers into action in order to eliminate barriers to official action.

With current project management in place over just one year, HARPAS has relocated from its original headquarters in Djibouti to Cairo, Egypt. HARPAS' objective is to create awareness and build commitment and leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS (also MDG Goal 6). A central feature of this programme is an advocacy programme entitled 'Breaking the Silence', aimed at increasing the visibility of HIV/AIDS, educating people on the risks of its spread, fostering open dialogue on the issue and decreasing discrimination and the stigma associated with the disease.

In order to succeed, the UNDP programme has positioned its advocacy campaign to address those segments of the community that have the greatest influence on the nature of the debate and have also, in the past, constituted an obstacle to open discussion and action, and has thereby created an extended partnership with them. In particular, HARPAS has sought to target those who are in a position to influence social and cultural factors that impinge upon the spread of the disease.

Over the past year, HARPAS has targeted religious leaders, CSOs and government institutions. In the region, to the extent that it had been addressed, HIV/AIDS was addressed from a medical perspective only. Since its inception, the HARPAS programme has, with the support of BDP, sought to foster a multi-sectoral approach to the problem, addressing the broader social elements of the epidemic including economic, security, development, cultural identity and human rights dimensions of the issue.

Results

By generating dialogue and debate and by providing alternative sources of information on a regional platform, HARPAS has, in a very short time, managed to mobilize a range of initiatives. The principal outputs of the programme have been:

- holding a conference for CSOs in Tunis that resulted in a joint declaration and agreement on common principles on the part of CSOs and also in the creation of a Regional Arab Network Against AIDS (RANAA) covering CSOs in 18 Arab countries⁹;
- participation of arts and media professionals in advocacy initiatives in several Arab countries;
- a conference of religious leaders that led to a joint statement by Muslim and Christian leaders acknowledging the problem of HIV/AIDS in the region, justifying support of and work with HIV/AIDS patients and advocating the prevention of the spread of HIV along compassionate and religious lines;
- preparation and distribution of training kits for Islamic and Christian clergy;
- stocktaking and analysis of pertinent legislation in the region;
- partnership with CAWTAR and ICTDAR in initiatives targeting vulnerable groups, especially women;
- sub-regional pilot initiative in Horn of Africa and Sudan (with UNAIDS);
- convening of a health ministers meeting on HIV/AIDS at the LAS;
- initial work with policy makers in the Gulf States.

Impact of the programme

In the short time since HARPAS was launched, it has contributed greatly to ‘Breaking the Silence’ against HIV/AIDS in the Arab world. Despite continuing resistance in some quarters (mainly governments), HARPAS has been endorsed by key religious figures, both Muslim and Christian, and is continuing its outreach to this community. It is disseminating kits and information and expanding training opportunities for religious figures. HARPAS has energized the arts and media community in several Arab countries to produce and air their own programmes to highlight HIV/AIDS. Some of these programmes have been aired on satellite television, reaching populations across the Arab world.

At the regional level, HARPAS has encouraged the establishment of RANAA as a regional network of 30 NGOs that in turn represents a total of 350 NGOs in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It has involved the LAS in policy discussions on HIV/AIDS (including a commitment by Arab ministers of health to study recommendations concerning the disease). At the country level, National AIDS Programmes (NAP), and other CSOs have been mobilized to work on increasing awareness and fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Relationship and collaboration with country offices: Despite its relatively short duration, HARPAS has already organized three meetings of UNDP country office focal point persons on HIV/AIDS, allowing country office staff to meet face-to-face, exchange ideas and plans, share success stories and troubleshoot problems and obstacles.

The opportunity to bring the programme to the country level and achieve national ownership of a HARPAS project is critical to the success and sustainability of this programme. Already, some individual countries, such as Syria, are in the process of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into their specific country programmes. Before HARPAS, according to one Syrian country office programme staff, people were reluctant to talk about HIV/AIDS. Now, raising awareness and fighting against HIV/AIDS is seen as a civic duty.

⁹ RANAA is based on: i) a joint commitment for reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS; ii) coordination of CSO efforts in the prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS; iii) commitment to the joint dissemination of information and transparency; iv) creation of a supportive environment for those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS including preservation of their rights and de-stigmatization of the disease.

Successes and failures of the programme: HARPAS' greatest strengths lie in advocacy, building partnerships and in generating and disseminating knowledge and tailored information kits in three languages. Perhaps its most spectacular success is in eliciting the involvement of religious leaders, such as the Sheikh of Al-Azhar in Egypt, in the effort to raise awareness, remove stigmas and reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS.

HARPAS has produced a number of information and training kits (for religious leaders), a video and other materials. Through capacity building, knowledge dissemination and other activities, it has equipped and empowered key segments of society, notably the arts and media sector, to produce their own programmes on the topic. The mobilization of CSOs to work to bring the issue to the attention of political leaders, as well as HARPAS' own interventions with the LAS, have raised visibility of HIV/AIDS as a political issue that requires immediate and serious attention.

Given that it is relatively new and the sensitivity of the topic it addresses, it is important to emphasize the processes of change HARPAS has introduced in the Arab world, and to stress that its real impact will take time to unfold. Nevertheless, as a regional programme with a central emphasis on advocacy, and with only a few concrete projects at the country level, HARPAS will need to leverage projects at the country level – either with UNDP or external partners - to increase its impact. With its headquarters in Cairo, a small staff and over 18 Arab countries to attend to, capacity is a constraint to implementation. Given the presence of other actors - such as UNAIDS, UNDP country projects, and a host of other agencies - at least one source has suggested that HARPAS needs to find an appropriate niche in order to maximize its strengths and contributions and avoid spreading itself too thin. Other sources have raised questions about the sustainability of the programme in the event that its dynamic regional programme coordinator were to leave. It should be noted that all of these are issues that pertain to the other UNDP flagship projects as well.

Problems in implementation: The move from Djibouti to Egypt and delays in staffing affected launching of the programme. Responding to the needs in each particular region remains a challenge (for example, in the Horn of Africa).

The programme, because of its sensitive nature, has of course faced resistance from a variety of institutions including those in its host country. However, it has managed to overcome these potentially critical constraints with great nimbleness.

Other Remarks

HARPAS is relatively new and has therefore not been evaluated. HARPAS' focus on addressing HIV/AIDS within a framework of human rights dovetails with other elements of the regional programme, through workshops and follow-ups with different sectors, that seek to ensure national legislation that protects vulnerable groups and to advance government respect and adherence to international human rights conventions. In this respect, synergy and collaboration with other regional programmes (such as POGAR and CAWTAR) may reinforce its impact.

While HARPAS continues to build on its main strategic strength - raising awareness and advocacy on HIV/AIDS at the regional level - working with country offices to design and implement related projects at the country level in partnership with local NGOs and other stakeholders may help concretize the programme, ensure national ownership and lend it sustainability in the long term.

RAB/01/005 Quality Assessment of Primary and Middle Education in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

The AHDR 2003 identified major weaknesses in the educational system in the Arab States, pointing in particular to lack of competitiveness, lack of access to cutting edge research and thinking, insufficient funding of education and research programmes, paucity of original research, inadequacy of curricula and outdated modes of instruction. The report went on to recommend a strategy for the region centred on¹⁰:

- guaranteeing the key freedoms of opinion, speech and assembly through good governance bounded by the law;
- disseminating high quality education for all;
- embedding and ingraining science, and building and broadening the capacity for research and development in all societal activities;
- shifting rapidly towards knowledge-based production in the Arab socio-economic structure; and
- developing an authentic, broadminded and enlightened Arab knowledge model.

Three of the RCF programmes address this knowledge deficit - TIMSS, Higher Education and ICTDAR.

The objective of this Quality Assessment is to enable Arab countries to collect accurate and reliable data on the quality of education in mathematics and science at the primary and middle school level through the TIMSS. The goal is to use the results of these studies to develop policies and strategies to improve the quality of education, beginning at the primary level.

Like its counterpart in the field of higher education, this programme was developed in response to the critical need for reform and improvement at all levels of education in the Arab world, particularly in the areas of science and mathematics taught to young students at the beginning of their academic life. This programme was developed before the publication of the second AHDR (2003) that identified a 'knowledge' deficit in the region.

The publication of the second AHDR only served to reinforce the message that Arab countries were by and large falling short in preparing young people for productive roles in the modern world. Illiteracy rates remain high (especially among women and girls), teachers do not necessarily receive adequate training, schools are not adequately equipped, especially in science instruction, and emphasis remains on rote learning and memorization rather than on thinking, analysing and problem solving. Birth rates remain high in much of the Arab world, putting additional pressure on educational institutions to accommodate growing student populations. Arab countries are waking up to the fact that this state of affairs cannot continue; the health of the nation is intertwined with the development of human capital. Quality education is necessary, not only to promote economic growth, but also to prepare young people for productive lives, away from the influence of extreme religious ideologies, and so ensure peace and stability.

In order to start the process of reform, however, countries require information such as base-line studies and other data establishing the performance and quality of their education systems.

¹⁰ Arab Human Development Report 2003, 'Building a Knowledge Society', UNDP and Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, 2003; and, 'Perspectives on the Arab Human Development Report 2003', UNDP, 2003.

The TIMSS programme is currently coordinated from New York.

Results

Main outputs of the programme:¹¹

- results of the curriculum-based assessments in six countries: Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen and Lebanon;
- preparation of TIMSS International Report (in which Syrian results were excluded);
- committee of five countries to coordinate production of Arab Regional Report on TIMSS;
- production of an International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) - authorized Arabic version of TIMSS instruments.

This was the first opportunity for Arab countries to participate in an international survey of this type. It was also an opportunity both to assess their own performance in light of international standards, and to compare educational quality and standards with other countries in the region.

From all indications, the TIMSS assessment came as a wake up call – to those participating directly in the survey, and others - to reform their education institutions. Some countries, such as Egypt, have indeed undertaken significant reforms in light of the TIMSS study. Even Syria, which was omitted from the International Report, has instituted significant educational reforms in grades one through Baccalaureate. These reforms are centred on developing national standards in the curriculum, advancing and improving teacher training and certification, focusing more on critical thinking, and acquisition of skills and knowledge instead of rote learning at all levels.

A second TIMSS survey is now being prepared, in which a number of Arab countries including Syria, will participate.

The TIMSS programme is apparently being coordinated directly with national stakeholders largely without input from or collaboration with UNDP country offices. This has placed some country offices in an awkward position vis-à-vis their government or non-government interlocutors. In Syria, for example, the TIMSS partner in the Ministry of Education is of the impression that it is all ‘UNDP’, and has often sought clarifications or information about the project from the country office. The country office, however, has not received adequate information, copies of ongoing communications, progress reports or other material that would help staff lend support, troubleshoot, or liaise with the regional programme as needed.

Successes and failures of the programme: The TIMSS assessment provided participating countries with exposure and training in international standards for sampling, assessments and surveying. It enabled these countries to conduct the necessary stocktaking, provide diagnostic tools, and establish base-line information on their educational systems to guide policy change and educational reform.

More specifically, the surveys shed light on teaching methods, curricula and other elements of science and math studies at the primary and middle school levels, and pointed to areas that may benefit from change or reform. The participation of several Arab countries in a regional context gave added incentive for individual countries to participate and compare their performance. It also gave participating countries (teachers, educational institutions and governments) a sense of

¹¹ Much of the information in these sections is from the Evaluation Report by Narinder K. Aggarwala, ‘Quality Assessment of Primary and Middle Education in Mathematics and Science (TIMSS)’, (RAB/01/005/A/01/03), 27 September 2004.

the value of these types of assessments, and an incentive to continue with self-assessments – thus contributing to a sense of national ownership and investment in the results of the study.

Problems in implementation: Some of the same elements contributing to the success of the programme also contributed to failures. Due to a lack of familiarity with international standards or survey methods of this type, some countries did not adhere rigorously to the requirements and standards of the survey (Syria, for example, was apparently unaware of the need to select samples according to plan). Such problems were exacerbated by problems associated with translating test instruments into Arabic, and miscommunication may have occurred in some instances because Arab data managers did not know much English.

Other remarks

Progress reports were not made available for this programme. In the case of Syria, for example, any progress reports that exist are apparently kept at the Ministry of Education and are unavailable at the country office.

Closer collaboration with country offices may help deal with problems before they arise, and help avoid confusion over the distinction between regional and county programmes. Information is unavailable on synergy between this and other regional programmes. As with the Higher Education programme, UNDP involvement in this programme has been questioned and may need to be discussed and clarified further in relation to regional programme objectives.

RAB/01/002 Quality assessment in Higher Education in the Arab States

The Quality Assessment of Higher Education in the Arab States (Higher Education) Programme, which is based in Amman, Jordan, uses international norms and standards to assess and enhance the quality of academic programmes in business administration and computer science at select Arab universities that have agreed to participate. The intention is to use the assessment to influence university policies and curricula and make them more relevant to the needs and context of local and global economies. The pilot project will also create a regional database.

The second AHDR (2003) noted that the region suffers from a serious deficit in the quality of education. In an increasingly globalized world, poor education standards have become a critical constraint to the competitiveness of countries in the region. Higher education in the Arab world is beset with a host of problems including lack of encouragement for critical thinking and problem-solving, inadequate training and preparation of faculty, ill-equipped departments, insufficient science instruction, unavailable, undeveloped or underutilized information and communications technologies (ICT), little attention to research and development, as well as social and political restrictions on the free exchange of ideas and debate. According to the AHDR, Arab universities do not live up to the educational needs of young people entering the modern work force. Arab universities also have yet to play a more prominent role in stimulating discussion and debate about development and reform.

Results

Under this assessment, participating universities are intended to be pilots for further replication. The programme has also begun work on capacity building through the preparation of a technical guide for quality assessment.

The programme has performed very effectively in that it has developed, tested and then implemented a complex and systematic quality assessment process that is multidimensional and includes a cross-comparison with international standards. The process has been well received at the pilot universities and the results placed on a computerized database that can be accessed on the web. Institutionalization of the process has begun through the preparation and publication of a guidebook/manual for implementation of quality surveys for computer science and business management programmes.

This programme has provided universities and other stakeholders with objective tools and relevant training to assess their preparation and performance. The assessments can be replicated in other countries, at other universities and in different departments and fields of study. Participating universities, as well as others now trained in the assessment techniques, can apply the results of these assessments to improve quality at their own institutions. Access to a regional database system should also help other universities assess the quality of their education.

The participation of 26 universities from 12 countries across the region has created platforms for regional teamwork and for sharing and learning from experience. This in turn has contributed to ongoing regional efforts to create common standards that are more in line with international quality and standards. For example, a regional conference on quality management and accreditation in higher education (November 2004), in which the RCF regional programme manager participated, brought together ministerial delegations, educators and other stakeholders from across the region to discuss the creation of regional quality assurance and accreditation standards.

There are signs that the regional programme has also had an impact on national efforts to assess the quality of higher education. For example, the assessment model used in this regional programme has been adapted and applied to assess 26 faculties of education at universities in Egypt.

Relationship and collaboration with country offices: Unless directly involved in the assessment, most country offices are apparently unaware of this regional programme.

Next steps: An important indicator of the success of this regional programme is the sense of ownership by participating universities and faculties, and in their clamour for more rigorous standards in higher education. This programme has motivated institutions of higher education and other stakeholders across the region to call for regional support and services for quality assurance and accreditation. The programme has also lent credence and visibility to those voices within Arab countries that have long been asking for education reform.

As more Arab countries participate and compare experiences and outcomes, it becomes more difficult for others in the region to stay out. The momentum to assess and improve higher education in the Arab world may well be irreversible.

As part of a medium term exit strategy for UNDP, it is recommended that the Higher Education programme should move into a new phase that is geared to the following:

- i) extension of the methodology to other faculties and programmes;
- ii) establishment of a regional institution that is self-sustaining and is devoted to quality assessment of higher education programmes and students;

- iii) reform of curricula and education policies in the region based on the findings of the quality assessments.

It is also noted that at the national level, the project remains relatively unknown among CSOs involved in the education sector and within ministries of education or ministries of higher education. The programme will need to make a concerted effort to raise awareness of its methodology and value added.

Other Remarks

At another level, there is some debate as to whether ‘knowledge’ is an appropriate niche for UNDP, given that other agencies have long worked in this sector. The existence of two regional programmes concerned directly with education (Quality Assessment in Higher Education and the TIMSS Programme) provide an opportunity for further discussion and clarification of the relationship between UNDP/RBAS programmes promoting education and knowledge and the goal of advancing human development in the Arab region – especially in light of the AHDRs that place great emphasis on addressing the knowledge deficit in the region.

RAB/02/003 Information and Communication Technologies for Development in the Arab Region (ICTDAR)

The objective of ICTDAR, which is hosted in Cairo, Egypt, is to support Arab States in the use of ICT for development. The aim is to help reduce human poverty by creating information-enabled societies, thereby contributing to the knowledge pillar as well as globalization and governance. A central feature is the creation of partnerships with public and private institutions for human development.

The Arab world lags behind other regions in the availability, accessibility and use of ICT. Meeting the human development needs of its citizens while preserving their ability to compete in an increasingly globalized world hinges on the acquisition and mastering of new technologies and applying them to the human development challenge. Mainstreaming ICT in development requires the collaboration of public, private and non-government institutions in the Arab world. One of ICTDAR’s important contributions in this respect is Arabic language content.

In view of its limited resources, ICTDAR has opted to concentrate on the less developed Arab countries, avoiding work in some of the Gulf countries. Unlike the other regional projects, ICTDAR provides more hands-on technical and policy advice at the regional as well as national levels. It has also begun capacity building and pilot projects in a number of countries working directly and through partners.

Results

Some of the main outputs of the programme include:

- ICTARB project (ICT for the visually impaired);
- ICT in support of SMEs;
- WRCATI project (Women’s Rights through Access to Information) in collaboration with CAWTAR;
- REGI (Arab Regional e-government institute);
- AjialCom (youth empowerment through community access centres);
- e-strategies.

Impact of the programme: ICTDAR was launched in October 2003, somewhat later than originally planned. In the short time since, ICTDAR has partnered with select UNDP country offices for implementation of specific projects at the country level, and has also partnered directly with a number of public and private institutions on key projects, particularly in Egypt.

ICTDAR's interventions at the World Summit for Information Sharing (WSIS) in December 2003 on 'Building Knowledge Societies in the Arab world' which was attended by a number of high-ranking Arab officials, gave visibility and momentum to the programme. Since then, ICTDAR has responded to requests or developed partnerships on projects in countries including Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Tunisia, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, Djibouti, Bahrain, UAE and Egypt. ICTDAR's project initiatives have been developed in close consultation with the LAS, a partnership that has increased ICTDAR's visibility and authority in the region.

At the regional level, ICTDAR has raised interest in the use of ICT for development. It has facilitated exchanges within the region and provided policy advice and tools for the use of ICT in development initiatives, thereby raising demands for applications. At both the regional and national levels, ICTDAR has established models of public/private partnerships with a view to replication.

Public/private collaboration in ICT is relatively new and a promising development for some Arab countries. In Egypt, ICTDAR has partnered with SAKHR Software - a company that produces Arabic software solutions for the visually impaired - and with the Ministry of Information and Technology to implement the ICTARB project through a local NGO. In Syria, the ICTARB project is being implemented at a local community centre through the UNDP country office, in partnership with ICTDAR and the Syrian Telecommunication Establishment.

Relationship and collaboration with country offices: The decision to locate ICTDAR's headquarters in Egypt relates to that country office's involvement in the Egypt ICT Trust Fund, which mainstreams ICT in development.

ICTDAR provides country offices with the technical and management capacities needed to get projects underway and also provides expertise not available in the SURF as it now falls outside of UNDP's practice areas. Pilot projects launched in one country can then be replicated in others. Country offices such as Syria benefit from implementing projects with ICTDAR that have already been piloted elsewhere (as in the ICTARB project). At the same time, bringing these projects to the country level fosters a sense of national ownership and creates new partnerships.

Successes and failures of the programme: Demand for ICTDAR's services from public and private entities alike is growing dramatically. With its small staff, ICTDAR has had to clarify its strategic niche. It has decided to maximize its impact through mainstreaming ICT for development within suitable venues. ICTDAR has created awareness, and has generated and disseminated knowledge about the use of ICT in development. It has also developed an internal policy that focuses on:

- placing content first;
- maximising partnerships; and
- ensuring the financial viability/sustainability of projects from the very outset.

Capacity building is a key feature of its work, and ICTDAR's partnerships with private sector organizations (such as Microsoft and others with whom it has signed memoranda of understanding) has provided access to a range of ICT applications for use in appropriate

development initiatives with countries in the region. Insistence and reliance on Arabic language content in ICTDAR's projects will certainly contribute to its success.

By focusing projects in key sectors (for example, supporting government initiatives), tailoring them to vulnerable groups (the visually impaired), targeting them to benefit women and youth (community centres), and supporting SMEs, ICTDAR is responding directly and indirectly to the three deficits identified in the AHDR and contributing to an overall effort to position itself more effectively with regard to the three underlying pillars of the RCF.

Another key feature of ICTDAR is its partnership with private sector companies. For instance, in its pilot programme for the visually impaired it worked with a private company to apply technology that provided the visually impaired with access to the Internet and potentially even to workplace functions. ICTDAR has also worked to provide SMEs with access to ICT thereby also promoting the private sector. ICTDAR's work with the private sector has also further promoted the third pillar of its own strategy – namely that of ensuring the financial viability and sustainability of its ventures.

Some collaboration with other RCF programmes is taking place, for example, with CAWTAR over the WRCATI project, and with HARPAS. It is still too early to assess the real impact of ICTDAR; several of its projects, especially those to be implemented within specific country offices, have yet to be finalized or launched. Similarly, regionally-based projects, such as e-government, have yet to unfold and yield results.

Problems in implementation: At present, the ICTDAR is operating at two levels simultaneously (direct partnerships and partnerships through country offices) and may be spreading itself too thin. Some delays in project implementation stem from protracted three-way negotiations that must take place between country offices, relevant government agencies and ICTDAR. In order for it to continue to respond to demands effectively, ICTDAR's technical and management personnel will need to be expanded through additional cost-sharing.

Other remarks

ICTDAR monitors its subsidiary projects and their products in conjunction with its ongoing work planning. In cases where these projects are undertaken by country offices (such as ICTARB in Syria), monitoring and evaluation is also undertaken by the country office. However, it is not clear if and how these results are systematically collected and aggregated so as to evaluate and track the overall results and impact of the ICTDAR programme.

Much of the responsibility for the work falls to ICTDAR's dynamic regional programme coordinator, which raises questions about the sustainability of the programme should she leave.

RAB/02/.001 Centre for Arab Women Training and Research, Phase II (CAWTAR)

Empowerment of women has been consistently identified as a high priority development challenge for the region. All three AHDRs have identified it as a concern to varying degrees. Women's empowerment has, in recent years, seen some progress, with women being accorded the vote in some countries of the Gulf and with increasing numbers of women finding their way into professional functions. However, the challenge of empowering women in a culturally sensitive and acceptable manner in terms of their rights before the law, access to education and opportunities, as well as political empowerment, continues to be a major one.

The objective of the CAWTAR is to provide a regional source of knowledge and expertise on key issues facing women in the development process. Strengthening institutional programmes in key areas - data collection and reporting, training in gender equality, employment promotion and poverty reduction, advocacy and the media - is designed to contribute to efforts to improve the status and condition of women in the Arab world.

CAWTAR was launched in Tunisia in 1993. Its first Arab women development report in 2002 paralleled the publication of the first AHDR (2002) that identified a serious deficit in women's equality and participation in the Arab world. Indicators of Arab women's participation in paid employment, educational achievements (with the possible exception of girl's education), parliamentary representation and their overall status in the economy and society lag behind other parts of the developing world.

Coinciding with Arab commitment to meet MDGs for development by 2015 came increased attention and commitment to improving the status of women. However, there remain wide disparities within and between Arab countries regarding these efforts and their results. The ideal role for Arab women remains rooted in tradition and in cultural and religious precepts regarding women and family. Changing the role of Arab women, so as to enable them to participate more fully as equal citizens, remains a challenge.

Results

Main outputs of the programme include:

- publication and dissemination of two Arab women development reports;
- creation of specialized databases;
- resumption of training programmes;
- creation of networks for effective dissemination of information and data on women;
- creation of partnerships with government, research centres, NGOs and other stakeholders in Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan (as well as limited collaboration with counterparts in the Gulf region).

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent CAWTAR's studies, training programme and advocacy efforts have had an impact on policy dialogue and policy development in the region. Over recent years, Arab countries have had to contend with rapid social change, external and internal pressures and demands, and increasing calls for reform, both from within and from outside the region. CAWTAR has contributed to the debates surrounding women's equality and participation. Its resources - information, studies, and databases - have been accessed and used by other organizations in their own research and advocacy efforts.

CAWTAR has partnered with other women's development organizations (for example, in a region-wide study to examine the case of women's identity cards and restrictions on freedoms) as a prelude for advocacy for policy change. In this respect, CAWTAR has helped to disseminate information, promote awareness, and advocate and advance discussions and dialogue on critical issues facing Arab women. CAWTAR may have been one of the first women's organizations in the Arab region to examine the gender implications of globalization for Arab women.

CAWTAR has collaborated with other regional programmes, mainly ICTDAR and to a lesser extent POGAR, to document and analyse legislative rights and issues, -- creating a degree of

synergy between the regional programmes. However, outside of the regional programme and select NGOs in the area, CAWTAR is less well known.

With the exception of Tunisia - where there is close collaboration between CAWTAR and the country office - there appears to be little awareness of CAWTAR at country offices elsewhere in the region.

One of CAWTAR's main successes was to re-emerge from a period of stagnation and reorganization and resume its work in promoting Arab women's human development. It has created partnerships with NGOs and others across the Arab world. For example, it is partnering with POGAR and organizations in six Arab countries to expand the work on women and globalization. As a regional programme with observer status in the LAS (Social Affairs), CAWTAR is well situated to create awareness and advocate on sensitive issues concerning Arab women, particularly when nationally based women's NGOs may not have the platform or freedom to perform this role.

Capacity appears to be one of the main problems facing CAWTAR in implementing its programmes. A three-year period during which the training programme was suspended and other management issues arose prevented CAWTAR from participating fully in the regional programme. As such it is less well known in the region, and has yet to achieve visibility and recognition as a key player in advancing women's status and rights.

Other remarks

CAWTAR seems to have emerged from a period of stagnation with a stronger management structure and a more coherent view of the core areas it should focus on. CAWTAR has decided that its optimal niche is in 'evidence-based advocacy'. In one way or another, all its programmes are to be directed at influencing policy makers, either directly through its own interventions and representations, or indirectly in its work with other NGOs and research and studies.

CAWTAR can benefit from the attention and buzz surrounding the AHDRs, especially on the status of Arab women. It can tailor some parts of its programme to fit more closely with the relevant findings of the AHDRs. In this way it can acquire more visibility and clout in the region and position itself to play a more prominent role in the preparation of the fourth and final AHDR that is to address the deficit in women's equality.

RAB/99/001 Support to the League of Arab States

The LAS is perhaps the most obvious regional counterpart to the UNDP at the regional level. A programme of assistance was developed in order to strengthen its capacity.

Results

The programme trained staff in the use of computers for basic office functions through a sub-contract with a local computer training company. A small component consisting of a total of US\$55,000 was allocated to develop a system of certificates of origin to assess trade policy issues and to examine policy issues pertaining to a unified customs system for the Arab region. The programme also supported a 'forum on human development' that included a conference on the empowerment of women, a study on the issue and additional workshops on issues pertaining to human development. Funding was provided to prepare a feasibility study for an 'observatory for

migration'. The latter consisted largely of the establishment of a database on migration in the region.

The project document lacked specificity and was loosely designed. It is not clear how these products were used, and UNDP subsequently ended its programme of assistance.

Other remarks

This programme was intended to help gain a foothold for further partnerships with the LAS, but it appears to have been poorly conceived.. The programme was closed a long time ago. The LAS has since been used as a forum for the validation of positions advocated by UNDP programmes through ministerial meetings hosted by LAS. LAS is presently undergoing a more extensive process of reform and this may present some opportunity for more systematic support from UNDP.

Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme (METAP), IV

METAP, a partnership among the EU, European Investment Bank (EIB), UNDP, Switzerland, Finland and the World Bank , currently provides assistance to 13 Mediterranean beneficiary countries (MBCs): Albania, Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and West Bank and Gaza. The overall objectives of METAP, as laid down at its inception in 1990, are to:

- a) strengthen the institutional capacity required to manage environmental issues;
- b) prepare a strong portfolio of priority environmental projects to accelerate and catalyse investment in environmental activities in the region; and
- c) formulate a set of focused key policy factors affecting the Mediterranean environment.

METAP Phase	Duration	Total Funding (US\$)
I	1990 to 1993	12.73
II	1993 to 1996	14.54
III	1996 to 2001	20.28
IV	2001 to 2005	12.44*
All	1990 to 2005	59.99

* This is the figure as of January 2005; some additional funding requests are still under consideration. Not included are EIB's expenditures on project preparation and, because of this, the figure for METAP IV is not comparable with the earlier phases.

The four phases of METAP have committed US\$60 million in support for two major themes: project preparation and capacity building. Under METAP IV, EIB has handled project preparation and a METAP Secretariat housed at the World Bank has managed capacity building through eight major projects and several smaller ones.

METAP I priorities included integrated water resource management, solid and hazardous waste management, marine oil and chemical pollution prevention and control, and coastal zone management. In May 1993, a Ministerial Conference on the Environment in the Mediterranean Region was held in Casablanca, Morocco to launch METAP II, focusing on programming for water, urban environmental management, institutional development and capacity building.

METAP III focused on three themes – capacity building, pollution in hot spots, and integrated water and coastal zone management. The partners established and co-financed a METAP regional

facility in Cairo, consisting of a project preparation unit (staffed by the World Bank and EIB) for policy support, project related capacity building, and project preparation; a capacity building unit (staffed by UNDP) for assisting countries in planning, designing and implementing national strengthening capacities; and part of UNDP's activities under the Regional Capacity Building Programme (RCBP), to promote exchange of experience and strengthen institutional and network links with and among the MBCs. In addition, EIB managed other project preparation from its Luxembourg headquarters. The World Bank continued to house the METAP Secretariat and was responsible for reporting to and coordinating with the partners, while UNDP managed several RCBP programmes. The EU and Switzerland were actively involved in policy and programmatic guidance. At the country level, enhanced responsibilities, training and tools were given to the national focal points. Annual meetings of these focal points constituted the formal forum of consultation between METAP partners and the MBCs. Due to operational difficulties and lowered expectations as to the size of the programme, the METAP regional facility was closed in 2001 and activities were transferred to the METAP Secretariat. An independent evaluation of METAP III was made in 2000.

Following the evaluation of METAP III, METAP IV was designed "*to assist the beneficiary countries in project preparation and to strengthen their capacity in selected regional environmental management activities*". Taking into account experience under the previous phase, programme activities were selected within three priority pillars:

Pillar 1: Water quality, wastewater and coastal zone management

Pillar 2: Municipal and hazardous waste management

Pillar 3: Policy and legislation tools

Two cross-cutting programmes were expected to underpin both the project preparation and capacity building themes: capacity building at the local level, and a regional knowledge management system. Priority was given to questions that could most effectively be addressed in a regional context, allowing countries to learn from each other's experience. Cooperation with other regional programmes, especially the Mediterranean Action Plan, was also stressed.

Results

Internal evaluations of the three completed projects show substantial impacts through pilot projects generating regional interest, new policies, laws and procedures for environmental impact assessment (EIA), and improved understanding of the links between trade and environment. The remaining projects all show promise of having sustained impacts.

In 1990, when METAP began, very few of the riparian countries had environmental laws or an operational environmental agency. That has completely changed over 14 years and in many cases METAP has supplied catalytic support at critical stages, so that now all the MBCs have not just agencies but ministries of environment and reasonably complete sets of basic laws. Specialized environmental staff has grown from a handful in each country to hundreds in most cases, with their capability strengthened, often by METAP-supplied training. In capacity building, METAP's greatest achievement may have been the series of National Environmental Action Plans, which allowed MBCs to identify their environmental problems, set priorities and develop short and medium term actions to address those priorities.

Other notable successes in capacity building include the EIA programme, mainstreaming environment into sectors like trade and privatization, and the use of economic instruments. Issues

like these are particularly well suited to the regional approach where countries can learn from each other, which has been a METAP specialty.

From the beginning, and in line with MBC priorities, METAP placed great importance on the sound preparation of environmental projects, which were mostly in the fields of water supply, wastewater and solid waste at the municipal level, as well as some ICZM initiatives. . By now, more than 35 projects have been prepared, most of which were eventually funded, resulting in an investment of over US\$1 billion. Experience also shows that a considerable amount of time may be needed to see the results of technical assistance.

The two expected cross-cutting programmes – in knowledge management and in local capacity building – have not materialized as envisaged, due both to funding difficulties and differences in approach between partners.

Local capacity building, along the Agenda 21 model of empowering local community leaders, had limited success in METAP III, with problems related more to managerial than design deficiencies. While it is true that public awareness and participation are essential to the success of many kinds of environmental planning and implementation (including especially ICZM and solid waste management), it does not necessarily follow that such capacity building lends itself to a regional approach.

Developing comprehensive and effective systems of knowledge management at a regional scale is central to effective environmental management in the Mediterranean region. Technology is evolving rapidly, and the Internet is now probably the main channel for accessing information globally. Priority must be given to ensuring that valuable knowledge is linked to the Internet and that potential users know where and how to look for information.

The thrust of the UNDP knowledge management proposal (Project 4.1) is **institutionalization** of knowledge management by creating ‘hubs’, putting knowledge generators in the ‘driver’s seat’, promoting people to people connections online, taking into account cultural and language preferences, and phasing-in of a programme.

Other remarks

The METAP website (www.metap.org) is a good source of knowledge on the programme for the general public¹². Current efforts to update it should rectify the problems of outdated material that the review noted. The METAP Newsletter has been revived and also provides useful information to a more specialized public.

The recommendation in the METAP III evaluation for more systematic monitoring and evaluation of METAP projects has only been partly achieved in METAP IV. Few of the projects have good performance indicators that can be monitored. The largest project, Regional Solid Waste Management Project (RSWMP), has useful quarterly progress reports and provision for mid-term and final reviews by an independent consulting firm. Three completed projects, Mediterranean Urban Waste Management Programme (MUWMP), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Trade and Environment, have had substantial internal evaluations with good derivations of lessons learned.

¹² While the website, if expanded and updated, can provide good general information on the programme, it should not be seen as a substitute for an Annual Report to the partners and MBCs, which must provide a more candid assessment on progress and problems.

IV. Management, methods and approaches

IV.a: Validation and legitimacy

Four principal vehicles have been used to bolster legitimacy for a programme that has pushed the development envelope in the region:

1. the use of well-known and well-respected Arab authors for the AHDR;
2. the creation of an Advisory Board consisting of well-respected individuals to guide and advise on the AHDR;
3. the use of ministerial meetings as a forum for the discussion of issues at the LAS ; and
4. the use of the press to create public awareness of the issues as early as possible.

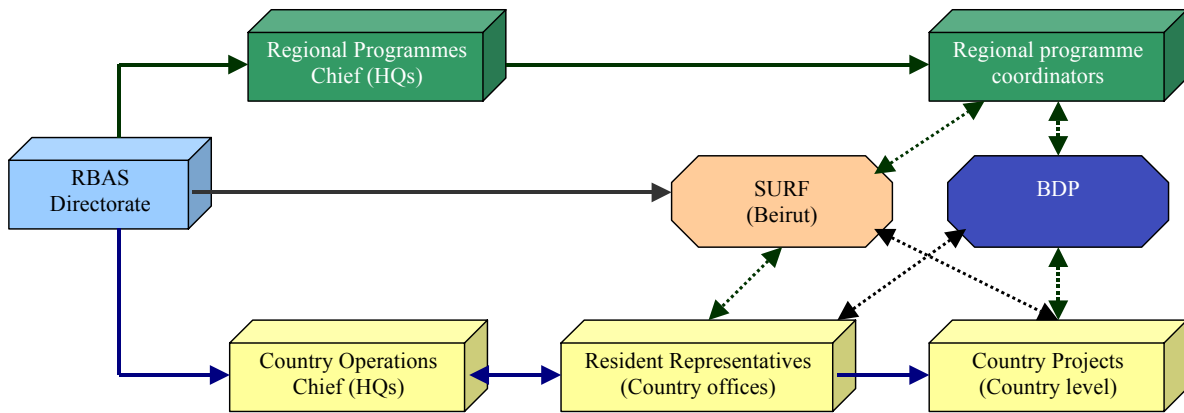
These four mechanisms have helped gain legitimacy for the positions of the AHDR and RCF, and should be continued. Consideration should also be given to expanding the role of the Advisory Board to provide guidance on the structure and content of the RCF to ensure continuity between it and the AHDR, and in deploying actual programmes under the RCF.

IV.b: Creating synergies and mutual reinforcement

There is room for further exploitation of synergies between the flagship programmes of the RCF. For instance, there is room for collaboration between ICTDAR and POGAR on e-governance at several levels. There is room for collaboration between ICTDAR, CAWTAR and Higher Education on information dissemination. There is also room for further collaboration between HARPAS and POGAR on human rights issues. While the programmes have begun working on some of these issues, collaboration is not yet particularly deep and has not been sufficiently exploited.

Synergies are created through the perception of joint objectives and the creation of teams in which members perceive mutual benefit. Up until the RPD/RBAS retreat, staff working in support of RCF objectives had never been brought together for joint programming or for joint management. Considerable added value may be experienced through regular meetings either in person or using teleconferencing. Even weekly meetings of the RPD at headquarters would go a long way towards strengthening substantive and management synergies.

It is clear that at present RBAS operates on two parallel tracks: i) the management of country operations; and ii) the management of regional programmes. There is very little collaboration between the two, either at headquarters or in the field.



Two RBASs -- Parallel Lines of Communication

At the country level, regional programme coordinators do not report to or through UNDP Resident Representatives/UN Resident Coordinators in their host countries. They view regional programme advisers in RBAS as their direct counterparts and report through them to the Regional Divisions Chief and the Regional Directorate. Indeed, in the countries visited, the Resident Representatives were only somewhat familiar with the regional programmes hosted in their own countries. While this may enable regional programme coordinators to work on cutting edge issues without being subject to the same political constraints as the Resident Representative, it also has several negative effects.

First, in the case of pillars within UNDP’s practice areas, significant opportunities to reinforce and support advocacy and dialogue at the regional level with capacity building and policy development programmes at the country level are lost, as is the opportunity for joint strategy development.

Second, UNDP country offices can follow-up in support of RCF activities if they are called on. This is particularly useful in instances where partners and other stakeholders are required to take the lead in the implementation of country level activities (pillars outside UNDP practice areas).

Third, at the country level both the regional and country programmes are viewed as UNDP operations. Resident Representatives need to be aware well in advance of all UNDP and indeed UN activities in the country, as they are likely to be held accountable, especially for problems that may arise when confronting cutting edge issues under regional programme activities. Resident Representatives cited several instances where regional programme coordinators have direct contacts with officials in their country of responsibility and even visit the country for meetings without ever briefing or even informing UNDP country offices.

Fourth, the regional programme has, through its advocacy and direct political support from headquarters, managed to access very high level officials and respected opinion makers; individuals and institutions that would also undoubtedly greatly benefit the UNDP’s mainstream country programme operations. Failure to involve the Resident Representative often results in lost opportunities for further leverage. The opposite is also true. Resident Representatives have their own high level contacts that can be tapped to facilitate and support regional programmes.

With closer association between the regional programme and country operations, Resident Representatives will of course need to use their judgement as to the extent of their involvement to

limit negative spill over, but most Resident Representatives are well aware of this risk when it comes to cutting edge advocacy.

Finally, the Regional Bureau should view the regional programme and country programme operations as instruments with very different comparative advantages that should be focused on and exploited selectively. The regional programme is most effective for advocacy of highly sensitive issues that face severe policy, political and bureaucratic constraints at the national level; the management of issues that require inter-country action and oversight; and the strengthening or reform of regional institutions. The country programme on the other hand is best suited for managing assistance for policy and institutional reforms and capacity building at the national level.

IV.c: The provision of substantive backstopping and policy support

BDP and the SURFs generally provide substantive and policy support within UNDP's practice areas. BDP sets policy positions through its 'practice notes', several of which have been issued by the governance team at headquarters and at the Oslo Centre. The SURF is supposed to issue position papers and think pieces. The extent to which the backstopping from BDP has been useful is debatable. Although the staffing pattern of the SURF has varied considerably over time, it is equipped with posts for two advisers in governance, one in trade, one in poverty and one in gender. Yet it is understood that most of the SURF advisers' time is taken up with providing backstopping to the 17 country programmes and the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP), and the regional programme does not receive much support from the SURF.

Two out of three RCF pillars (knowledge and globalization) are largely outside UNDP's formal practice areas and have been selected based on an assessment of critical issues as they pertain to the region. In the particular case of RBAS, substantive backstopping is also provided to varying degrees by staff recruited to RPD at headquarters. Under the regional programme, the analysis in the AHDRs has also served to establish a policy framework if not an operational policy per se. Both cover areas within as well as outside the practice areas.

HARPAS has obtained considerable backstopping and support both from RBAS/RPD and BDP's HIV/AIDS team. Indeed, it is probably the best example of teamwork between the regional programme staff and backstopping units. In this particular case, policy frameworks are also derived from UNAIDS although its focus in the region had until the start of the HARPAS programme been largely medical and therefore of relatively little relevance to UNDP's operations.

The biggest problem is faced by those projects that operate outside UNDP's practice areas; all of the projects under the knowledge pillar come to mind in this regard. Such projects are not only forced to establish their own policies in consultation with governments and counterpart institutions, but are frequently called upon to provide substantive support and expertise to country offices themselves. It is therefore extremely important that the projects be sufficiently staffed to meet the challenge. In the case of ICTDAR in particular, the demand is extremely high and growing; the project staff are treated as technical advisers to country programmes and country offices themselves. In order to meet these demands, the UNDP will need to look at how it can mobilize resources to boost the staff capacity of all of the RCF's flagship projects.

IV.d: Harmonization of programming cycles

The RCF cycle is out of sync with most of UNDP's CCF/CP cycles in the region. Harmonization to have CCF cycles coincide fully with the RCF cycles is probably neither viable nor useful. Given the nature of advocacy, the direction that issues may take and the opportunities that arise may not be predictable from the outset of an RCF.

Staggering CCFs one or two years after the start of the RCF period is therefore actually a valuable asset, particularly if UNDP's CCFs are required in the future to consider incorporating follow-up to advocacy undertaken under the RCF. It is recommended that regional programme managers and/or regional division staff could be asked to serve as a resource in CCF/CP preparation to ensure more effective programmatic dovetailing between the two.

IV.e: Programme management

All of the regional projects are UNOPS executed. UNOPS provides no technical backstopping and is limited to providing administrative and financial support. All programme and RBAS headquarters staff have stated that UNOPS is not a good source for locating technical consultants. In fact, consultants are located by RBAS and regional programme staff using their own contacts with regional institutions, think tanks, universities and consulting firms. UNOPS is only involved with contracting, procurement and financial reporting. Contracting, procurement and payments have been subject to chronic delays. UNOPS execution is Atlas-based, but is independent of UNDP's own Atlas system, and RPD/RBAS and regional programme staff do not have real time access to expenditure data. Repeated requests for quarterly expenditure reports from UNOPS have gone unfulfilled, and final expenditures for 2004 were still not available from UNOPS at the time of writing.

In order to make up for this and maintain budgetary soundness, regional programme staff and RPD/RBAS have had to keep their own parallel record of expenditure estimates. While this has enabled the regional programme to function reasonably efficiently, the unnecessary duplication is not only a major source of inefficiency, but is also a source of some confusion as the only accurate and definitive source of expenditure data must be UNOPS as it is the one that actually effects all major payments.

It is recommended that with all of the substantive backstopping capacity now internalized within UNDP, the regional service centre (that is currently RBAS headquarters) should take over all procurement, contractual and financial functions, enabling substantive backstopping and project staff to have real time access to all information required for efficient and effective management. Programme management should move towards a more pragmatic model whereby substantive issues are coordinated with national institutions that are associated with programme activities and all inputs are mobilized and managed directly by UNDP. It is recommended that if necessary, the Executive Board should be called upon to endorse this model for the next RCF as it would not only raise the level of efficiency, but also improve both substantive and financial accountability.

Current execution arrangements also have very negative effects on resource mobilization efforts. UNOPS's support costs, which have been reduced to seven percent, are still considered very high and the UNDP offices that take on the largest responsibility in project management are not reimbursed for support costs incurred. Under new and more pragmatic management arrangements, UNDP would probably be able to operate on the basis of two percent support costs to cover its financial and administrative costs, with a suitable split between headquarters and the field. The inevitable rise in cost-sharing would then enable the projects to boost their technical

advisory capacity as required in order to deliver programmes more effectively and to meet the growing demand.

IV.f: Monitoring and evaluation

While project personnel track project outputs and direct products, they are not reported on systematically or in a standardized format as UNDP's current guidelines provide flexibility in reporting (reporting format is left up to the project concerned).

Because project personnel are so pressed for time and are so focused on getting the job done, reporting is sometimes combined with other functions. ICTDAR has combined its work planning function with tracking its products. HARPAS has issued its progress reports in the form of an annual glossy public relations document. While both serve to capture project achievements, they are of limited value as a management tool as they do not identify difficulties and shortcomings. UNDP should revert to a more systematic and complete format for internal progress reporting that can serve as a useful project management tool and can be kept separate from public information functions. It is also noted that in some instances, regional policy advisers at RPD/RBAS do not have progress reports. All relevant staff in the programme management chain should have access to all relevant information pertaining to implementation progress. If the format is standardized, it is recommended that internal progress reports be maintained online so that they are available to all those who need to see them.

Outcomes and impact of individual regional projects and of the regional programme as a whole are not tracked. A truly results-based management system requires that outcomes and impact are also tracked. In order to do so, it is recommended that a separate outcome monitoring project be established using regional TRAC resources. The project would identify outcome and impact indicators and their respective measures and i) establish a baseline for each pillar; ii) establish data collection mechanisms that are relatively simple and low-cost; iii) analyse the data on a continuing basis; and iv) periodically report on outcomes and impact to all concerned.

In this overall context, it is worth noting that while capacity exists in the region – both in the form of academic institutions and private firms to conduct surveys and opinion polls - specific capacity for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes and impact of development programmes does not appear to exist in the region as a whole. It is recommended that UNDP may wish to develop the capacity of a regional institution to monitor and evaluate development and the implementation of national plans in the region.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

V.a Conclusions

Relevance and positioning

1. The RCF (2002-2005) for Arab States has been innovatively used by the regional director and her headquarters staff as an instrument for UNDP to adopt independent positions on development issues for the region, to draw attention to needs that are difficult to address because of their sensitivity, to seek consensus or partial agreement on them and to advocate for change – usually at the national level.

2. The regional programme has been used quite effectively as a platform to draw policy makers and leaders of civil society out of their national contexts and to foster dialogue on policy issues that sometimes could not be discussed within the confines of domestic constraints.
3. The AHDR has, since 2002, been the flagship programme of the UNDP for the region. It has at times served as the vanguard for other projects and programmes in the RCF, informing the design of regional programmes and also benefiting from stocktaking and analytical work undertaken by them; there has been a healthy exchange of ideas between them. As the AHDR gains greater currency in the region, the relationship between the main body of the RCF and the AHDR can be further reinforced.
4. Because of the strong emphasis on regional priorities as identified from the independent perspective of the AHDR and the Regional Bureau, the RCF has sought to address issues that are not normally recognized as being within UNDP's corporate thematic areas of focus such as higher education (knowledge) and economic growth and trade (globalization). These areas are generally viewed as ones in which other multilateral organizations possess a comparative advantage. However, the RCF has demonstrated the relevance of using human development perspectives and approaches in addressing these issues.
5. The strategies adopted under different pillars and regional programmes have of course varied. However, some of the most successful approaches at advocacy have been those that have involved directly approaching those opinion makers and leaders who are both most influential and those that are (rightly or wrongly) perceived as the most significant obstacle to progress in the area. Their involvement and buy-in from the very outset has proved critically important to 'Breaking the Silence' under HARPAS for instance, and has removed potential constraints on dialogue at the regional and even national levels.
6. In a region where external involvement in policy making has been highly controversial and frequently rejected, the RCF has rightly emphasized the use of regional capacities, thereby raising the legitimacy of positions advocated and enabling the programmes to more readily gain traction and acceptance. On the other hand, failure to involve policy makers in the design of the programme from the very outset has limited the degree of legitimacy and ownership that the RCF has been able to generate.
7. The level of sensitivity involved has prevented the Bureau from seeking and accepting external funding from several potential sources and the proportion of cost-sharing has been relatively low despite strong international interest.
8. From data provided by the regional programme managers it would appear that parallel funding of programmes by other donors has been high, demonstrating both the ability of the UNDP's regional programme to mobilize resources in support of causes it advocates and the high level of interest among partners. There has, however, been relatively little direct cost-sharing through UNDP.
9. The regional programme has succeeded in positioning UNDP effectively in sensitive areas such as HIV/AIDS, information and communications technology and governance. Indeed, it has been used skilfully to gain credibility and trust on the part of UNDP in a

region where the UN has been viewed with considerable suspicion. This is no mean feat and warrants considerable praise.

10. More could be done to utilize the results of the regional programme to effectively position UNDP at the country level and vice-versa. As discussed under the section on management, at present the linkages between the regional and country programmes are largely non-existent. This has probably resulted in lost opportunities for gaining leverage and long-term impact particularly in thematic areas such as governance in which UNDP also has rather extensive programme activities at the country level.

Design

11. The RCF (2002-2005) was designed to cover three thematic pillars (governance, globalization and knowledge) and eight 'service areas' or types of activities: i) stocktaking; ii) knowledge sharing and dissemination; iii) advocacy and fostering dialogue; iv) policy advice; v) policy development; vi) capacity building; vii) implementation of pilot schemes; and viii) the fostering of partnerships and networks.
12. All three pillars are said to contribute to poverty reduction although it is not clear from the design of the actual programmes how this was to be achieved. Coherence and the relationship between the pillars themselves is relatively unclear and while some programmes could be said to address multiple pillars, this has perhaps been more by chance than by design.
13. The principal emphasis of programmes under the RCF has been on stocktaking and advocacy; national ownership from the very outset has therefore not been a principal driving force, nor has sustainability of activities been a central tenet or objective. The programmes are instead designed to provoke discussion on key developmental issues, to foster and promote civil society networks for the purpose of dialogue and advocacy and to create momentum for policy change.
14. In contrast with most other UNDP programmes, the RCF for Arab States was largely designed in New York and subsequently submitted for consultation and support from potential participants. Country office involvement in the original programme design was not strong. A regional Advisory Board was established to support the preparation of the AHDR. Although the issues identified under the AHDR are closely associated with those addressed by projects under the RCF, the regional Advisory Board was not very actively involved in the design of the RCF.
15. The process followed in the design of the RCF has probably been quite deliberate and has enabled the RCF to address issues of considerable sensitivity (e.g. aspects of democratic governance, gender and HIV/AIDS) that almost certainly would not have been included if government priorities and clearances had been sought *a priori*.
16. It would appear that in most instances this has not proved a significant problem and governments have subsequently agreed to participate in the UNDP programmes. Indeed, with the strong support of RBAS headquarters and the regional director in particular, most of the flagship programmes have achieved very high-level participation and have subsequently also received very high levels of entry within individual countries.

17. The absence of strong regional institutions has made it difficult for the regional programme to find a clear counterpart for its inter-country operations. An effort has been made to cultivate the LAS as a counterpart institution, but results have been mixed. Nevertheless, the LAS has provided a forum for joint ministerial declarations in support of positions advocated by UNDP under the regional programme. The extent to which these declarations have translated into actual action at the country level is not clear.

Results

18. Two out of three thematic pillars have yielded results, as have some of the programmes, such as the HIV/AIDS programme, that fall outside the three pillars. Some of these results have been quite spectacular as in the case of the inter-faith conference of some of the highest religious leaders of the region who broke the taboo of discussing the problem of HIV/AIDS in the region and adopted a declaration that, among other things, went a long way towards removing barriers to more open discussion and projects for prevention and control of the disease.
19. Projects under the globalization pillar were launched briefly, but were closed shortly thereafter and have not had any lasting results despite an obvious need for assistance in a region in which many of the countries are due to join the WTO within the coming years.
20. The regional programme has demonstrated results in the areas of thematic or sectoral stocktaking and analysis, advocacy and the fostering of dialogue. There have been relatively few long-term, sustainable results in the area of capacity building or piloting. In some instances, this has been due to the relative emphasis of the programmes themselves and in others because of the short life of the projects to date.
21. The AHDR, HARPAS and the POGAR programme have all made significant breakthroughs, creating awareness among key opinion-makers in the region as a result of their advocacy. This can be measured by the nature and level of dialogue generated at the regional and in many cases, the national level as well. There have been instances of national policies and legislation being adjusted following dialogue that was generated by the UNDP programmes.
22. Direct causal linkages between advocacy and dialogue generated under the regional programme and actual policy changes are difficult to establish with certainty, although there are several instances of policy changes taking place after they were discussed openly for the first time under the UNDP regional programme and therefore causality can be inferred. For instance, the TIMSS programme prompted the Ministry of Education in Egypt to make changes in curricula and teacher training programmes.
23. There is probably only one clear example of a regional project having inspired or generated a corresponding project at the national level. This is the case of an ICT project for the visually impaired in Syria that was launched as a result of the work of ICTDAR.
24. There is room for more synergy between regional programmes.

Management issues

25. The regional programme is managed in RBAS with relatively few or no inter-linkages with the country programmes. Regional project managers report directly to regional programme advisers at RBAS headquarters in New York and are in some instances also supported by the SURF in Beirut. Regional project managers/coordinators do not report through Resident Representatives in the countries that host their programmes.
26. Regional programme managers and indeed even regional programme advisers at RBAS headquarters appear to have very limited substantive, planned interaction thereby reducing the overall coherence and synergies between programmes.
27. Regional programme managers/coordinators usually deal directly with government, civil society and private sector contacts often without keeping UNDP country offices informed or involved. In fact there is evidence that one particular regional programme manager/coordinator has made it a point of letting Resident Representatives know that he has very little to do with them and is not accountable to them for his actions – even in their country of responsibility. The result is that while Resident Representative and their staff are uniformly supportive and strongly praise the AHDR, they are unaware of and have little or no ownership of the regional programmes under the RCF. While they are partially aware of some of the activities of the regional programmes that are hosted in their own countries, they are not at all aware of the regional programmes that are hosted elsewhere. The result is that there are two RBASs - the country programme line and the regional programme line - and there is relatively little follow up at the country level to ensure that advocacy at the regional level is transformed into action on the ground.
28. Support to regional programmes is not written into country office work plans and there is currently relatively little incentive for country offices to support or interact with the regional programmes.
29. Most projects are inadequately staffed and as a result cannot provide the necessary follow-up to ensure that momentum gained at the regional level is always translated into action on the ground. Because there is a relatively low level of ownership at the national level, the sustainability of many of the results beyond the life of the projects may also be in question.
30. In terms of resource mobilization, while there is some evidence that the success of the regional programmes has resulted in the generation of considerable parallel funding, the volume of cost-sharing actually channelled through UNDP has been relatively limited. This may in part be due to a conscious effort on the part of the UNDP to avoid giving the impression of being influenced by other parties [to be reviewed].
31. Despite the absence of special linkages to the country office in the host country, the programmes tend to be more active in their host country and there is a perception among those countries that do not host programmes that they are ‘forgotten’ and do not benefit from the RCF.
32. While flexibility in design has enabled programmes to seize opportunities as they arise and as needs change, they have also led to insufficient long-term strategizing and planning. Some projects have continued to undertake advocacy programmes for years on

end without a phased approach to ensuring that the advocacy translates into real change at the country level.

33. Regional programmes are generally understaffed and have difficulty meeting growing demands for their services.
34. Relatively little value added can be discerned from UNOPS execution. Support costs associated with UNOPS execution have also hindered resource mobilization in the form of cost-sharing, thereby hindering the regional programme's ability to meet growing needs directly.

Monitoring, evaluation and the systematic assessment of performance

35. Monitoring systems are not explicitly provided for in project budgets and as a result the indicators that could provide information about outcomes and impact are not systematically collected. UNDP's new guidelines on monitoring and progress reports have resulted in progress being recorded in very different ways by different projects. In some instances they are monitored in the form of work plans and in others they are produced in the form of public information documents which do not highlight any shortcomings or problems faced.
36. There is no clear counterpart for regional programmes in member governments or focal points in UNDP country offices. As a result both the government (except relevant sections of some line ministries) and UNDP country offices know relatively little about the regional programme and reviews of performance are only undertaken between the project staff and RBAS headquarters.

V.b Recommendations

Design, relevance and positioning

1. Future RCFs should focus on programme activities that lend themselves best to regional, inter-country collaboration, applying the following criteria:
 - are likely to achieve more progress by removing them from the domestic context and addressing them on an inter-country platform;
 - would be likely to compromise UNDP positioning if first broached at the national level;
 - address issues with transborder/international dimensions;
 - can be addressed within UNDP's practice areas;
 - require international management – at least in some aspects; and
 - receive initial interest from two or more countries prior to programme formulation.
2. The Bureau may wish to consider not renewing programmes that are not clearly in support of its pillars as presently defined or its broader global mandate.
3. In view of the need to dovetail the RCF/RP with CCFs/CPs, there is a need to increasingly focus UNDP's regional programmes on UNDP's corporate 'practice areas'.

A phased strategy must be prepared for most programmes, and in particular for those that are outside UNDP's core practice areas, with a view to their full-fledged institutionalization and an exit strategy that ensures that achievements are consolidated and sustained.

4. UNDP should move even farther towards using the AHDR and RCF as advocacy tools geared to analysis of issues, dissemination of information, active advocacy and dialogue and the creation of partnerships and networks. Policy advice, policy development, capacity building and piloting should be even more systematically implemented under country programmes.
5. This requires more active programming in conjunction with country programmes (despite differences in programming cycles) and effective dovetailing with the regional (RCF/RP) and country programmes (CCF/CP) as well as the MYFF.
6. The UNDP may wish to consider using the AHDRs as the overarching strategic framework to guide conceptualization and strategic positioning of the RCF, so as to provide thematic coherence to the RCF as a whole in light of critical deficits identified in the region; to address sensitive issues while increasing the likelihood of regional buy-in (since contributors to AHDRs are regarded as authoritative analysts of the region); to concretize the findings of the AHDRs in real projects; and, to provide avenues for long-term programmes in the region.
7. The AHDR has gained a great deal of visibility and recognition for UNDP. Indeed it is synonymous with UNDP in the region. Despite the high level of initial resistance that each report met with, over time they have all gained increasing currency and acceptance both within the region and among donors. Institutionalization of the AHDR in a regional institution would probably not be advisable if UNDP wishes to use it under its own brand name and as the driving force – an advocacy vanguard – for its own programming work.
8. At the corporate level, the UNDP has tended to move rapidly from one area of focus to another. In order to have a significant impact on the complex and sensitive areas that it has identified under the RCF, a concerted, continuous and systematic effort will be required.
9. Further advocacy is probably required on issues pertaining to distribution, equity and gender as well as in the areas of employment and economic growth, particularly as it pertains to increasing globalization.
10. Work under most of the RCF pillars is at a relatively early stage in that considerable progress must be made and there is ample room for further pursuing advocacy and dialogue to ensure continued movement. Activities entered into under UNDP's flagship programmes, especially those pertaining to programmes that were launched in the last four years, should continue.
11. In the case of some projects such as Higher Education, programme activities should move on to the next stage with a stronger focus on institutionalization of testing in a regional institution, standardization of testing throughout the region using the system and procedures established, and adjustment of educational policies and standards. Other flagship projects will need to continue focusing on advocacy and fostering dialogue.

12. The globalization pillar is of obvious relevance to the region as trade practices and patterns change, as countries aspire to access WTO and as the region becomes increasingly integrated into the globalization phenomenon and as this integration begins to have an even more pronounced effect on employment, economic growth and sustainable development. It is essential, however that UNDP's advocacy should be to set up programmes in areas in which it is recognized as having a niche. Failure to do so will result in UNDP being marginalized by other big players (WTO, World Bank, IMF, Regional Banks, EU).
13. The RBAS and AHDR Advisory Committee should be brought more systematically into the process of designing and programming the RCF/RP in the future in order to ensure continuity and coherence.
14. Perhaps the biggest challenge is to find a regional institution that can serve, not so much as a counterpart, but as a sounding board and mechanism for validation of UNDP's regional efforts. The LAS remains one obvious choice despite its limitations. UNDP may wish to consult it during the programming of the next RCF. This consultation should enable the LAS and its ministerial network to serve as a sounding board for ideas for inclusion in the RCF/RP.
15. UNDP may wish to consider providing support to the LAS in its new reform programme with a view to strengthening it as a partner institution for the RCF/RP.
16. Programmes that have received the highest marks from governments of the region have inevitably been those that require the international management of resources; where national policies and practices alone are insufficient. Consideration should be given to providing support to some programmes that not only benefit from regional advocacy, but also focus on issues or programmes that require transborder collaboration in their management. For instance, the issue of water management/governance is not only of critical importance to the region, but also requires transborder management. Joint management of river basins has also proved to be an effective basis for regional programmes in other regions (see the experience of RBAP and RBLAC) and may also be considered in the RBAS region – perhaps in collaboration with the regional programme in RBA where appropriate.

Management issues

17. RBAS needs to urgently establish a mechanism to ensure more systematic and active contact and collaboration between RBAS headquarters, the SURF, regional programme staff and country offices in the design and management of the RCF/RP. Collaboration across pillars should also be enhanced among RBAS staff under the leadership of the new regional division chief.
18. Consideration should be given to appointing Deputy Resident Representatives as 'regional focal points' with the responsibility of: i) being aware of all RBAS regional programme activities as they pertain to their countries; ii) communicating with relevant regional programme coordinators; iii) organizing operational and substantive support/interaction from the country level; and iv) ensuring programmatic synergy with country programmes wherever appropriate. RBAS headquarters staff and regional programme coordinators should go out of their way to ensure that regional focal points are kept informed of activities that pertain to their countries and that they are consulted.

19. A strategic plan should be developed to accompany the next RCF for establishing national ownership of programmes and to ensure legitimacy and sustainability in the long term. This should include a structured programme of consultation at the country level that will raise awareness of the RCF/RP and further bolster its synergy with UNDP supported programmes at national level.
20. Consideration should be given to establishing a fund that is geared to translating advocacy and dialogue undertaken at the regional level into policy advisory work, policy development, capacity building and pilot programmes at the country level. This fund should be at least partially funded from the regional TRAC resources and priorities for its use should be identified and implemented in close collaboration with country offices of the region.
21. More active efforts need to be made to ensure that programme design and implementation involves non-host countries to ensure that they too benefit from the RCF/RP.
22. Clarify and strategize the relationships and collaborations between RCF programmes and other agencies working on issues – especially other UN agencies – to avoid duplication, maximize impact of regional programmes, utilize strategic strengths of programme, expand across the region, etc.
23. Build in mechanisms for developing more synergy between related regional programmes so as to optimize strategic impact of each and achieve overall results.
24. Allocate responsibility to country offices for functions they can perform, such as capacity-building, operationalizing at national level, monitoring and evaluation, etc., and thus free regional programmes to concentrate on the wider policy elements of the programmes and impact on reforms and change.
25. Identify and work with regional institutions that can serve as sounding boards for issues, projects and concepts developed under UNDP's regional programmes.
26. While there is a need to preserve flexibility and grab opportunities as they arise, there is also a need for UNDP regional programmes to identify issues that can gain real traction and to develop medium term, phased strategies to see them through to fruition and until they result in significant policy shifts and institutional change at the country level.
27. The substantive value added of having UNOPS as an executing agency under the RCF/RP is unclear and largely preserved for bureaucratic reasons. Its current role is limited to administration and financial management. There has been difficulty in obtaining expenditure records from UNOPS in a timely manner and UNDP RBAS has been forced to keep its own duplicate records, which are unlikely to be more than estimates as actual expenditure records are maintained by UNOPS. Given the development of UNDP's regional service centre, the SURF and substantive backstopping capacity at the RBAS headquarters, more direct programme management mechanisms should be considered with the support of the Executive Board if necessary.
- 28.

Monitoring, evaluation and the systematic assessment of performance

29. Develop more systematic mechanisms complete with line item in project budgets for establishing dedicated monitoring and evaluation systems to collect baseline data and track indicators that can provide information on the outcomes and impact of UNDP regional programmes. A standardized format for internal progress reporting needs to be reintroduced and used as a tool for programme management and decision-making.
30. A separate programme within the RCF should be developed and paid for from TRAC resources to undertake the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes and impact of both the RCF as a whole as well as its constituent regional programmes. The programme should provide for i) the selection of indicators; ii) the establishment of mechanisms for the collection, collation and analysis of data; iii) the establishment of a baseline for the RCF as a whole as well as individual programmes; iv) the collection, analysis and reporting on data on a regular, periodic basis; and v) the use of the information gathered for programming and decision-making purposes as well as public relations and resource mobilization as necessary.
31. The viability of establishing a regional institution (e.g. for the monitoring and evaluation of human development and the implementation of national plans and programmes of action) should be explored. If sufficient interest exists, the UNDP may wish to support the capacity development of such an institution.

PART III APPENDICES

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Appendix II: Persons consulted

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Appendix III: Terms of Reference (summary)

Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation will assess the overall programme performance and outcomes of the RCF (2002-2005) covering its scope and range, policy advisory services and knowledge management. Findings of the evaluation will provide inputs to the next RCF for the region. Specific objectives of the planned independent evaluation of the RCF are as follows:

1. assess the achievement of the intended organizational goals and development results, highlighting key results of outputs and outcomes, lessons learnt and good practices;
2. assess performance of the RCF and specify the development results achieved in policy advice, capacity development and knowledge management within the core results areas that the regional programme has focused on as well as assessment of the scope and range of strategic partnerships formed;
3. based on the actual results, ascertain how the RCF has contributed to strategically positioning UNDP to establish its comparative advantage or niche as a major upstream global policy advisor for poverty reduction and sustainable human development and as a knowledge-based organization in the region; and
4. assess the degree of innovation among the initiatives undertaken within the RCF programmed project portfolio, their value addition and contribution to generating and sharing knowledge within UNDP and with programme countries.

Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will undertake a thorough assessment of all outcome/programme evaluations undertaken in the region during the period of the RCF. In assessing strategic importance, relevance, and development effectiveness of the RCF, the evaluation will cover four key areas *inter alia*:

- a. programme performance of the RCF programme portfolio and development results achieved;
- b. organizational strategy and modality/mechanisms (including linkages to the Multi-Year Funding Framework or MYFF) of delivering service lines and their effectiveness;
- c. overall institutional and resource mobilization results; and
- d. lessons learned and future directions.

In addition, the evaluation will examine the following:

- 1) the extent to which the RCF has addressed the three dimensions (pillars') and the attainment of the immediate objectives;
- 2) strategic focus of the RCF support and its relevance to the country and regional priorities, including relevance to the MDGs;
- 3) synergic relationships between various components of the RCF (e.g. linkages between the three development dimensions leading to sustainable human development);
- 4) synergies and alignment of the RCF support with other initiatives and partnerships, including that of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)/country programmes, GCF, as well as cross-cutting or cross practice linkages (e.g. gender and women's empowerment). Such an assessment may also include examination of how the RCF leveraged its resources and that of others towards

- achievement of results, the balance between advocacy, analytical work and networking of the RCF contributing to the achievement of the MDGs;
- 5) the relevance and quality of SURF-based services from the country/regional perspective; diversity and nature of demands from country offices for policy advice and service and value added as well as cost effectiveness of the SURF mechanism in delivering RCF products;
 - 6) institutional arrangements of BDP for programming, delivery and monitoring of implementation of the RCF at the Headquarters level, at the sub-regional level (SURFs) and at the country level;
 - 7) institutional and management arrangements of RBAS and the regional centre in Beirut for programming, managing, monitoring and evaluating the regional programmes.

Methodology

The evaluation will entail a combination of comprehensive desk reviews and document analysis, consultations with key stakeholders and visits to a sample of 3-4 countries/locations. Triangulation of information and data sources will constitute the primary methodology for the assessment. Triangulation refers to empirical evidence gathered through three major sources of information: perception, validation and documentation. Validation of the information and findings will be achieved through cross-referencing of sources. This means that document reviews will be supplemented by interviews and focused group discussions with key informants and/or stakeholders at both UNDP Headquarters and the country offices that will be visited. If necessary, a rapid questionnaire and/or informal snap survey would be used to provide quick information on the programme. The evaluation team will consult with Headquarters-based specialists and key partner agencies and institutions of UNDP in the region in order to obtain a broad range of views.

The evaluation team will review the RCF, its constituent projects and other related initiatives and key documents to extract information, determine key trends and issues and develop key questions and criteria - including a survey—for analysis, and compile relevant data during the preparatory phase of the evaluation. The team will also analyse all outcome/programme evaluations undertaken by UNDP during the RCF period before country visits, and undertake additional desk reviews based on interactions with country offices and regional offices and other focal points for RCF activities during and after country visits. The overall evaluation methodology will be agreed between EO and the evaluation team leader. An inception report reflecting, *inter alia*, the agreed methodology and implementation arrangements will be made available by February 2005 at the latest.

Finalization of the report: The evaluation team will meet in plenary by early April 2005 to start preparations for the evaluation report. The last stage of the assessment will be devoted to report writing and further triangulation of country specific data and findings with Headquarters' sources. The draft final report will be made available to the Evaluation Office by 20 April 2005 for EO/RBAS review. The team leader will finalize the evaluation report after the Headquarters consultation/validation process and will make it available to the Evaluation Office by 6 May 2005 at the latest.

Team composition An international team of consultants will undertake the assessment. The team will comprise at least two consultants, one of whom will be the team leader. Both consultants will undertake selected country visits. The team will also include a designated staff member from Evaluation Office to support the team at Headquarters and during country visits. The composition of the evaluation team should reflect the independent and substantive results focus of the exercise. The team leader must have a demonstrative capacity in strategic thinking and policy

advice and in the evaluation and management of complex programmes. The team composition should reflect cross-cultural experience in development and in evaluation including expertise in poverty, governance, environment, crises management and gender. In general, all the team members must possess educational qualifications in the social sciences or related disciplines. The team is also expected to have extensive knowledge in organizational and institutional changes, and in management and modalities of impacting changes through advisory services and advocacy, etc.

Management arrangements

Evaluation Office will manage the evaluation process, provide backstopping support and ensure the coordination and liaison with concerned agencies at the Headquarters level as well as at the country level. Evaluation Office will be responsible for the production of the Evaluation Report and presentation of the same to the UN Executive Board.

Appendix IV: Highlights of results under flagship projects

Project	Outputs/Products “What has been achieved?”	Changes/Impact -Highlights “What has been done with the products?”
CAWTAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of training kits. ▪ Training programmes and training of trainers (TOT) resumed. ▪ Establishment of the Arab Network on Gender and Development (ANGAD) with 180 members in 18 countries including researchers, academics, media professionals, institutions, research centres and NGOs. ▪ Arab Women Development Reports. ▪ Third Annual Meeting of the ANGAD in Tunis. ▪ Report on adolescent girls (“<i>Adolescent Girls: Reality and Prospects</i>”) drawing on seven national studies of adolescents. ▪ Competition for young researchers on Arab women and the media. ▪ Study on the impact of economic liberalization on gender. ▪ CAWTAR website. ▪ Regional training workshop for NGOs on the role of women in peace building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘Evidence-based advocacy’ targeting policy-makers. ▪ Collaboration with NGOs and other stakeholders across the region in specific projects (e.g. study of identity cards and implications for women’s freedom) for use in advocacy, dialogue and policy change. ▪ Collaboration with ICTDAR (WRCATI project) ▪ Collaboration with HARPAS on women and HIV/AIDS.
HARPAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNDP HIV/AIDS focal points workshop in Khartoum. ▪ Regional workshop on leadership, partnership, and networking of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in the Arab States held in Tunisia. ▪ Second Regional Arab Network Against AIDS. ▪ Workshop in Beirut. ▪ First regional documentary on HIV/AIDS, ‘Breaking the Silence’. ▪ Conference for religious leaders on HIV/AIDS in Syria. ▪ Arts and media kit in French to be distributed at workshop for francophone Arab countries. ▪ Religious kits for both the Muslim and Christian faiths for use at the grass-roots level. ▪ Workshop on ‘AIDS in Africa: Scenario for the Future’ including experts from Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Sudan held in Cairo. ▪ Conference on ‘Partnership on the HIV/AIDS Response in the Horn of Africa: Tackling the Epidemic in Post-Conflict Situations’, in Yemen. ▪ Workshop for artists and the media to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS, in Agadir, Morocco. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobilized participation of new stakeholders. ▪ Regional Arab Network Against AIDS (RANAA) established. ▪ Public dialogue in countries where HIV/AIDS has been a taboo subject. ▪ HIV/AIDS statistics now questioned/challenged. ▪ Official support of key Muslim and Christian opinion makers. ▪ Policy declaration by ministers of health at LAS to examine legislation, protect vulnerable groups, and address health and social issues related to HIV/AIDS. ▪ Group of legal experts to propose model legislation for Arab states. ▪ Research and awareness project to survey awareness and beliefs and assist in developing plan to involve government, civil society, and private sector responses in Bahrain. ▪ Marathon run of ‘Breaking the Silence’ to inform and raise awareness in Jordan. ▪ Arts and media campaigns, local TV shows reach wide audiences (and across region) in Egypt ▪ Alliance Against AIDS, research to stimulate national response and achieve MDGs in Libya. ▪ Policy makers discuss for inclusion in 2002-04 National Strategic Plan in Morocco. ▪ NGO network active, arts and media campaigns, and involvement of religious leaders in Tunisia. ▪ National AIDS Committee/MOH, meetings in UAE ▪ Reporting for MDGs (Goal 6) and commitment to capacity building to ‘break the silence’ in Palestinian Territories. ▪ Members of royal family now discussing issue of HIV/AIDS in Saudi Arabia.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mainstreaming of responses to HIV/AIDS into national policies to review legislation in Yemen.
ICTDAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launching of ICTDAR at a panel on ‘The Arab Knowledge Society’ at the World Summit on Information Society in Geneva, Switzerland ▪ Workshop for governments on e-governance with participation of the private sector, in Morocco. ▪ Workshop on e-governance in Tunisia ▪ Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and Microsoft (ICTDAR) for support to Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Sudan and Yemen. ▪ Portal for youth in Arabic (under preparation in collaboration with UNESCO). ▪ ICT for SME’s workshop in Morocco. ▪ Mission to Sudan to initiate an e-readiness assessment in preparation for a national e-strategy. ▪ Presentation on ‘Knowledge Society in the Arab Region’ during the e-merging e-learning conference in Abu Dhabi. ▪ Feasibility study for a regional e-government institute. ▪ Youth centres focussed on SMEs to be opened in Yemen. ▪ E-readiness assessment for Yemen. ▪ Launching of community access centres in Morocco. ▪ Workshop on building a knowledge society in Beirut. ▪ E-government discussion with the Prime Minister’s Office in Morocco. ▪ Conference on telecommunications in Africa, held in Cairo. ▪ International Conference on ICT for Sustainable Development in Abu Dhabi. ▪ Presentation on the use of ICT hubs for SMEs and regional e-government portals at WSIS II. ▪ Regional Preparatory Conference of the World Summit on the Information Society in Damascus, Syria. ▪ Conference on ICT in Algiers. ▪ Wireless technology workshop in Jordan (ICTDAR). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E-governance plans being developed by several countries in the region. ▪ Assessments of ICT requirements being launched in several countries in the region. ▪ Public-private partnership mechanisms established for ICT development for the blind. ▪ ICT for SMEs with Microsoft being developed. ▪ Yemen, Morocco and Egypt are piloting community access centres (for youth, etc.). ▪ WRCATI project in Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon ▪ ICTARB project with UNDP country office in Syria. ▪ With EU support, project for women’s access to legal information in Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon.
POGAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beirut roundtable on Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. ▪ Exploratory meeting on Good Governance for Development in the Middle East and North Africa Region in Istanbul . ▪ Conference on ‘Modernizing Public Prosecution Offices in the Arab Region’, in Morocco. ▪ Translation of ‘Assessing Legislation – A Manual for Legislators’. ▪ Television documentary entitled ‘My Child the Foreigner’ on the rights of Arab women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beyond publications resulting from workshops and conferences as well as policy documents, the outcomes resulting directly from POGAR (policy changes, institutional reform), if any, were difficult to determine. ▪ Perhaps the most significant outcomes of POGAR are i) its contribution to bridging the knowledge deficit, particularly with respect to information in Arabic; ii) increased sensitization of participants in workshops and other events; and iii) the establishment of partnerships with CSOs.

	<p>to pass their nationality to their children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting on corruption and good governance in the Arab States, organized by the Centre of Arab Unity Studies in Beirut, 20-23 September 2004. ▪ Arabic publication on “Role of public prosecution in protecting human rights and Freedoms in 2004. ▪ Paper on human rights entitled ‘Human Rights in the Arab Mediterranean Countries: Intellectual Discourse, Socio-Economic Background and Legal Instruments’ published in the Mediterranean Politics Journal. ▪ Publication of “Directory on Women in Islam” in 2003, focusing on gender related issues and role of women in the region. ▪ Study report on ‘Legal and Economic Framework to Address Corruption in the Arab World’ (Arabic and English versions). ▪ Paper on ‘Comparative Study on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and the Current Legal Status in the Arab Countries’. ▪ Publication on the proceedings of the workshop on ‘The Role of Civil Society in the Arab Countries and Reform: Reality and Prospects’. ▪ POGAR website. ▪ Meeting on Governance for Investment and Development in the Middle East and North Africa, with OECD. ▪ Keynote address in the 8th Annual Euro-Mediterranean Economic Transition Meeting organized by the European Commission. ▪ Meeting on the judicial system in Iraq held in Amman, Jordan. ▪ Arab ministerial meeting on Good Governance for Development in collaboration with OECD, held in Amman, Jordan. ▪ Workshop on aid coordination, held in Morocco. <p>Five subsidiary projects in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RAB/01/004 - Human Development and Human Rights ▪ RAB//03/M02 - Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund for Strengthening Legislatures ▪ RAB/03/H01 – Promoting Good Governance and the Rule of Law in Arab States and Implementing the AHDR ▪ RAB/03/H02 – Promoting Good Governance Through the Rule of Law. 	
TIMSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definition of assessment framework. ▪ Tests and questionnaires finalized after field trials in the (5) participating countries. ▪ Sampling techniques and software prepared by the TIMSS management, identification of 150 representative schools for inclusion into national TIMSS target population sample. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational reforms in middle school curricula in science and math, introduction of TIMSS-style test formats; adoption of new teaching methodologies including enhanced classroom teacher/student interaction, in Egypt. ▪ Lebanon is reviewing school curricula and survey provided useful data.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tests and questionnaires administered to students, teachers and principals in sample (in Arabic). ▪ Data resulting from tests and questionnaires compiled and analysed in participating countries and sent to the IEA for final analysis and report preparation. ▪ TIMSS 2003 reports on mathematics and science. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Palestinian Territories: The government has adopted TIMSS data analysis and methodology as a “diagnostic tool” for its own national evaluation and assessment programmes for educational reforms. ▪ In Syria, government commitment to educational reform of grade one through Baccalaureate. TIMSS team to be part of new Education Research Centre being set up. Syria to joins TIMSS. ▪ Standardization of scoring methodology, re-examination of style and content of student tests in Yemen.
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convening of an advisory committee on higher education. ▪ Higher education workshop for peer reviewers. ▪ Final reports on the review of computer science programmes within Arab universities (higher education). ▪ Application of Arabic and French versions of American-based major field test in computer science and business administration at 29 universities in 12 countries. ▪ Integrated statistical database on Arab universities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for establishment of regional standardized database system to demonstrate standards and point to areas of improvement. ▪ Contribution to developing regionally based standards, quality assessments and accreditation in partnership with CSOs, government, universities and other stakeholders (for example, conference on ‘Quality Management and Accreditation of Higher Education in the Arab World’, Cairo, Egypt, December 2004) ▪ Establishment or strengthening of ‘evaluation units’ in different universities. ▪ University representatives in the project developing quality assurance within their respective institutions. ▪ Publication of standardized data regionally.
League of Arab States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Development Forum for the LAS. ▪ Launch of the Arab MDGs with LAS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LAS served as a forum for the consideration of policy issues generated by HARPAS, POGAR and other projects, issuing important ministerial declarations that can lay the basis for policy change.

Appendix V: Questionnaire

Based on the design/profile of the RCF, results should be assessed under the following 6 dimensions:

1. general, pertaining to role of the RCF;
2. policy advocacy;
3. processes and modes of interaction;
4. capacity building;
5. piloting; and
6. other dimensions pertaining to equity, sustainability and ownership.

The following questions pertain to each dimension above and are intended for UNDP staff, project staff and stakeholders for UNDP Country Offices.¹³

General

1. Did the RCF help to strategically position UNDP in the region and at the national level in your country?
2. What value added does UNDP obtain by continuing to have an inter-country programme? Would limited funds be better used on programmes that are restricted to a single country?
3. How did the AHDRs influence the content and approach adopted by the regional programme and was the AHDR a useful tool?

Policy advocacy

4. Can it be said that the regional cooperation programme resulted in changes to any policies at the national and/or regional levels? If so, which ones, and what were the changes?
5. What have been the effects of the above policy changes at the:
 - national level?
 - regional level?

Processes and changes in modes of interaction

6. How has the RCF resulted in changes to processes and ways in which institutions and individuals interact?
7. Has the RCF instigated/created new partnerships between institutions at either the national or international levels?

¹³ Responses from UNDP Country Offices in Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, and United Arab Emirates were received by the Evaluation Team.

8. Have the RCF programmes within the knowledge pillar broadened the use of information or rendered its use more effective? Have they contributed to an improvement in the quality of information available, and if so, what categories of information?
9. Has the RCF and its constituent programmes created or strengthened any permanent or lasting networks?
10. Are there any clear examples of policy advocacy under the RCF influencing the nature and content of public or policy debate at the national or regional levels?
11. Are there clear examples of policy positions advocated under the RCF being translated into policy or action at the national level? If so, what are they?

Capacity building

12. Have any new technologies been introduced under the RCF? How effective and sustainable have they been?
13. Has capacity been built in any regional or national institutions as a result of the RCF? If so, what capacities have been built and in what institutions?

Piloting of activities

14. In your country, what pilot activities were implemented under the RCF and were they successful? If so which ones? What were the reasons for success? What were the reasons for failure?
15. If they were successful were they either replicated or scaled-up? If not, why?

Other dimensions

16. National ownership - Did the individual programmes formulated and implemented under the RCF generate a strong sense of ownership at the national level? If not, why?
17. National ownership - Did the RCF as a whole benefit from a strong sense of ownership at the national level? If not, why?
18. Sustainability - Can you expect programme activities to continue upon completion of the UNDP programme under each of the relevant regional programmes?
19. How were women involved in the design, management and monitoring of the programme?
20. How many women were direct beneficiaries of each regional programme/of the RCF in your country (please provide numbers)?
21. Did the RCF as a whole contribute to the attainment of greater equity? If so, how?

Appendix VI: Comprehensive financial table

Project	Title	2002			2003			2004			2005			Future			TOTAL		
		C/S	TRAC	Total	C/S	TRAC	Total	C/S	TRAC	Total	C/S	TRAC	Total	C/S	TRAC	Total	C/S	TRAC	Total
RAB/86/047	Administrative Development of the Secretariat of the Arab League	-	(272,171)	(272,171)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(272,171)	(272,171)
RAB/89/005	Aqua-Culture Development in the Mediterranean Region (MEDRAP) II	-	4,455	4,455	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,455	4,455
RAB/02/005	Arab Economic Growth under Globalization	-	-	-	-	241,539	241,539	-	152,591	152,591	-	500,000	500,000	-	2,605,870	2,605,870	-	3,500,000	3,500,000
RAB/01/001	Arab Human Development Report (AHDR)	22,960	976,423	999,383	39,939	1,099,977	1,139,916	-	1,231,528	1,231,528	498,866	750,000	1,248,866	58,866	528,106	586,972	620,631	4,586,034	5,206,665
RAB/94/004	Centre for Arab Women for Training and Research (CAW/TAR) I	-	-	-	-	353,182	353,182	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	353,182	353,182
RAB/98/002	Centre for Arab Women for Training and Research (CAW/TAR) II	34,965	296,348	331,313	-	(241,965)	(241,965)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34,965	54,383	89,348
RAB/02/001	Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAW/TAR) III	-	-	-	150,000	602,603	752,603	-	448,171	448,171	285,600	194,933	480,533	144,400	-	144,400	580,000	1,245,707	1,825,707
Rab/99/001	Cooperation with the Arab League (LAS)	-	143,404	143,404	-	112,354	112,354	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	255,758	255,758
RAB/96/007	Development of National Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries	-	32,942	32,942	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32,942	32,942
RAB/99/006	Globalization Initiative	-	(29)	(29)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(29)	(29)
RAB/99/005	Governance Programme in the Arab Region (POGAR)	165,587	1,127,750	1,293,337	-	1,212,648	1,212,648	816,649	1,156,612	1,973,261	3,000,000	400,000	3,400,000	6,633,435	-	6,633,435	10,615,671	3,997,010	14,512,681
RAB/03/001	HIWAIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States (HARPAS)	158,209	-	158,209	262,398	54,423	316,821	227,165	266,613	493,778	300,000	417,771	717,771	1,159,836	-	1,159,836	2,107,608	738,807	2,846,415
RAB/01/004	Human Development and Human Rights	-	129,864	129,864	-	284,690	284,690	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	414,554	414,554
RAB/02/003	Information Communication Technologies in the Arab Region (ICTDAR)	-	106,590	106,590	-	254,578	254,578	203,893	487,421	691,314	573,439	250,000	823,439	-	1,401,411	1,401,411	777,332	2,500,000	3,277,332
RAB/01/003	Intellectual Capital Development (ICD)	-	152,435	152,435	-	21,076	21,076	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	173,511	173,511
RAB/00/001	Mediterranean Development Forum (MDF-3)	20,000	35,374	55,374	-	7,612	7,612	-	20,271	20,271	-	-	-	-	-	-	20,000	63,257	83,257
RAB/95/003	Poverty in the Arab Region	-	(64,741)	(64,741)	-	(9,943)	(9,943)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(74,684)	(74,684)
RAB/99/002	Preparatory Assistance for IT Build-up	-	-	-	-	(23,403)	(23,403)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(23,403)	(23,403)
RAB/96/008	Preparatory Assistance for the Nile Basin	-	6,569	6,569	-	40,244	40,244	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46,813	46,813
RAB/96/005	Promoting Technical and Industrial Culture	-	(115,578)	(115,578)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(115,578)	(115,578)
RAB/94/760	Promotion of Sustainable Human Development (SHD) in the Arab States	-	25,799	25,799	-	1,236	1,236	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27,035	27,035
RAB/01/002	Quality Assessment of Higher Education Institutes in the Arab Countries	-	870,497	870,497	-	675,771	675,771	-	868,474	868,474	-	850,000	850,000	-	1,405,269	1,405,269	-	4,670,011	4,670,011
RAB/96/002	Regional Capacity Building Programme-METAP	561,647	301,871	863,518	(72,617)	(257,862)	(330,479)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	489,030	44,009	533,039
RAB/96/888	Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF) Programme Cost-Sharing	403,914	(403,914)	-	77,098	(77,098)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	481,012	(481,012)	-
RAB/96/003	Strengthening and Mobilizing the Intellectual Property System	-	7,520	7,520	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,520	7,520
RAB/97/004	Strengthening the Finance Sector	-	25,884	25,884	-	(22,321)	(22,321)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,563	3,563
RAB/90/005	Supplementary Water Management under Rain-fed Agriculture	-	-	-	-	77,897	77,897	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77,897	77,897
RAB/96/001	Support to Arab States in Pursuit of Economic Development	-	493,952	493,952	-	1,945	1,945	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	495,897	495,897
RAB/99/004	Support to Small/Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in the Arab Region	-	1,831	1,831	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,831	1,831
RAB/91/007	Surveillance of Disease & Germplasm Enhancement for Cereals & Legumes	-	-	-	-	31,569	31,569	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31,569	31,569
RAB/01/005	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)	-	616,925	616,925	-	139,248	139,248	-	176,542	176,542	-	737,296	737,296	-	2,231,426	2,231,426	-	3,901,437	3,901,437
Total		1,367,282	4,500,000	5,867,282	456,818	4,580,000	5,036,818	1,247,707	4,808,223	6,055,930	4,657,905	4,100,000	8,757,905	7,996,537	8,172,082	16,168,619	15,726,249	26,160,305	41,886,554