MOPAN Assessment Report

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

2020 Assessment Cycle

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MOPAN
Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network

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Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network

Preface

ABOUT MOPAN

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) comprises 21 countries* that share a common interest in assessing the performance of the major multilateral organisations they fund. A MOPAN assessment report seeks to provide a diagnostic assessment, or snapshot, of an organisation and tell the story of an organisation's current performance, within its mandate. It is conducted through a rigorous process and takes a collaborative approach to ensure that the findings resonate with the organisation and its stakeholders. It draws on multiple lines of evidence (documentary, survey, and interviews) from sources within and outside an organisation to validate and triangulate findings set against a standard indicator framework that was developed based on international best practice.

MOPAN Members

as at 1 October 2021

Australia	Belgium	Canada	Denmark	European Union*	Finland
France	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Japan	Korea
Luxembourg	Netherlands	Norway	Qatar*	Sweden	Switzerland
United Arab Emirates	United Kingdom	United States			

* The European Union and Qatar are observers

The following operating principles guide the implementation of MOPAN assessments, and MOPAN's Methodology Manual[1] describes how these principles are realised.

Operating principles

MOPAN will generate credible, fair and accurate assessments through:

- **implementing** an impartial, systematic and rigorous approach

- **balancing breadth with depth**, adopting an appropriate balance between coverage and depth of information

- **prioritising quality** of information over quantity

- **adopting a systematic approach**, including the use of structured tools for enquiry/analysis

- **providing transparency**, generating an "audit trail" of findings

- **being efficient**, building layers of data, seeking to reduce burdens on organisations

- **ensuring utility**, building organisational learning through an iterative process and accessible reporting

- **being incisive**, through a focused methodology, which provides concise reporting to tell the story of an organisation's current performance
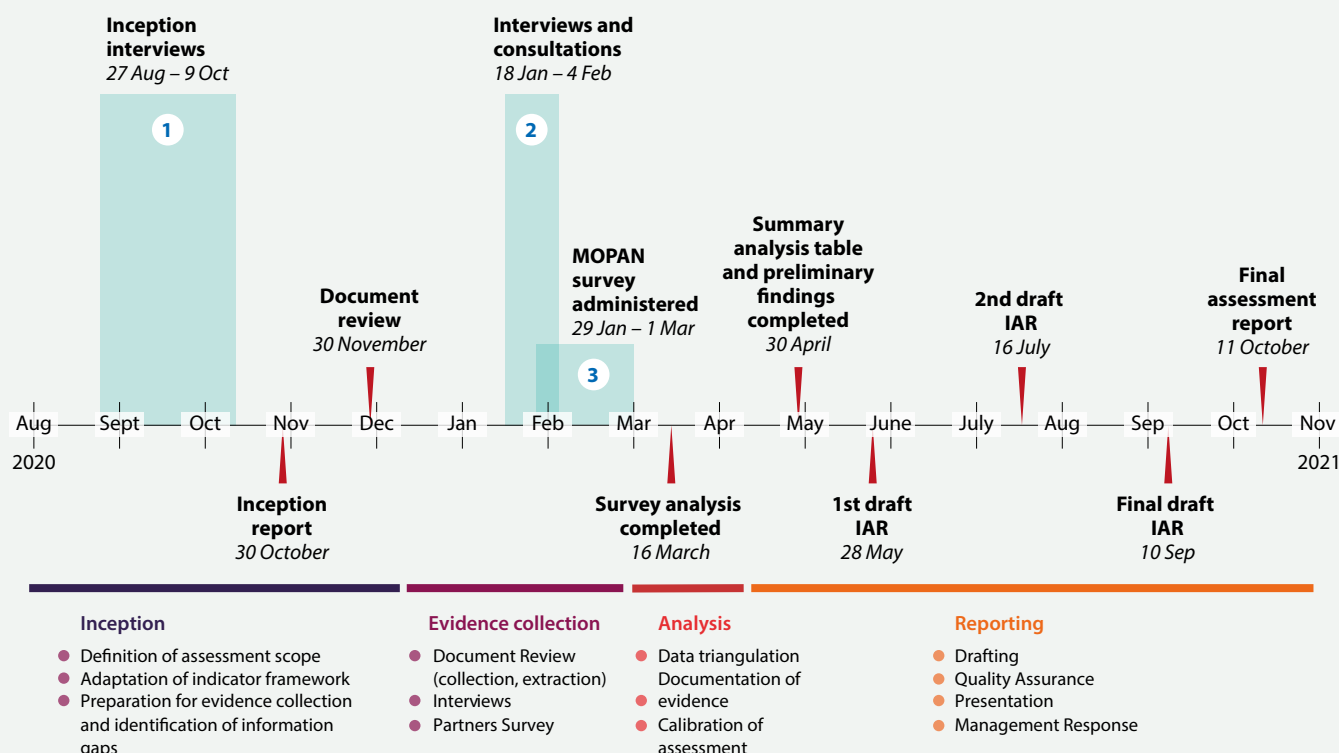

Applying these principles, MOPAN generates, collects, analyses and presents relevant and credible information on organisational and development effectiveness. This knowledge base is intended to contribute to organisational learning within and among the organisations, their direct clients and partners, and other stakeholders. Network members use the reports for their own accountability needs and as a source of input for strategic decision making.

Note that the assessment report is structured to present a high-level overview of findings across the body of the text (in Chapters 2 and 3), and that more detailed analysis underlying each score, as well as full referencing, is available in Annex A.

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1   MOPAN (2020), MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, 2020 Assessment Cycle, http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf

MOPAN ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR UNDP

The MOPAN assessment of UNDP was undertaken between September 2020 and September 2021. It covers the performance of UNDP headquarters, regional offices and country field operations. It examines the period following the previous 2015-16 MOPAN assessment, from 2016–20, as part of the regular MOPAN assessment cycle.

Inception interviews
27 Aug – 9 Oct
1

Interviews and consultations
18 Jan – 4 Feb
2

Document review
30 November

MOPAN survey administered
29 Jan – 1 Mar
3

Summary analysis table and preliminary findings completed
30 April

2nd draft IAR
16 July

Final assessment report
11 October

Aug — Sept — Oct — Nov — Dec — Jan — Feb — Mar — Apr — May — June — July — Aug — Sep — Oct — Nov
2020   2021

Inception report
30 October

Survey analysis completed
16 March

1st draft IAR
28 May

Final draft IAR
10 Sep

Inception
- Definition of assessment scope
- Adaptation of indicator framework
- Preparation for evidence collection and identification of information gaps

Evidence collection
- Document Review (collection, extraction)
- Interviews
- Partners Survey

Analysis
- Data triangulation Documentation of evidence
- Calibration of assessment

Reporting
- Drafting
- Quality Assurance
- Presentation
- Management Response

The MOPAN 3.1 methodology was applied in its entirety, without any adjustments. It has been interpreted in ways that reflect the realities of UNDP's mandate, operating context and systems.

Governance is at the heart of UNDP's policies, strategies and interventions. It is one of UNDP's six "Signature Solutions" and an integral part of the programming across the organisation. Because governance is more than "just" a cross-cutting theme, as per the MOPAN assessment framework, micro-indicator (MI) 2.4 has been replaced with a separate governance section in Chapter 2.2., which describes its main features. In addition, where pertinent, governance is also captured in all relevant key performance indicators (KPIs), MIs and elements, and referenced as needed, both in the main report and Annex A. For example, KPI 5 references UNDP's role in strengthening institutional capacity, while KPIs 9-12 look at the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of results of governance interventions.

The methodology relies on three lines of evidence including a document review (with a cut-off date of 31 December 2020), an online survey and interviews and consultations. Apart from the independent evaluations of UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 and UNDP's support to conflict-affected countries, the cut-off date regrettably meant that other documentary evidence published in 2021 – such as the COVID-19 Evaluability Study, the management response to the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21, or the June 2021 MOPAN report on United Nations Development System (UNDS) Reform – could not be incorporated in this assessment.

UNDP provided feedback on the draft interim document review and offered additional documentation to update the review and address gaps before the review fed into the overall analysis. The team held an information call with

MOPAN members in December 2020, and another informal call with institutional lead representatives from the United Kingdom and Switzerland in March 2021 to discuss preliminary findings.

At the request of MOPAN members, the assessment team prepared a preliminary note with a summary of assessment findings in May 2021. These preliminary findings were shared with UNDP and MOPAN members with the aim to inform the Executive Board negotiations on the UNDP 2022-25 Strategic Plan in June 2021.

HISTORY OF MOPAN ASSESSMENTS FOR UNDP

UNDP was assessed in 2009 and 2012, as well as in the 2015-16 cycle. It was also covered in the synthesis reports of 2004 (with the African Development Bank [AfDB] and the Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO]) – and 2007 (with AfDB and the World Health Organization [WHO]). Previous assessments can be found via http://www.mopanonline. org/assessments.

Acknowledgements

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Figures, boxes and tables

Abbreviations and acronyms

AEAC	Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
AF	Adaption Fund
AfDB	African Development Bank
BPPS	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support
CACHE	Capacity Assessment Checklist
CAT-I	Capacity Assessment Tool for Infrastructure
CB	Crisis Bureau
CBCM	Community-based Complaints Mechanism
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEB	Chief Executive Board
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CPD	Country Programme Documents
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCO	Development Coordination Office
EAC	Engagement Acceptance Committee
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ED	Executive Director
EOD	Executive Office Directive
EOI	Executive Office Instruction
EU	European Union
ERM	Enterprise Risk Management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GA	General Assembly
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GLOC	Government Local Office Costs
GPN	Global Policy Network
GPEDC	The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation
GRI	Global Reporting Index
GSSC	Global Shared Service Centres
GTF	Global Task Force
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
HDR	Human Development Report
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HRDDP	Human Rights Due Diligence Policy
HIC	High Income Countries
HSSE	Health & Safety and Social & Environmental
IAIG	Internal Audit and Investigation Group
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative

ICF	Internal Control Framework
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
ILO	International Labour Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
ISA	International Standards on Auditing
IRRF	Integrated Results and Resources Framework
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LDC	Least Developed Country
LDCF	Least Developed Country Fund
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer and Intersex
LLDC	Landlocked Developing Countries
MAF	Management and Accountability Framework
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MI	Micro-indicator
MIC	Middle-income Countries
MO	Multilateral Organisation
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
MPTFO	Multi Partner Trust Fund Office
MTR	Midterm Review
N/A	Not Applicable
N/E	No Evidence
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPP	National Public Partner
NHRI	National Human Rights Institutions
NPIF	Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund
NYSC	New York Service Cluster
QA	Quality Assurance
QBR	Quarterly Business Review
OAI	Office of Audit and Evaluations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
OI	Organisational Instruction
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PEAT	Procurement Efficiency Assessment Tool
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
PPM	Programme and Project Management
PSEA	Protection of Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
PMM	Project Management Manual
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RBM	Results-Based Management

RC	Resident Coordinator
RR	Resident Representative
ROAR	Results Oriented Annual Report
SAMOA	SAMOA Pathway
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SERF	UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19
SES	Social and Environmental Standards
SGB	Secretary-General's Bulletin
SG	Secretary-General
SH	Sexual Harassment
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SP	Strategic Plan
SS	Signature Solution
SSC	South-South Co-operation
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignment from Core
TOKTEN	Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Networks
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UN SG	United Nations Secretary-General
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN-SWAP	United Nations System-Wide Action Plan
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USD	United States Dollar
USG	Under Secretary-General
VRA	Victims' Rights Advocates
WHO	World Health Organization

UNDP:
PERFOMANCE AT-A-GLANCE

UNDP: Performance at-a-glance

ABOUT UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), founded in 1965, has the most comprehensive tasks among all UN agencies. Its mandate includes, but is not limited to, poverty reduction, democratic governance, peacebuilding and state-building. Beside its programmatic role in eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerating structural transformation for sustainable development, and building resilience to crises and shocks, UNDP also has the role of "integrator". It spearheads a multidisciplinary "whole of society" response in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, UNDP is the "operational" backbone of the UN system, servicing UN entities at country level. It provides a platform that includes finance, human resources, procurement, travel, IT and other services to over 80 UN and other entities. To implement its mandate and play these different roles, UNDP works in a highly decentralised manner. It operates in about 170 countries and territories, with only 7% of its almost 20 000 employees based in New York.

KEY FINDINGS

The past four years have been extraordinarily turbulent for UNDP. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda and subsequent UNDS reforms, and the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, have had far-reaching consequences. UNDP has shown great resilience in responding to these shocks and demonstrated new dynamism, especially in responding to COVID-19. Building on the UNDS reforms, UNDP played a pivotal role in the preparation of the UN Secretary-General's appeal, "Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity – responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19", the policy framework, and the elaboration of socio-economic response and recovery plans at the country level (SERPs).

Alongside its "traditional" roles, UNDP is seeking to reposition itself both as an innovator and, as mandated by the General Assembly, an "integrator" within the UN development system. Especially at headquarter (HQ) level, it has pro-actively invested in existing and new strategic institutional partnerships with UN partners and international financial institutions (IFIs). Simultaneously, UNDP has begun to roll out an ambitious #NextGenUNDP change agenda. Learning from past restructuring efforts, UNDP has also chosen to keep its organisational structure and decentralised business model intact, whilst adjusting to new realities. In doing so, it has adopted an incremental, "ink-spot" approach to organisational transformation by piloting new initiatives before scaling up, thereby aiming for a smooth change process.

UNDP's direction of travel remains, however, a work in progress. At this stage, UNDP's organisational structure, processes and people still primarily reflect its traditional roles as service provider and project implementing agency, and are insufficiently aligned with its current multifaceted strategic ambitions and initiatives. Moreover, innovation is constrained by today's stringent funding practice, which favours UNDP's programmatic role, limits strategic-level steering across the six Signature Solutions, and perpetuates fragmentation across too many themes and areas. UNDP's reliance on a small number of core donors constitutes a strategic and reputational risk. Overall, innovation and integration are yet to be better "anchored" – both within the organisation and externally with its partners – in terms of conceptual clarity, buy-in, and operational policies, procedures and instruments. In September 2020, UNDP established a Strategic Innovation Unit to address these needs. Thus, it is too early to determine how successfully innovation is transforming UNDP's ways of working, its partnerships and its performance at the country level.

To pursue this change agenda further, UNDP can capitalise on its key strengths, i.e. robust organisational systems, a decentralised structure, a proven capacity to handle change constructively, thought leadership and a strong approach to partnerships. However, these alone will not assure the delivery of more effective, relevant, efficient and sustainable development results. Importantly, UNDP will need to better define its role and complementarity and invest in better

managing change, whilst simultaneously closing the gap between HQ policies, strategies and programmes, including its results-based management and field-level operations. It will need to innovate and align its organisational structure, business model, funding structure and organisational culture to a more strategic and programmatic focus. The push for greater quality, efficiency and new ways of working are yet to be fully embedded in the minds and actions of personnel across all layers of the organisation. Similarly, they also need to be better reflected in programmatic terms, with a move away from "project implementor" to more upstream policy advice and the facilitation of sustainable, integrated solutions to today's complex problems.

Strategic management

UNDP is a large, multifaceted, heterogeneous development organisation, operating globally across a broad range of areas and themes. To maintain flexibility during great uncertainty and change, UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 presented an exploratory vision for the organisation, rather than a detailed strategy. The plan is fully aligned with the 2030 Development Agenda. To some extent, UNDP's main objectives – to bring greater focus to its work, break down internal silos and bolster innovation – have been achieved, although a gap remains between innovative policies and strategies developed at HQ level, and country level practice. Overall, UNDP has handled the UNDS reforms exceptionally well, including the Regional Coordinator (RC) delinking. Its response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly successful, with its agility, global reach and on-the-ground presence proving valuable assets. UNDP took the lead on the pandemic's socio-economic impact, supported governments in their short- and medium-term response, and reprogrammed and mobilised close to USD 1 billion in funds.

UNDP is a voluntarily funded organisation, reliant on a few donors for core resources to maintain corporate structures and cover programme expenses. UNDP remains predominantly a decentralised project implementing agency, with 93% of its workforce based at the country level delivering about 5 000 active development projects. UNDP is mostly recognised and valued for its traditional programmatic and "backbone" roles, and less so for its thought leadership and "integrator" roles.

On cross-cutting issues, UNDP has made progress in its approach to gender equality and women's empowerment. Whilst notable achievements have been made across all programmatic areas, they nevertheless remain constrained by modest human and financial resources. Although UNDP does not have an external climate change/environmental sustainability strategy or policy, it takes a holistic approach to climate change and holds its programmes to high standards. It is a key provider of technical support on environmental issues and a primary actor on climate change within the UN system. A human rights-based approach is mandatory for all UNDP programming. While wholly committed to economic and social rights, a challenge for UNDP, as with other UNDS entities, has been articulating its stance on sensitive (civil-political) human rights issues more widely at the country level.

Operational management

UNDP continues to streamline and bolster its internal policies, business processes, systems, tools and instruments to enhance delivery. Demonstrable improvements have been made to people management, clustering of services and financial management. UNDP shows determination to become a client-oriented operational service provider, and its adaptation and contribution to the smooth transition of the RC function is widely appreciated. During the delinking process, UNDP seconded 63 of its staff as Resident Coordinators and appointed 127 new resident representatives and 144 deputy representatives. With an annual contribution of USD 10.3 million, UNDP is the second-largest UN contributor to the RC system.

All resources are reflected in the integrated resource plan and integrated budget document; however, regular resources amounted to no more than 12-13% of total resources in 2016-19. Results-based budgeting and the reallocation of resources are lacking at the corporate level. Moreover, in the integrated budget there is no discernible prioritisation of resources. Most resources are project-based and mobilised at the country level. UNDP's decentralised

delivery mechanisms are sufficiently capable of withstanding shocks such as COVID-19. A comprehensive risk-informed approach is used to detect (potential) fraud and corruption. UNDP is recognised as the most transparent UN organisation.

A new area that MOPAN is tracking is the organisation's efforts to prevent sexual misconduct. UNDP underscores its adherence to the SG's Bulletin on special measures for the protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (PSEA), which applies to all UN staff. UNDP has a designated policy on sexual harassment (SH), aligned to UN and Chief Executive Board (CEB) standards, which extends to all UNDP personnel; however, it does have not an organisation-specific policy on PSEA. SH and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are explicitly proscribed in UNDP's code of ethics, legal framework and staff rules. UNDP established a strategy and action plan that sets out its efforts to prevent and respond to SH and SEA, led by a multi-sectoral taskforce headed by UNDP's Deputy Chief of Staff. Additional resources for implementing the action plan and strategy are provided through PSEA focal points in the majority of UNDP country offices, and specific country offices have a designated PSEA co-ordinator. Nevertheless, tracking progress on PSEA is made difficult by how the strategy is monitored. Given the broad parameters of UNDP's programming, and the scope and arena of the beneficiaries that UNDP is involved with, SEA is a challenging area to tackle; however, progress has recently been made through revisions to UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, which now include risks related to gender-based violence (GBV) and PSEA. UNDP has strengthened channels for reporting, investigating cases, and tracking implementation of progress on preventing and responding to SEA/SH at HQ and field levels. Prevention of SEA/SH through outreach, training and communications is a main focus of UNDP's SEA/SH strategy and action plan. With this, UNDP is actively engaged to ensure that all personnel better understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to preventing and responding to SEA and SH, which is translating to significant efforts by country offices, although more effort will be needed to embed consistent processes across all UNDP programming.

Relationship management

UNDP is at heart a partnership agency, and has spearheaded many important initiatives that have bolstered collaboration and partnership within and beyond the UN system. UNDP is committed to the aid effectiveness agenda and to supporting nationally led action, driven by strong partnerships with national governments. It has fully incorporated its principles into its programming approach. Its guidance for enterprise risk management, programme and operations policies and procedures, and social and environmental safeguards have improved.

UNDP sees itself primarily as a partner of national governments, whose priorities define UNDP's engagement at the country level. This has led to confusion among stakeholders about its comparative advantage in terms of contributing to upstream "whole of society" policies and strategies, to criticism from other agencies about its lack of thematic focus and complementarity, and to questions about its concept of "beneficiaries" and measures to ensure that "no one is left behind". Knowledge management, which would be essential to underpin its thought leadership, programmatic and integrator roles, deserves a fresh look; there was limited evidence of vertical and horizontal development and systematic use of knowledge.

Results management

UNDP is committed to results-based management (RBM) and has taken steps to track results across development contexts and against the SDGs. However, despite efforts to account for UNDP's heterogeneous results across country contexts, UNDP's systems continue to steer the organisation towards results measurement at the country level, and insufficiently capture and aggregate planned and intended results at the global level. Its ability to integrate lessons from previous interventions, and particularly learn from failure, has been a persistent weakness. UNDP has a well-established, credible independent evaluation function, an up-to-date evaluation policy, robust systems and a growing evaluation budget. Notwithstanding efforts to improve their oversight and quality, decentralised evaluations remain relatively weak.

Box 1: Main strengths and areas for improvement identified in the MOPAN 2020 assessment

Main strengths

- UNDP's 2018-21 Strategic Plan is ambitious, transformative and forward-looking, and provides a compelling vision for UNDP's contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

- UNDP has shown great resilience and demonstrated new dynamism in response to the UNDS reforms and COVID-19 pandemic, handling change extraordinarily well in light of the challenging circumstances.

- UNDP has made progress in addressing and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues (gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, environmental sustainability and climate change, and human rights, particularly those of minorities and people with disabilities).

- UNDP demonstrates commitment to and alignment with national priorities, the aid effectiveness agenda, and co-operation with member states, in combination with increased emphasis on inter-agency and partnership planning and programming.

- UNDP has effective decentralised decision-making and resource allocation mechanisms.

- UNDP has strong management systems (including ICT, business continuity and enterprise risk management); independent evaluation, audit and oversight functions; and high levels of transparency and information disclosure.

Areas for improvement

- UNDP's dependency on a small group of core donors, combined with uneven resourcing and mechanisms for resource mobilisation across priority areas and partners, have created an imbalance in resources across UNDP's strategic priorities and constitute a strategic and reputational risk.

- UNDP's organisational structure, processes and people still primarily reflect its traditional roles as service provider and project implementing agency, and are insufficiently aligned with its current multifaceted strategic ambitions and initiatives.

- To increase internal coherence and clarity of its role and comparative advantage, UNDP will need to bridge the gap between HQ-level policies, strategies and programmes, and its country-level programming and decision making.

- UNDP's RBM systems insufficiently steer and aggregate results at the global level.

- Whilst UNDP has efficient and robust systems in place to guide programme management and monitoring, they do not assure more effective, relevant, efficient and sustainable development results.

- Moreover, too many UNDP interventions remain fragmented, are scattered across too many themes and areas, and are insufficiently geared towards upstream policy making and capacity strengthening.

- UNDP needs to better integrate the lessons from evaluations of past interventions and apply these systematically.

Results

Given the considerable scope and breadth of its programmatic interventions in diverse contexts, there is mixed evidence of UNDP's development results. Evaluative evidence demonstrates relatively strong programmatic performance in three well-funded Signature Solution areas – poverty reduction, governance and environment – but less so in resilience, energy and gender. Moreover, energy and gender combined received less than 3% of total funding in 2020. UNDP faces persistent challenges to achieve relevant results in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner. Such challenges include: a fragmented portfolio of small-scale, isolated and unsustainable projects (1% of projects accounted for 41% of expenditure in 2020), with weak linkages to upstream policy and institutional capacity development; funding-driven priorities and actions; government-centric partnerships; ineffective funding mechanisms; and a need to further strengthen multidimensional approaches and intersectoral co-ordination. Many of these reflect structural issues in the development arena that are pertinent to all development actors.

FIGURE 1: UNDP'S PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY
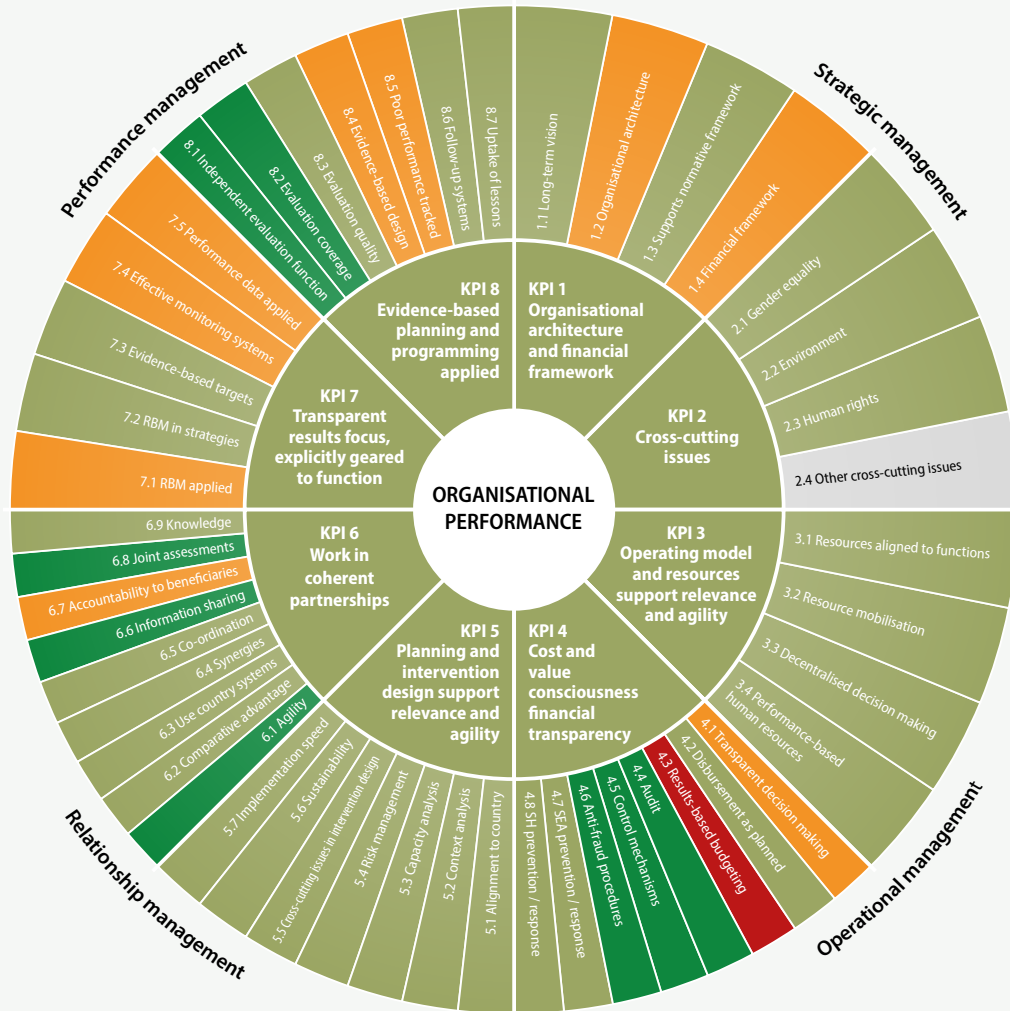
How to read these charts
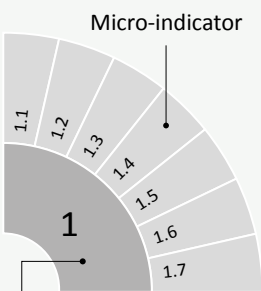
Micro-indicator

Key Performance Indicator

- **Highly satisfactory** (3.51-4.00)
- **Satisfactory** (2.51-3.50)
- **Unsatisfactory** (1.51-2.50)
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.50)
- **No evidence / Not applicable**
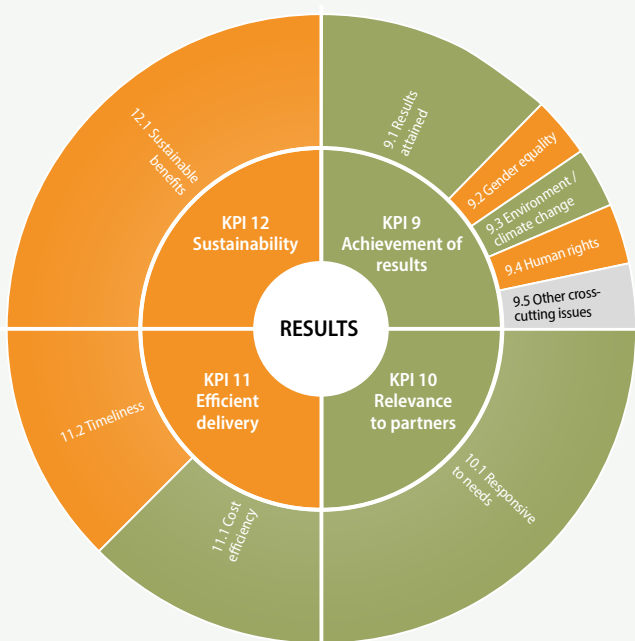
FIGURE 2: UNDP'S PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY (previous rating scale)

Changes to MOPAN's rating system

MOPAN's methodology is continuously evolving, and a recent notable change is how ratings (and their corresponding colours) are applied based on the scores at MI and KPI level. Compared to pre-2019 assessments, the threshold for a rating has been raised to reflect the increasing demands for organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring are unaffected.

How to read these charts

Micro-indicator

Key Performance Indicator
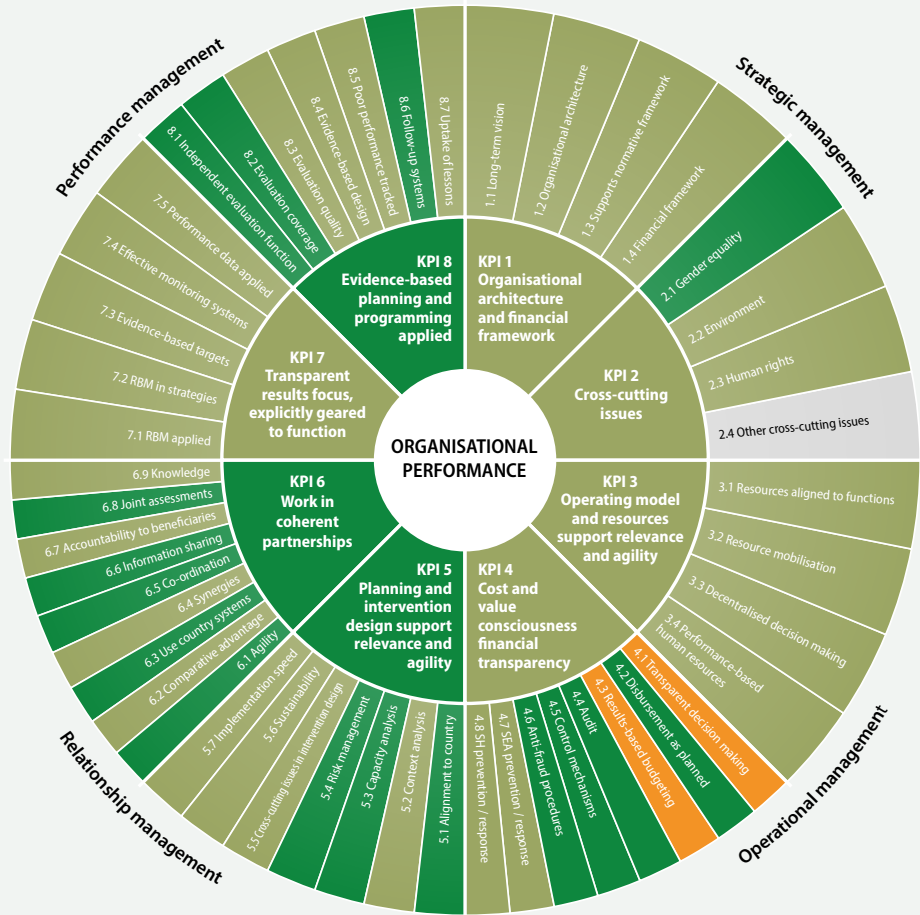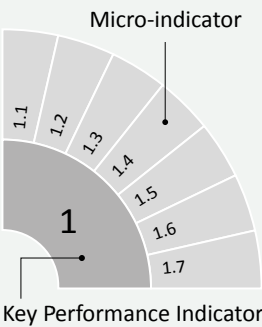
- **Highly satisfactory** (3.01-4.00)
- **Satisfactory** (2.01-3.00)
- **Unsatisfactory** (1.01-2.00)
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.00)
- **No evidence / Not applicable**
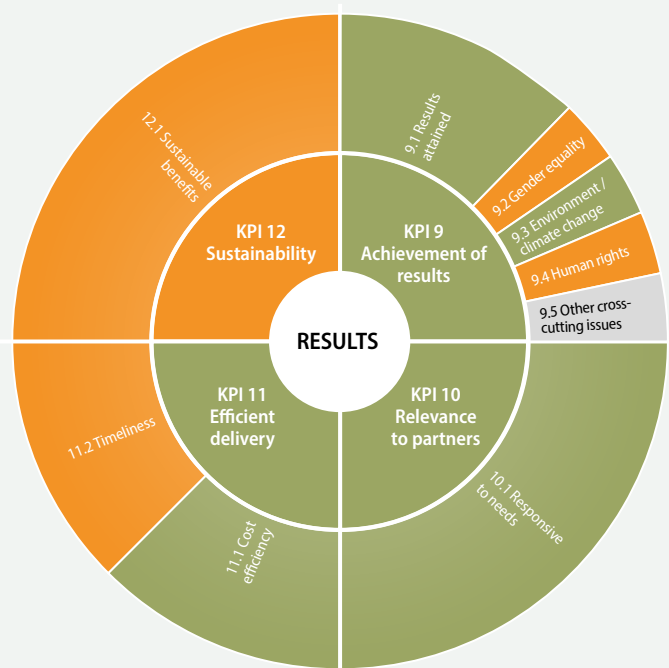
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1.1. INTRODUCING UNDP

Mission and mandate

Founded in 1965, UNDP aims to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities and exclusion. To this end, it works in about 170 countries and territories, helping countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities and institutional capabilities, as well as build resilience to sustain development results.

Unlike other entities, UNDP is not a treaty organization, but works across multiple conventions and all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In that sense, UNDP has the most comprehensive task among all UN agencies, including, but not limited to, poverty reduction, democratic governance, peacebuilding and state-building. The UNDP Administrator is the vice-chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group and is administratively responsible for UN Volunteers, the UN Capital Development Fund and the UN Office for South-South Cooperation. The Administrator represents these entities for member states as part of the UNDP/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Executive Board. UNDP also administers the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office.

The UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 is quite different to its predecessor. It sets out a vision for the evolution of UNDP and responds to a changing development landscape and the evolving needs of its partners. It describes how UNDP would support countries in achieving sustainable development, what the organisation wants to be and what it wants to achieve. Anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and committed to the principles of universality, equality and leaving no one behind, the Strategic Plan 2018-21 reinforces commitment to working in partnership with governments, civil society and the private sector, as mandated by the General Assembly.

The Strategic Plan's results areas were redefined, going from 7 outcomes and 39 outputs to 3 outcomes and 6 "Signature Solutions" (as shown Table 1 below) that define UNDP's core work in the Strategic Plan's three development contexts. The Signature Solutions are described as "integrated responses to development against which UNDP aligns its resources and expertise, to make real impact".

Table 1: UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-21: Outcomes and Signature Solutions

Outcomes
1. Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions
2. Accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development
3. Build resilience to crises and shocks
Signature Solutions
1. Keeping people out of poverty
2. Strengthen effective, inclusive and accountable governance
3. Enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies
4. Promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet
5. Close the energy gap by improving access to clean and affordable energy
6. Strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

Meanwhile, UNDP works across all SDGs, with a multitude of partners: national governments, sub-national governments, donors, foundations, international financial institutions (IFIs), multilaterals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs)/ Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), parliaments, the private sector, research institutes and United Nations (UN) agencies. UNDP's 2020 figures demonstrate that almost 25% of expenditure went on SDG1 (no poverty), 26.8% on SDG16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), 7.3% on SDG13 (climate action), 1.4% on SDG7 (affordable and clean energy) and 1.6% on SDG5 (gender equality). Expenditure on SDG3 (good health and wellbeing – 10.1%), SDG15 (life on land – 3.7%), SDG8 (decent work and economic growth – 1.9%), SDG9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure – 1.9%) and SDG4 (quality education – 1.7%) were higher than on UNDP's Signature Solutions 5 and 6.

UNDP's self-declared "offer" is broad[2] and consists of a mixture of:

Capacity development/technical assistance	Normative support
Convening/partnerships/knowledge sharing	Policy advice
Institutional mechanism and system building	Risk analysis
Direct support/service delivery	Support functions
Data collection and analysis	Thought leadership
Innovative approaches	UN agency integration

Governance arrangements

UNDP's Executive Board is made up of 36 member states elected on a rotational basis. The Board supervises UNDP activities and provides inter-governmental support so that the organisation remains responsive to the evolving needs of programme countries. It monitors the performance of UNDP, approves programmatic frameworks, including country programmes, and decides on administrative and financial plans and budgets. Executive Board Members are elected by members of the Economic and Social Council, to which the Board reports annually, on a three-year basis. The current Administrator was first appointed in 2017 for a four-year term. In April 2021, the General Assembly confirmed his appointment for a further four years.

Organisational structure

UNDP is a highly decentralised development organisation. Operating in about 170 countries and territories, it has 5 regional offices, 137 country offices, 4 representation offices and 5 global policy centres. Only 7% of its 19 794 employees are based in the New York headquarters (HQ). Most employees are contractors, with only 38% staff. Working through its network of country offices and regional service centres, UNDP also serves as "the operational backbone of the United Nations", providing a platform that includes finance, human resources, procurement, travel, information technology (IT) and other services to over 80 UN entities and others. UNDP disbursed USD 3 billion in payroll, and provided USD 95 million in travel services and USD 618 million in procurement on behalf of partner agencies.

Finances and operations

In 2019, UNDP's total revenue was USD 4.8 billion, almost identical to 2016 (Figure 3). Total expenses in 2019 amounted to USD 4.9 billion, 6% higher than in 2016. All funding, both the 13% regular (non-earmarked) resources and the 87% earmarked for specific programmes, projects or thematic areas, is provided through voluntary contributions. In 2019, 43% of total revenue was provided by donor countries (mostly OECD/Development Assistance Committee [DAC]), 39% by multilateral organisations (18% vertical funds, 10% UN pooled funds, 6% EU, 3% financial institutions and 2% UN agencies), and 18% by programme country governments. In 2019, 87% of total contributions was earmarked.

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2   https://open.undp.org/our-approaches/hows.

FIGURE 3: UNDP RESOURCES: 2016 AND 2019
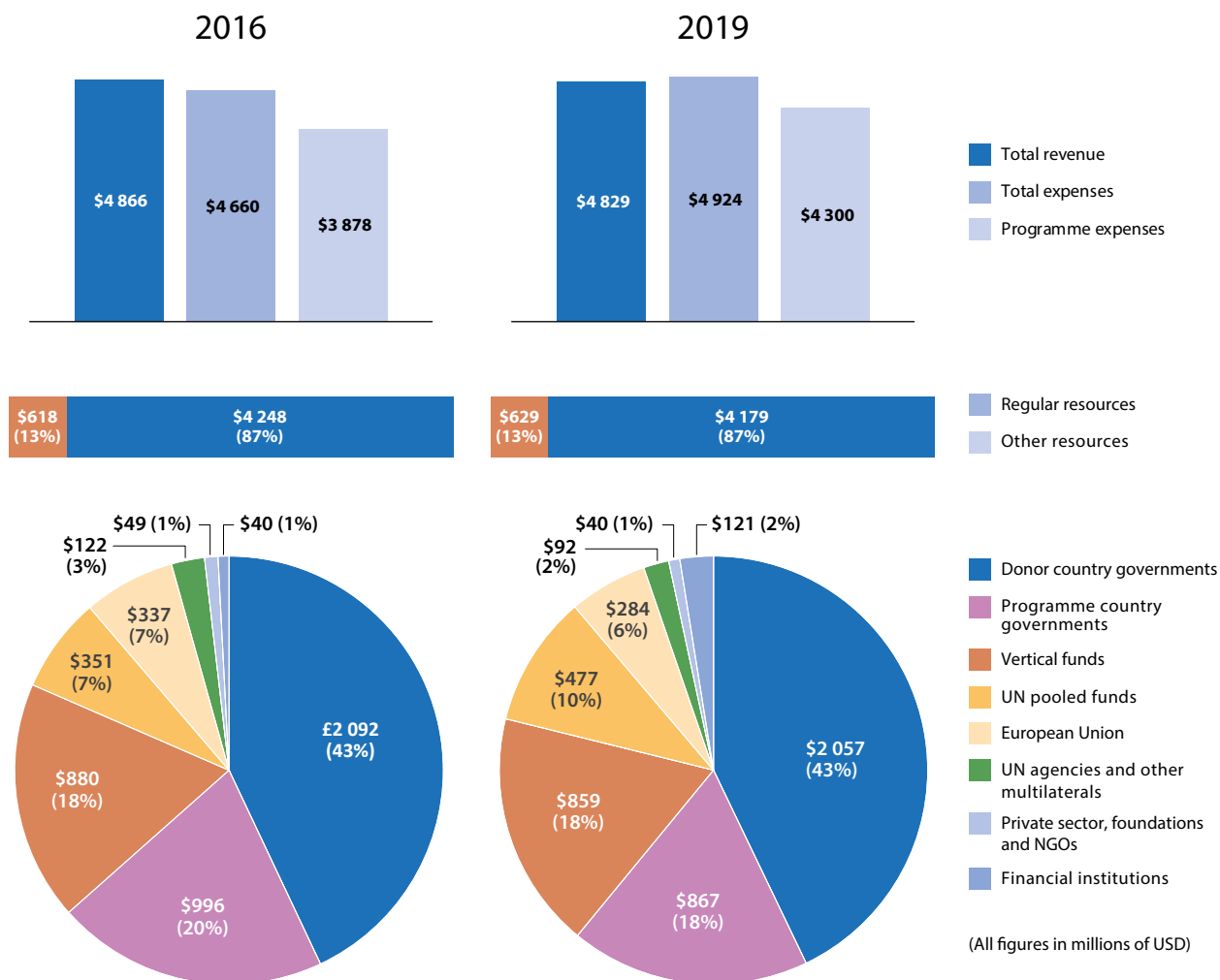
Source: UNDP Funding Compendium 2016 and 2019; Annual Review of the Financial Situation, 2016 and 2019

According to the UNDP Transparency Portal, between 2018 and 2020, expenditure across the six Signature Solutions was heavily skewed towards Signature Solutions 1 and 2, which combined accounted for between 74% and 77% of total expenditure. Annual expenditure on Signature Solution 3 increased from 5% in 2018 to 8% in 2020. Signature Solutions 4, 5 and 6 remained stable at 10%, 2% and 1%, respectively. Total expenditure on "other" than the Signature Solutions increased from 5% in 2018 to 8% in 2020.

Between 2018 and 2020, the total number of active projects increased by 5%, from 4 696 in 2018 to 4 962 in 2020; during the same period, the average volume per project decreased by 5%, from USD 930 000 to USD 880 000. In 2020, 1% of active projects accounted for 41% of total project expenditure, with an average expenditure of almost USD 22 million, versus less than USD 500 000 for the remaining 99% of projects. That same year, approximately 25% of total expenditure was spent in six countries (Afghanistan, Argentina, Iraq, Ukraine, Yemen and Zimbabwe). In 2019, USD 4.3 billion (83.4% of total expenses) was spent on programmes and projects.

FIGURE 4: UNDP TOTAL EXPENSES PER COUNTRY: 2016-2019

Total Expenses 2016 – 2020 (USD)

0   2 333 656 903
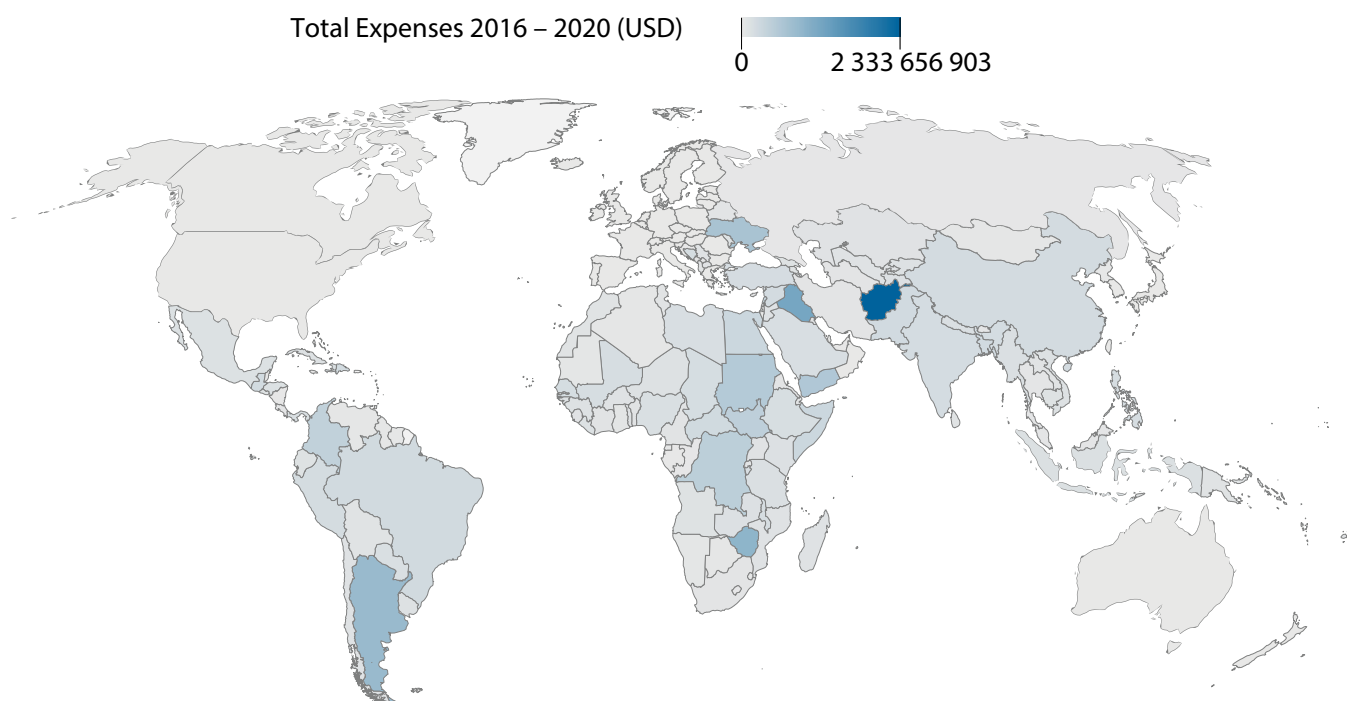
Source: UNDP Transparency Portal

1.2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

For UNDP, COVID-19 had a profound, systemic effect on both the organisation and its internal and external context. This is addressed in Chapters 2 and 3.

At the start of 2016, UNDP's financial conditions were challenging. Dependent on voluntary contributions for both core (regular) and non-core (programme) expenses, donations for regular resources had dropped to historic lows in 2015, triggering budgetary pressures, including the threat of an operational deficit. UNDP managed to avert a budget crisis through efficiency measures and cost savings and has since presented balanced accounts. Nevertheless, its continued reliance on a small group of donors for 80% of its regular resources puts it in a vulnerable position, and encourages staff to opportunistically mobilise resources and implement projects at the country level.

The 2016-2020 assessment period was marked by profound changes in the external and internal operating environment. The new UNDP Administrator arrived in June 2017, after the approval of the 2030 Development Agenda and just before the Secretary-General's first report on the UNDS reforms. UNDP experienced a series of organisational changes in relation to the anticipated effects of UN reform, the new directions envisaged in the new Strategic Plan 2018-21, and the shift of institutional capacity from New York HQ to regional hubs and global shared service centres (GSSCs), following the 2014 organisational restructuring.

One of the main components of the UNDS reforms has been the delivery of a reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, with an independent and empowered Resident Coordinator (RC) at its centre. This includes "delinking" the RC role from that of the UNDP Resident Representative (RR), transitioning the responsibility for oversight of the RC system from UNDP to the Development Coordination Office (DCO), and better resourcing of the RC office. Of

all UNDS reforms, the delinking had the greatest impact on UNDP in terms of its role and position within the UN development system. No longer hosting the RC function, UNDP's relationship with host governments changed, as its core responsibility of co-ordinating and negotiating UN country frameworks was passed on to the UN Secretariat. Although the "delinking" disrupted UNDP's working practices, it has been completed successfully, in large part thanks to the efforts of DCO and UNDP.

General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 also designated UNDP as the "support platform of the United Nations development system providing an integrator function in support of countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda". UNDP incorporated this new system-wide role in its Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and operationalised it in different ways, for example through integrated programming approaches, by developing multidimensional solutions to complex problems, and by developing SDG integration tools and capacity strengthening efforts.

With the arrival of the current Administrator and subsequent changes in senior leadership positions came new perspectives on a "future proof" UNDP that would be "reform ready" and fit for purpose, i.e. capable of taking on global development challenges and delivering against the SDGs. The approval of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 was postponed to a special session of the Executive Board so that the new leadership's perspectives and priorities could be incorporated. The plan stressed the new "integrator" role and existing "operational backbone" role, but not its project implementation role, even though the latter remained the main vehicle for the Signature Solutions, and thus achievement of the strategy's three outcomes. The Strategic Plan also raised the profile of the Innovation Agenda as a catalyst for change, portrayed as *#nextgenUNDP*.[3]

1.3. PERFORMANCE JOURNEY

UNDP was assessed by MOPAN in 2009 and 2012, and for the 2015-16 cycle. It was also covered in the synthesis reports of 2004 (with AfDB and FAO) and 2007 (with AfDB and WHO). Over the years, UNDP's reported strengths and areas for improvement have been fairly consistent. Recurrent strengths include the delegated responsibilities to country offices, robust financial systems and the independent evaluation function. Recurrent areas for improvement include corporate level results management, institutional learning and efficiency. Others, such as gender and human rights mainstreaming, appear to fluctuate more.

The 2015-16 MOPAN assessment was published in 2016 and covered the 2014 to mid-2016 period. The report identified key strengths and areas for improvement (Box 2).

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3 #nextgenUNDP is articulated as: "The next generation UNDP that builds on its existing assets – worldwide presence, thought leadership and over 50 years of experience – to help countries and communities respond to a fast-changing development landscape, creating new solutions, building collaboration platforms and sparking new partnerships and instruments for development, disrupting the way the organisation thinks, invests, manages and delivers so it can perform faster and better to accelerate progress towards the SDGs." (Source: UNDP Annual Report 2018).

Box 2: Main strengths and areas for improvement from the 2015-16 MOPAN assessment

Main strengths

- Strategic plan and organisational architecture well aligned with its overarching long-term vision and draws on its comparative advantage.

- An organisational structure that supports decentralised decision making.

- Top performer in the Aid Transparency Index in 2014 and 2015.

- Commitment to the Busan Partnership principles and the use of, and alignment with, country systems.

- Robust organisational systems that are both cost and value-conscious and enable financial transparency and accountability.

- A corporate commitment to results-based management.

- A strong independent evaluation unit with a clear accountability system.

Areas for improvement

- The challenge of implementing ongoing organisational and operational reform, and maintaining such a broad sectoral and geographical focus, in the context of reduced core funding.

- Strengthen procurement capacity at the country office level.

- Strengthen the systematic analysis of partner (institutional) capacity and cross-cutting issues, particularly gender, to inform programme design.

- Better corporate guidance on the requirements for developing theories of change and more consistent application to programming.

- Improve the quality and use of decentralised evaluations, and lesson learning more generally.

- Improve the efficiency and sustainability of interventions.

Source: MOPAN 2015-16 Assessments: United Nations Development Programme Institutional Assessment Report.

During the 2016-2020 assessment period, UNDP participated in numerous independent corporate, thematic and country programme evaluations (Independent Evaluation Office [IEO], Office of Internal Oversight Services [OIOS]), as well as external assessments (Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System [JIU]), studies, audits and reviews. Of particular relevance to this MOPAN assessment are the findings of the independent evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21. These are summarised in Figure 5 below.

FIGURE 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF EVALUATION OF UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-21

Strength	Issue	Challenge
Recognised as an aspirational and flexible document	Strategic plan	Concepts underpinning integration, development settings, signature solutions, platforms, performance, and innovation streams still call for more clarity
UNDP was swift to adapt its capabilities to support UN development system reforms	UN reforms	Delinking has not been easy, and challenges remain in repositioning UNDP in the space of the humanitarian-peace and development nexus
Relevant contributions made to development results and most appreciated for traditional roles providing programme & project implementation, capacity development and technical expertise	Development results	UNDP is not yet appreciated for integrated and innovative development solutions
UNDP has contributed to all SDGs, but over 50% of total programme expenditure was related to Goal 1 and 16, areas of comparative strength for UNDP	SDG contributions	
The Strategic Plan promoted the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as a key accelerator of development results	Gender equality and women's empowerment	Key constraints continue to be the lack of adequate financial and human resources
Concerted efforts made to promote effective partnerships to support and finance the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Effective partnerships	
The elevation of innovation in the SP has been followed by important investments with potential to transform UNDP's work. Accelerator labs and digital initiatives are increasingly taking shape	Innovation	Capacity for innovation is constrained by limited risk appetite, stakeholder support, financial resources, and flexibility in rules and regulations, and shortcomings in monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management
The Global Policy Network offers good potential for policy support	Global policy network	Needs a more coherent approach, structural adjustments, and greater involvement of UNDP's own global policy centres and external partners
Country support platforms are valued for their potential to spur innovation and integration	Country support platforms	Country support platforms have lacked a strong business plan, conceptual framework and guidance for country offices
UNDP has reduced management costs, balanced the budget, streamlined business processes, improved client orientation and reduced its carbon footprint	Operations, management and business processes	
The People Strategy 2030 and People Learning and Development Strategy offer a comprehensive people management plan	People Strategy 2030 and Learning & Development Strategy	UNDP is yet to make the tools for these fully functional
Despite the challenging financial context, UNDP has sustained a stable non-core resources and managed to increase regular resources	Funding	

Source: Evaluation of UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-21

Within UNDP, organisational change has been an ongoing process for many years. But even by its own standards, the past four years have been particularly turbulent due to a combination of external dynamics and internal choices. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda and subsequent UNDS reforms, including the emphasis on the integrated development agenda and joint programming, has had far-reaching effects. At the same time, the arrival of a new Administrator in 2017, and subsequent changes within the senior management team, generated fresh perspectives, priorities and initiatives to reposition UNDP within this new reality.

With the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the UN Development System, UNDP has had to adjust to a major shift in its operating environment. The resolution designated UNDP as the "integrator" for the SDGs, a new, vaguely formulated system-wide role which UNDP incorporated in its Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The resolution also meant that as of 2019, UNDP would no longer manage the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) system.

The consequences of both decisions were profound, both in terms of staffing and the (re)positioning of UNDP within the UN system and beyond, especially at the country level. Its handling of, and contribution to, the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system has been well acknowledged and highly appreciated. UNDP transferred the co-ordination function to the United Nations Secretariat by 1 January 2019, seconding 63 of its staff as Resident Coordinators. Simultaneously, UNDP put in place a new generation of country office leaders, appointing 127 new resident representatives and 144 deputy representatives. During the transition of the RC system, UNDP continued to provide services, both at headquarters and country level, to the UN Secretariat to ensure the uninterrupted functioning of the RC system. UNDP managed the risks of delinking and other reforms well through careful corporate governance, including continuous risk monitoring and active internal communication. Despite the delinking, UNDP remains the second largest UN entity contributor to the Resident Coordinator system after the UN Secretariat, with an annual contribution of USD 10.3 million.

The new "integrator" role, whereby UNDP would spearhead a multidisciplinary "whole of society" response in line with the SDGs, featured prominently in the Strategic Plan 2018-21. It spurred UNDP's innovation agenda and corresponding adaptations to its business model, including an increase in government innovation labs, a strengthening of regional hubs, the creation of the accelerator lab network at country level, and the formation of the Global Policy Network (GPN) and country support platforms. The GPN, anchored in the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support and the Crisis Bureau, is intended as a network of UNDP experts and practitioners, whose expertise can be drawn upon to develop and apply the six Signature Solutions and drive innovation.

Importantly, these developments in the operating environment have included a growing prominence of partnerships. Especially at HQ level, UNDP has proactively invested in strategic institutional partnerships with UN partners, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNFPA, the UN Secretary-General Office, and IFIs. The UNDP Administrator is also the Vice-Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group, and UNDP participates in 66 "Delivering as One" initiatives that are meant to enable United Nations Country Team (UNCTs) to operate more coherently, effectively and efficiently.

The Strategic Plan 2018-21 is bold and ambitious, but also intentionally vague and ambiguous. Written at a time when the United Nations Development System was experiencing far-reaching change, it is in essence a "license to operate", rather than an operationalisation of UNDP's vision, that includes clear choices as to what the organisation would (no longer) do, especially in terms of its programmatic function, its "offer" and the breadth of its engagement.

At the country level, the delinking did not trigger an in-depth reconsideration of UNDP's presence, complementarity and "niche" regarding UN agencies, other development partners and donors. On the contrary, the reforms were often

seen as an opportunity to re-establish UNDP's core mandate as "the" UN development organisation. Combined with UNDP's global presence, longstanding partnership with governments, and its decentralised business model and structure on the one hand, and negligible resource allocations by headquarters on the other, this prompted a further push towards country-level resource mobilisation and project implementation across a continuously wide array of areas and themes.

Despite the profound changes in UNDP's operating environment, it chose to keep its organisational structure and decentralised business model intact as it adjusted to new realities. Learning from the painful experiences of past restructuring efforts, UNDP's overall, highly decentralised structure has remained stable and continues to be geared to the delivery of its traditional roles as project implementing partner and "operational backbone". The same can be said of UNDP's operational systems and procedures, as well as staffing: out of a total workforce of over 19 000 people, about 3 400 are in the general service category, and close to 10 000 are short-term service contract holders involved in administrative and project implementation roles.

The new "integrator role" has been operationalised in the form of initiatives situated within UNDP's existing organisational structure, which were conceptualised at HQ level and then rolled out to decentralised offices on a voluntary basis. In doing so, UNDP has adopted an incremental, "ink-spot" approach to organisational transformation, thereby aiming for a smooth change process. However, the capacity to deliver against the integrator role at regional and especially country level, is less evident. As such, the overall organisational transformation process itself would seem to be open-ended and voluntary, rather than a systematically planned, resourced, and managed organisational development process.

Whilst recognising the considerable effort made thus far, it is nevertheless too early to determine the effect of these integrator-related initiatives. Some initiatives, such as the Accelerator Labs, are more advanced than others, and some still lack clarity of purpose and direction. Most initiatives are yet to be anchored in the mindsets, policies, operational systems and processes of the organisation, and are reflected as such in programmatic terms across the organisation. For example, for the GPN, UNDP has invested in skills mapping and staff profiles, external expert rosters, and financing models and instruments; however, it has not yet mapped expertise needs nor matched supply and demand. UNDP acknowledges that the GPN has had a rocky start, with progress limited to collaboration between units in a vertical rather that horizontal relationship. Moreover, it remains unclear how UNDP's integrator function should complement the integrator role of DCO and, more particularly, the reinvigorated RC system at the country level. As the 2021 MOPAN study on UNDS reforms points out, its integrator function is not yet fully understood across the UNCT and in governments, and there is a lack of clarity within the organisation itself. It would be useful to clarify how the integrator function can add value to the UNDR reform process as it progresses.

Thus, despite the bold strategic aspirations articulated in the Strategic Plan 2018-21, UNDP's corporate-level innovative policies and strategies, which are meant to transform its image, roles, priorities, niche and ways of working, are yet to infuse country level profiles, programmes and partnerships. The latter are determined mainly by opportunities driven by demand and resource availability, rather than UNDP's overarching strategic repositioning. To this day, UNDP remains predominantly a project implementing agency and service provider to other (UN) entities, with close to 5 000 active projects covering a broad range of issues through a wide offering.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Findings, conclusions and outlook

2.1. ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Is UNDP an effective organisation?

The performance conclusions consider four key attributes of an effective organisation: 1) whether it understands future needs and demands; 2) whether it is organised and makes use of its comparative advantages, including operating in coherent partnerships; 3) whether it has mandate-oriented systems, planning and operations; and 4) whether it adapts/makes consistent improvements according to its resource level and operational context.

For the 2020 assessments, further consideration is throughout also given to the organisation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its universal and transformational effect on UNDP's mandate, mission, operations and activities.

Does UNDP understand future needs and demands?

UNDP has demonstrated a clear understanding of future development needs and demands, and what this means for its own current and future roles and responsibilities. Its Strategic Plan 2018-21 is fully aligned with the 2030 Development Agenda, keeping with its prior track record to champion UN reform efforts. UNDP is taking a proactive role in adapting and adjusting how it works and where it sits in the broader UN SDG architecture, notably through the introduction of its "integrator role" and the roll-out of an ambitious innovation agenda. While these are yet to be fully embedded within all levels and structures of the organisation, UNDP is nevertheless making commendable and worthwhile contributions to the 2030 Agenda and UNDS Reforms from a substantive as well as organisational and financial perspective. In this regard, further clarity about the respective roles and responsibilities of the RC and UNDP's Resident Representative will be helpful.

Is UNDP organised and does it make use of its comparative advantages, including operating in coherent partnerships?

UNDP is deeply committed to the aid effectiveness agenda, which is a vital part of Agenda 2030, and participates in inter-agency collaboration, for example it co-hosts the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) with the OECD. It is also committed to national ownership, as is well demonstrated at the country level, where UNDP's programmes are informed by a wide set of stakeholders, but principally defined by national government priorities. At times, this has led to confusion and occasional criticism about UNDP's added value beyond that of a capacity strengthening and/or implementing agency, for which it is best recognised by its national governmental counterparts.

In terms of inter-agency collaboration, the past four years have shown a strong push from senior leadership towards broadening and deepening strategic partnerships with UN agencies, IFIs, multilateral organisations and increasingly the private sector, with whom UNDP has entered into several corporate partnerships. The effects of this push for partnerships are most visible at the corporate level, with important achievements including the advanced collaboration between the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and UNDP at the Executive Board level, as well as UNICEF, UN WOMEN, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), FAO, the international Labour Organization (ILO) and others at the policy and programme level.

In part due to UNDP's highly decentralised business model, the scale and quality of inter-agency collaboration at the country level tends to be more mixed, with some country offices performing better than others. Survey results, as well as the recent evaluation of the strategic plan, point to a need, expressed by donors and other UN entities, to better articulate UNDP's comparative advantage and support UN inter-agency co-ordination. Thus far, UNDP's partnership approach appears to be mainly focused on how UNDP can add value to others, rather than identifying how others

could complement its own gaps. There is room for improvement, moving away from transactional collaboration towards coherent synergistic partnerships at all levels, in the true spirit of Agenda 2030.

UNDP clearly acknowledges the importance of Agenda 2030 and pursues an ambitious innovation agenda to align itself better with current and future needs and demands. At the same time, it has continued to pursue its principal roles as project implementing agency and "operational backbone". With an active portfolio of close to 5 000 projects in 2020, and an "offer" spanning a wide range of support areas across all SDGs, UNDP continues to position itself as the main development actor within the UN system, purportedly capable of responding to a very diverse set of client's demands in practically all development settings, ranging from large-scale stabilisation programmes in conflict-affected settings to bespoke, high-end "niche consultancy" support in high-income countries.

Does UNDP have mandate-oriented systems, planning and operations?

During the past four years, UNDP has made efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its operational support and make it more client-facing, with the clear intention to continue this role in the years ahead. Arguably, the COVID-19 pandemic affirmed the importance of the organisation's operational support role.

During the 2016-2020 period, UNDP has enhanced its business operation systems and instruments. With its People Strategy, UNDP aims to align its human resource management to the Strategic Plan 2018-21 objectives, putting stronger emphasis on "people-centric" human resource management policies, fostering diversity, flexible career paths and rewarding excellence. That said, ensuring that the organisation possesses the human capabilities, skillsets and adaptive business processes needed to perform the distinct roles more effectively remains a work in progress. The integrator role calls for distinctly different skillsets and competencies than that of project implementation or operational support, and although UNDP's policy expertise and capabilities are impressive, they remain locked in their structures in global policy centres and country offices. Some 65% of staff consist of national officers and general service staff who cannot be redeployed outside their country. In this regard, given that most of UNDP's financial resources are spent on personnel, it will be imperative that human resourcing and capabilities are better considered in strategic planning and decision making.

UNDP has made important strides in enhancing and refining its substantive policies, strategies and instruments to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in its programming. Although constrained by a lack of resources, the Gender Seal programme is a good example of this, with promising results in countries where country offices have actively engaged. Equally noteworthy are UNDP's revised guidelines on social and environmental safeguards (SES). When properly applied, the SES guidelines present an opportunity for UNDP to enhance its treatment of cross-cutting issues.

UNDP's aspiration to (re-)establish itself as a global "thought leader" is reflected not only in the well-appreciated work of the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) and partnerships with other development actors, but also in the initiation of the Global Policy Network. Thus far, UNDP has focused largely on the supply side of the GPN, including establishing online "communities of practice" to encourage the exchange of knowledge, ideas and practices. Further effort is needed to strengthen horizontal and vertical exchange of expertise within UNDP, including between the GPN and HDRO, and better access to and sharing of expertise with other UN agencies.

UNDP has sophisticated, comprehensive and robust operational and intervention design tools and systems in place. During the assessment period, programmatic and operational policies, procedures, and guidance related to programme and project design and implementation have been upgraded. These include the programme and operations policies and procedures (POPP), in which guidance on the design stage of country programming documents has been strengthened in a number of ways, including through enhanced guidance on context analysis and partner capacity assessment. Equally, UNDP's country programme document is closely aligned to the UN Sustainable Development

Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) planning process, with guidance explicitly calling on UNDP country offices to articulate UNDP's contribution to national development priorities as part of the UNSDCF.

UNDP has also revised its enterprise risk management policy to augment the capacity and culture surrounding risk management, including the identification and analysis of risks that could affect the achievement of development results, and capacities for risk management. This includes the addition of risk sub-categories to reflect corporate priorities (e.g. the addition of sexual harassment). UNDP is also currently developing a risk appetite statement. UNDP continues to make progress in terms of internal control mechanisms. It has effective accountability and internal control frameworks that spell out roles and responsibilities, including the responsibility to report any suspicions of fraud and corruption in line with its "zero tolerance" policy. A risk-informed approach is used to detect (potential) fraud and corruption issues, and its internal audit and investigation function is well established and partly decentralised.

Does UNDP make consistent developments according to its resource level and operational context?

UNDP's discernible improvements in substantive, programmatic and operational policies, processes, and systems do not appear to have demonstrably improved the effectiveness of UNDP operations themselves. Most independent external evaluations of UNDP's performance included in this assessment point to mixed results, with effectiveness determined by a much wider variety of issues. Some of the key challenges to UNDP's organisational effectiveness run deep and are even reinforced by prevailing funding models. Although UNDP's robust systems do contribute to organisational effectiveness, as shown in Chapter 3 and Annex A, they do not necessarily guarantee effective and sustainable development results. The fragmentation of isolated, "downstream" projects and programmes across too many sectors and areas, combined with project management shortcomings and only modest uptake of lessons learned, continues to impact negatively on the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP's work. In this regard, UNDP's results management approach remains the weakest link, as previous MOPAN assessments and the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 have demonstrated.

UNDP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its universal and transformational effect on UNDP's mandate, mission, operations and activities

Building on the UNDS reforms, notably the delinking process, UNDP played a pivotal role in the preparation of the UN Secretary-General's appeal, "Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity – Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19", the required policy framework, and the elaboration of socio-economic response and recovery plans at the country level (SERPs).

As the pandemic struck, UNDP's main comparative advantages – its longstanding global, highly decentralised physical presence; its well-established relationships with government partners and the international community; its relative size and breadth of programmatic engagement across many sectors; and its ability to respond to shocks and stresses – proved important assets. As one of the "first responders" to the pandemic, the organisation has demonstrated that it possesses the necessary capabilities to provide immediate support to national governments in response to rapidly changing conditions, whilst supporting other agencies and co-ordination structures, both on the ground and at HQ level.

The same attributes that gave UNDP a comparative advantage during the pandemic may also allow the organisation to advance its own transformative agenda and become the "integrator" and "innovator" it aspires to be. While UNDP has made considerable efforts in this regard, with some *#nextgenUNDP* innovations increasingly taking shape, such changes take time to mature and become fully embedded in the organisation's systems and the mindsets of its people. As found in the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21, UNDP's capacity to embed, leverage and scale up innovation is constrained by limited risk appetite, lack of stakeholder support, inadequate financial resources, insufficient flexibility in rules and regulations, and shortcomings in its monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management functions.

It is too early to say how these innovations will affect what activities UNDP will undertake, and how it will undertake them. Thus far, notwithstanding the attention paid to innovation and integration, UNDP continues to pursue its principal roles as project implementing agency and "operational backbone". For now, at least, UNDP's multidimensional, heterogeneous character has remained remarkably stable. Its organisational structure, resources, staffing, business processes and mindsets are still principally in support of these two known roles, and the innovation agenda itself has been "projectised" to attract funding. Whether borne out of necessity or by deliberate design, at this stage the strategic direction coming from UNDP's HQ in New York to "transform UNDP from within" appears to be more like a voluntary menu of options for country offices to choose from than a common agenda for all. As a result, UNDP's strategic intent to reposition itself within the global development architecture, as articulated in the Strategic Plan 2018-21 and subsequent policies, is yet to manifest itself organisation wide in terms of what the organisation does differently, where, how and with whom.

Within this larger performance story, the MOPAN assessment identified the following six main areas of strength and seven areas of improvement to organisational performance:

Box 3: Main strengths and areas for improvement identified in the MOPAN 2020 assessment

Main strengths

- UNDP's 2018-21 Strategic Plan is ambitious, transformative and forward-looking, and provides a compelling vision for UNDP's contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

- UNDP has shown great resilience and demonstrated new dynamism in response to the UNDS reforms and COVID-19 pandemic, handling change extraordinarily well in light of the challenging circumstances.

- UNDP has made progress in addressing and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues (gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, environmental sustainability and climate change, and the rights of minorities and people with disabilities).

- UNDP demonstrates commitment to and alignment with national priorities, the aid effectiveness agenda, and co-operation with member states, in combination with increased emphasis on inter-agency and partnership planning and programming.

- UNDP has effective decentralised decision-making and resource allocation mechanisms.

- UNDP has strong management systems (including ICT, business continuity and enterprise risk management); independent evaluation, audit and oversight functions; and high levels of transparency and information disclosure.

Areas for improvement

- UNDP's dependency on a small group of core donors, combined with uneven resourcing and mechanisms for resource mobilisation across priority areas and partners, have created an imbalance in resources across UNDP's strategic priorities and constitute a strategic and reputational risk.

- UNDP's organisational structure, processes and people still primarily reflect its traditional roles as service provider and project implementing agency, and are insufficiently aligned with its current multifaceted strategic ambitions and initiatives.

- To increase internal coherence and clarity of its role and comparative advantage, UNDP will need to bridge the gap between HQ-level policies, strategies and programmes, and its country-level programming and decision making.

- UNDP's RBM systems insufficiently steer and aggregate results at the global level.

- Whilst UNDP has efficient and robust systems in place to guide programme management and monitoring, they do not assure more effective, relevant, efficient and sustainable development results.

- Moreover, too many UNDP interventions remain fragmented, are scattered across too many themes and areas, and are insufficiently geared towards upstream policy making and capacity strengthening.

- UNDP needs to better integrate the lessons from evaluations of past interventions and apply these systematically.

2.2. UNDP'S PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY

Performance conclusions consider four key attributes of an effective organisation: (i) whether it understands future needs and demands; (ii) whether it is organised and makes use of its assets and comparative advantages, including operating in coherent partnerships; (iii) whether it has mandate-oriented systems, planning and operations; and (iv) whether it adapts / makes consistent improvements according to its resource level and operational context.

For the 2020 assessments, further consideration is throughout also given to the organisation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its universal and transformational effect on UNOPS' mandate, mission, operations and activities.

How to read these charts

Micro-indicator

Key Performance Indicator

- **Highly satisfactory** (3.51-4.00)
- **Satisfactory** (2.51-3.50)
- **Unsatisfactory** (1.51-2.50)
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.50)
- **No evidence / Not applicable**
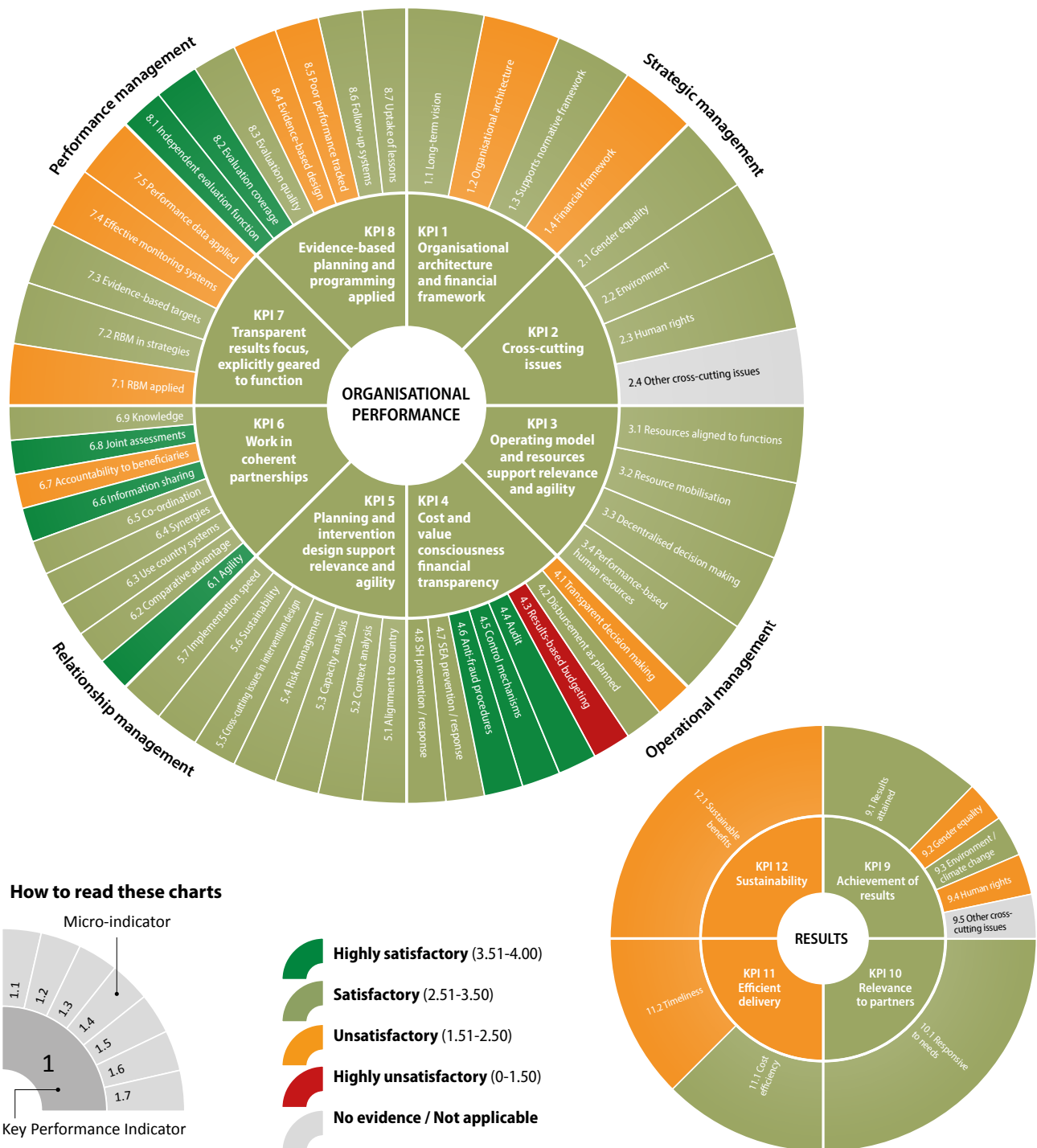
HIGHLIGHTS BY PERFORMANCE AREA

Strategic Management

Legend:
- **Highly satisfactory** (3.51-4.00)
- **Satisfactory** (2.51-3.50)
- **Unsatisfactory** (1.51-2.50)
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.50)
- **No evidence / Not applicable**
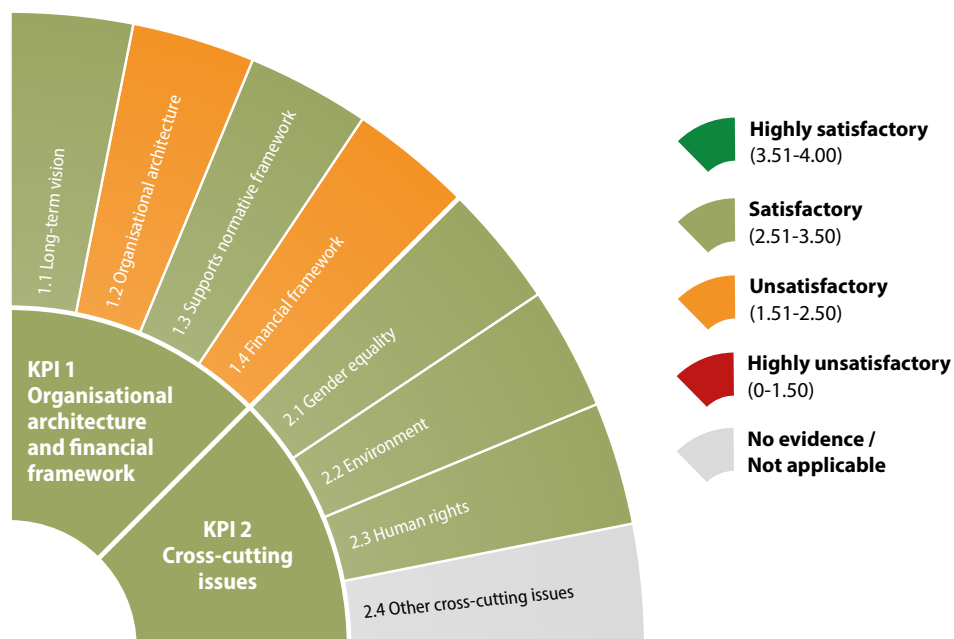
Strategic Management KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 1: The organisational architecture and the financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results.	2.64
KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda principles.	2.89

UNDP is a large, multifaceted, heterogeneous and highly decentralised development organisation, operating globally across a broad range of areas and themes. UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 presented an exploratory vision for the organisation and is fully aligned with the 2030 Development Agenda. Its main objectives have been partially achieved, although gaps remain between innovative policies and strategies developed at HQ level, and country level practice. Overall, UNDP has handled the UNDS reforms well, including the RC delinking. Its response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been successful. UNDP worked very closely with DCO on the Secretary-General's appeal and policy framework, led on mapping the pandemic's socio-economic impacts, supported governments in their short- and medium-term response plans and implementation, and reprogrammed close to USD 1 billion in funds.

UNDP is a voluntarily funded organisation, reliant on a few donors for core resources to maintain corporate structures and cover programme expenses. UNDP remains a predominantly decentralised project implementing agency, with 93% of its workforce based at country level delivering about 5 000 active development projects. UNDP is mostly recognised and valued for its traditional programmatic and "operational backbone" roles.

On cross-cutting issues, UNDP has made progress in its approach to gender equality and women's empowerment; however, performance is constrained by modest resourcing. UNDP takes a holistic approach to climate change and holds its programmes to high standards. It is a key provider of technical support on environmental issues and a

primary actor on climate change within the UN system. A human rights based approach is mandatory for all UNDP programming. While wholly committed to economic and social rights, a challenge for UNDP, as with many other UNDS entities, has been articulating its stance on sensitive (civil-political) human rights issues at the country level.

Operational Management

Legend	
Highly satisfactory (3.51-4.00)	
Satisfactory (2.51-3.50)	
Unsatisfactory (1.51-2.50)	
Highly unsatisfactory (0-1.50)	
No evidence / Not applicable	
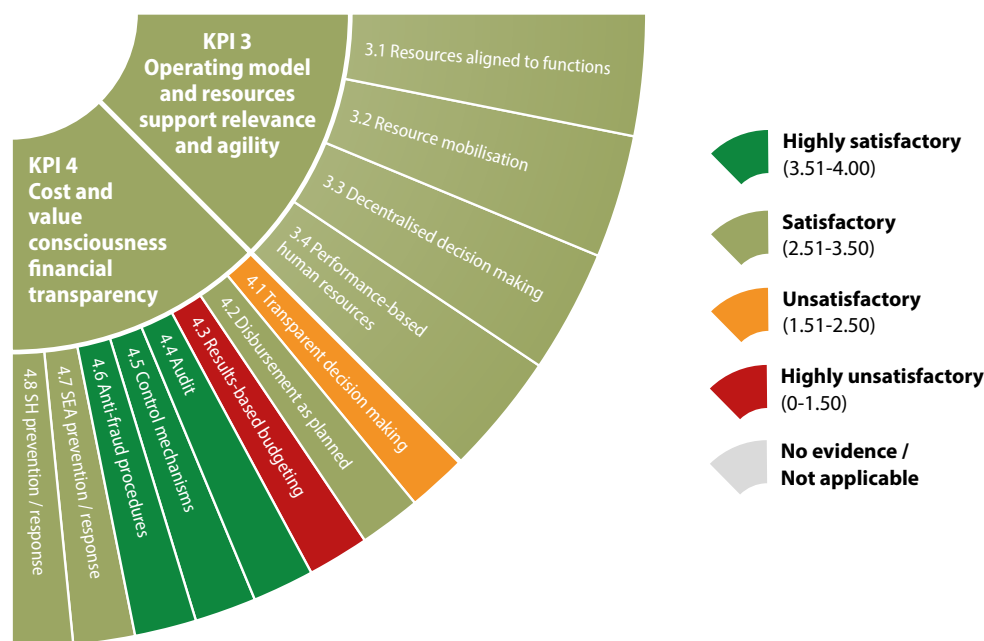
Operational Management KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 3: The operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility.	2.87
KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable transparency and accountability.	3.00

UNDP continues to streamline and bolster its internal policies, business processes, systems, tools and instruments to enhance its delivery. Demonstrable improvements have been made to people management, clustering of services and financial management. UNDP shows determination to become a client-oriented operational services provider, and both its adaptation and contribution to the smooth transition of the RC function is widely acknowledged and well appreciated. With an annual contribution of USD 10.3 million, UNDP is the second-largest United Nations entity contributor to the RC system.

All resources are brought together in the integrated resource plan and integrated budget, but the corporate allocation mechanism only affects regular resources, which were between 12% and 13% of total resources in 2016-2020. Most resources are project-based and mobilised at the country level. Results-based budgeting and the reallocation of resources are lacking at the corporate level. Moreover, in the integrated budget there does not appear to be any prioritisation of resources. UNDP's decentralised delivery mechanisms are sufficiently capable of withstanding shocks such as COVID-19. A robust risk-informed approach is used to detect potential fraud and corruption. UNDP is recognised as the most transparent UN organisation.

UNDP has a designated policy on sexual harassment (SH), aligned to UN and CEB standards, which extends to all UNDP personnel. It adopted the "SG's Bulletin" on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and SH and

SEA are explicitly proscribed. UNDP established a strategy and action plan which sets out its efforts to prevent and respond to SEA and SH, led by a multi-sectoral task force. Nevertheless, tracking of progress on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse is challenging, and more effort is needed to ensure that all personnel understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to preventing and responding to SEA and SH.

Relationship Management
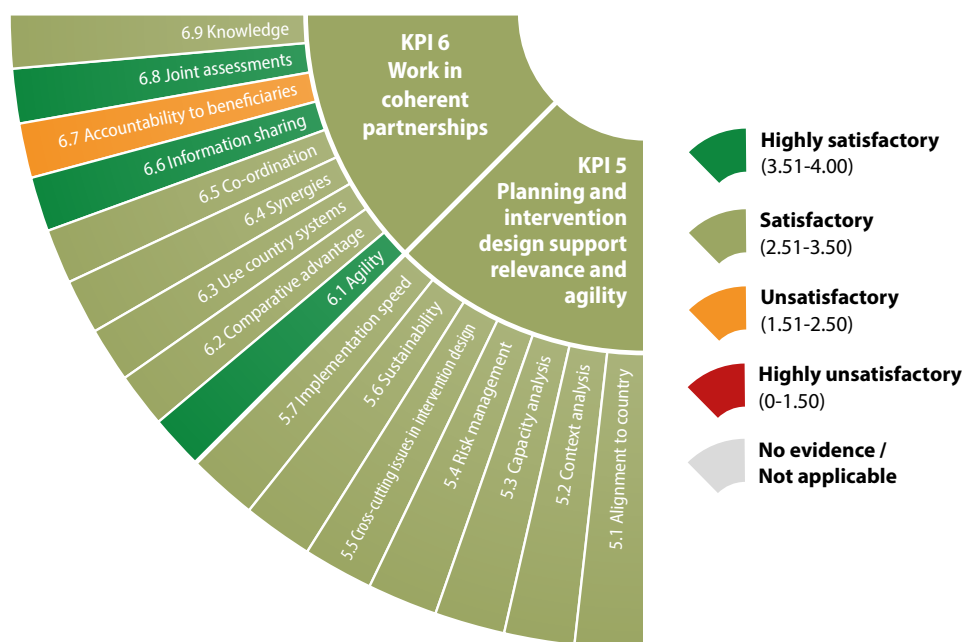
Relationship Management KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 5: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility in partnerships.	3.09
KPI 6: Working in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources.	3.20

UNDP is a partnership agency at heart. It has spearheaded many important initiatives that have bolstered collaboration and partnership within the UN system and outside. UNDP is committed to the aid effectiveness agenda and to supporting nationally led action, driven by strong partnerships with national governments. The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) is a good example of UNDP's lead role in joint monitoring and reporting. It has fully incorporated these principles into its programming approach. Its internal guidance for enterprise risk management, programme and operations policies and procedures, and social and environmental safeguards have improved.

UNDP sees itself primarily as a partner of national governments, whose priorities define UNDP's engagement at the country level. This has led to confusion among stakeholders about its comparative advantage in terms of contributing to upstream "whole of society" policies and strategies, to criticism from other agencies about its lack of thematic focus and complementarity, and to questions about its concept of "beneficiaries" and measures to ensure that "no one is left behind". Despite its high-quality "flagship" Human Development Reports, at present, UNDP's aspiration to reinforce its thought leadership role and profile is insufficiently reflected in its structure, systems and organisational culture. There was limited evidence of vertical and horizontal development and systematic use of knowledge. Thus, knowledge management, which would be essential to underpin its thought leadership, programmatic and integrator roles, deserves a fresh look.

Results Management
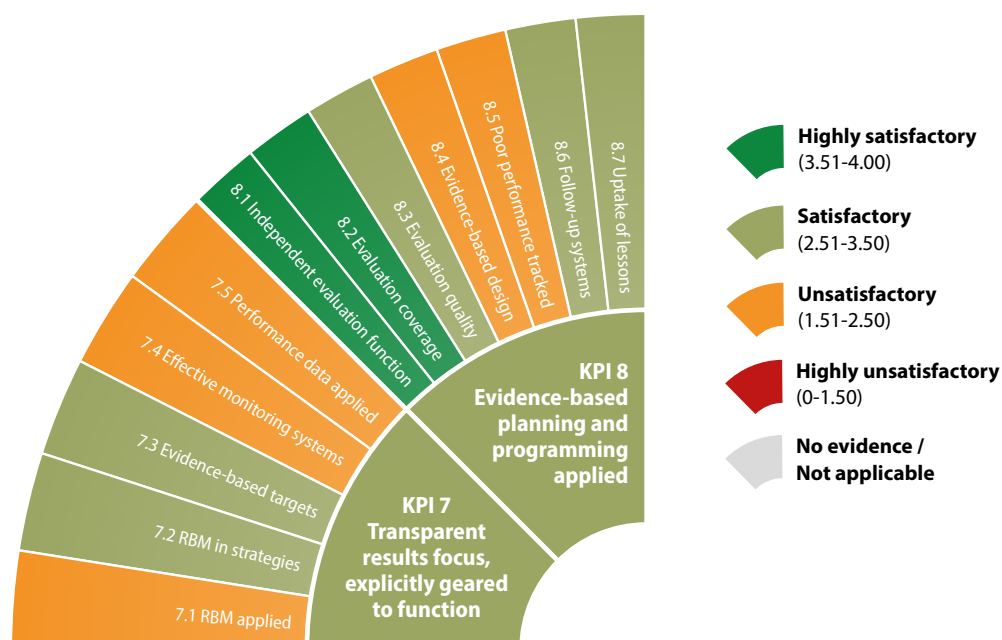
Performance Management KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 7: The focus on results is strong, transparent and explicitly geared towards function.	2.57
KPI 8: The organisation applies evidence-based planning and programming	3.02

UNDP is committed to results-based management (RBM) and has taken steps to track results across development contexts and against the SDGs. However, despite efforts to account for heterogeneous results across country contexts, UNDP's systems steer the organisation towards results measurement at the country level, and insufficiently capture planned and intended results at the global level. This is because decentralised offices are not obliged to implement signature solutions; instead, project-level results at the country level are retro-fitted to align with corporate-level outcomes. UNDP's ability to integrate lessons from previous interventions, and particularly learn from failure, has been a persistent weakness. It has a well-established and credible independent evaluation function, an up-to-date evaluation policy, robust systems, and a growing evaluation budget. Notwithstanding efforts to improve their oversight and quality, decentralised evaluations remain relatively weak.

Results
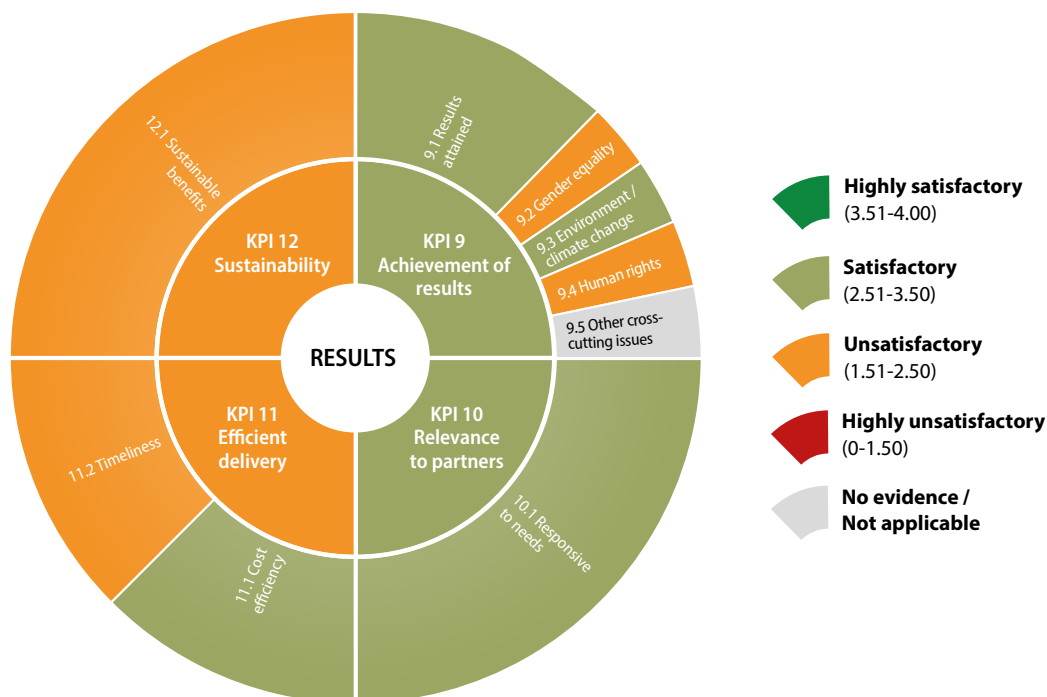
Results KPIs	KPI Score
KPI 9: Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals.	2.67
KPI 10: Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, as the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate.	3.00
KPI 11: Results are delivered efficiently.	2.50
KPI 12: Results are sustainable.	2.00

Given the vast scope and breadth of its programmatic interventions in diverse contexts, there is mixed evidence of UNDP's development results. Evaluative evidence demonstrates relatively strong programmatic performance in three well-funded Signature Solution areas – poverty reduction, governance and environment – but less so in resilience, energy and gender.

Whereas gender equality and women's empowerment are making incremental progress and becoming more effectively organised, on balance, progress is limited and not commensurate with the status of gender equality as a Signature Solution. Gender mainstreaming is chronically under-resourced, suggesting a serious gap between policy intent and actual delivery. Evaluations are largely positive about UNDPs achievements regarding environmental sustainability and climate change, but point to the risk of dependence on vertical funds. Limited evidence was found of UNDP's performance in mainstreaming and protecting human rights.

UNDP's interventions are found to be (highly) relevant, responding to expressed needs and priorities of partners. At the corporate level, UNDP has made relevant contributions to development results. However, especially in middle-income countries and high-income countries HICs, UNDP risks losing some of its relevance and is constantly challenged to position itself strategically and demonstrate added value to its partners and other stakeholders. Cost-efficiency is not evaluated systematically, but evaluations that do take place point to satisfactory performance. Timeliness, while also

rarely assessed, is seen as a concern. Despite some successes, UNDP's performance in terms of sustainability of results remains unsatisfactory.

UNDP faces structural challenges to achieve relevant results in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner. These include: a fragmented portfolio of small-scale, isolated and unsustainable projects with weak linkages to upstream policy and institutional capacity development; funding-driven priorities and actions; government-centric partnerships; ineffective funding mechanisms; and a need to further strengthen multidimensional approaches and intersectoral co-ordination. Many of these reflect fundamental systemic concerns in the development arena, which are pertinent to all development actors.

Box 4: UNDP's governance-related work

Governance is at the heart of UNDP's policies, strategies and interventions. It is one of UNDP's six Signature Solutions and an integral part of the programming across the organisation. Therefore, given that governance is more than "just" a cross-cutting theme, as per the MOPAN assessment framework, micro-indicator 2.4 has been replaced with a separate governance section, below.

Definition and scope
Although widely considered a distinctive feature of its policies and actions, UNDP does not have an explicit overarching definition of "governance". In the current strategic plan, governance is both a signature solution (#2 – strengthen effective, accountable and inclusive governance) and an integral "enabling" part of other signature solutions. Therefore, the scope of UNDP's governance intervention areas and technical expertise offer is very broad.

Structure
At UNDP headquarters, the governance team is one of 16 teams within the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)/Crisis Bureau (CB). Structurally, UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre is part of the BPPS governance team. At the regional level, governance experts are based in regional hubs and report to the HQ-based regional bureaux. The vast majority of governance experts are based at the country level where they are involved in project and programme implementation.

Expenditure
UNDP's Transparency Portal shows that between 2018 and 2020, UNDP spent nearly 40% of its income on Signature Solution # 2 (SS2). The number of active projects increased from 1 343 in 2018 to 1 562 in 2020. This represents 38% of all active UNDP projects in 2020. During this time, the average expenditure per project dropped from USD 1.3 million in 2018 to USD 1.1 million in 2020. Lacking a clear working definition of governance, the classification/designation and aggregation of project budgets and expenditures under a given Signature Solution is somewhat arbitrary.

Instruments
Besides its engagement in project and programme implementation at the country, regional and global levels, UNDP has developed guidance notes for several governance components, including SDG16 monitoring, civil restoration and reform in fragile and conflict affected states, building inclusive societies, and sustaining peace. Together with the World Bank, in 2017 UNDP issued guidance on the main priorities and actions needed to re-establish six core government functions in fragile and conflict affected settings.

FIGURE 6: SUMMARY OF UNDP GOVERNANCE-RELATED WORK

DEFINITION AND SCOPE

- Signature Solution #2: Governance for peaceful, just and inclusive societies
- Integral "enabling part" of remaining five Signature Solutions
- Contribution to all three outcomes in the IRRF
- Governance in the IRRF focuses on strengthening national and sub-national capacity, institutional strengthening and processes and systems that support effective rule-of-law.

STRUCTURE

- Governance Team in Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)/Crisis Bureau (CB)
- Oslo Governance Centre
- Governance Experts in Regional Hubs
- Governance Experts in Country Offices

INSTRUMENTS

Guidance notes including:

- Building Inclusive Societies and Sustaining Peace through Democratic Governance and Conflict Prevention (2016)
- (Re)Building Core Government Functions in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings (2017)
- Supporting Civil Service Restoration and Reform in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings (2017)
- Pathways for Peace – Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict (2018)
- Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption Service Offer for COVID-19 Response and Recovery (2020)
- Responding to COVID-19 Information Pollution (2020)

COUNTRIES WITH PROJECTS
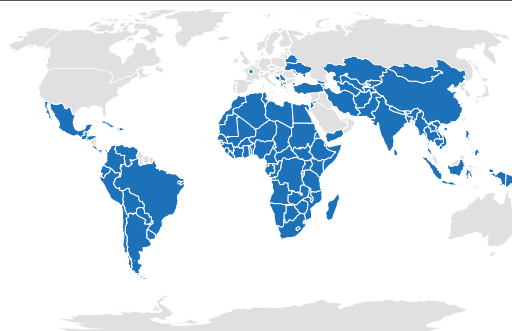
BUDGET AND EXPENSES
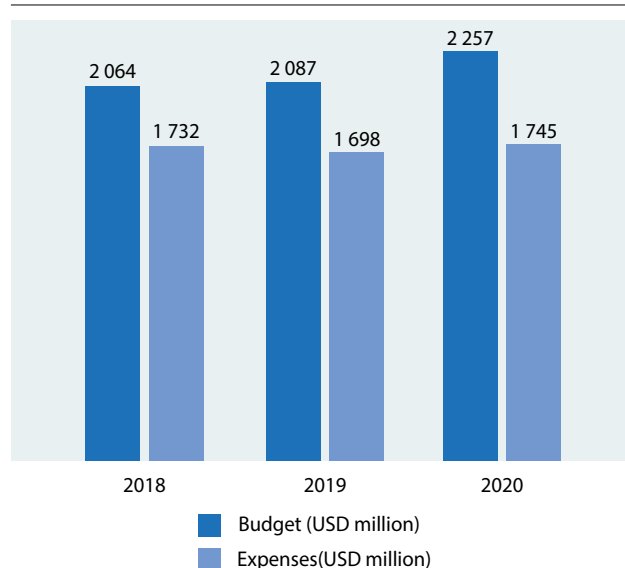
NUMBER OF PROJECTS
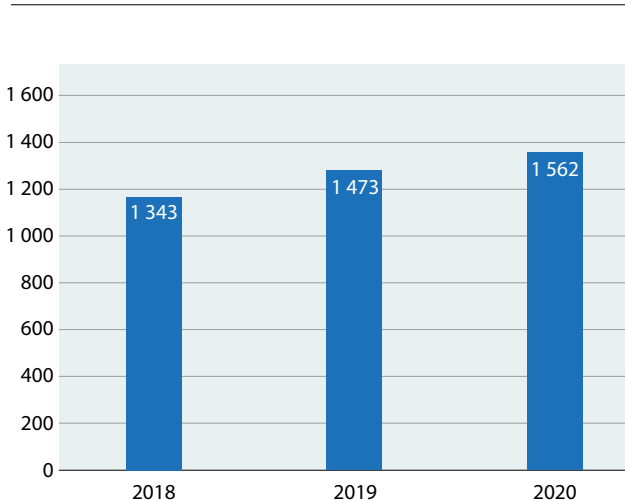
Box 4: UNDP's governance-related work (*continued*)

Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) and results
There are three outcomes in the current IRRF, and SS2 is expected to contribute to all three. Governance, as tracked in the IRRF, focuses on strengthening national and sub-national capacity, institutional strengthening, and processes and systems that support effective rule-of-law. However, the IRRF does not show how much of SS2 is attributable to each outcome. Overall, evaluative evidence shows that the development results of governance interventions – in terms of their relevance and effectiveness – are similar to other intervention areas. Nonetheless, the sustainability and efficiency of governance interventions are areas for concern due to fragmentation, "projectisation", a lack of political acceptance, and insufficient alignment with national context and priorities, among other things (see Annex A for detailed evidence).

Governance and COVID-19
Recognising that COVID-19 is as much a governance crisis as it is a health, humanitarian or socio-economic crisis, UNDP has made governance a key part of its response to the pandemic. In 2020, BPPS teams issued a series of guidance notes for inclusive governance responses to address the impact of COVID-19, covering areas such as core governance functions for crisis management and service delivery, legal identity systems, the rule of law, human rights and security, and information pollution ("infodemic").

2.3. UNDP'S FUTURE TRAJECTORY

Recognising the truly extraordinary operating environment during the assessment period, in particular the UNDS reforms and the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP has come a long way. In some respects, UNDP has laid a solid foundation for the coming years. It has done so both by design and by seizing unexpected new opportunities.

UNDP's direction of travel remains, however, a work in progress. Some of its foremost challenges lie beyond its immediate control. UNDS Reforms are moving ahead, but at an intermittent pace, with some areas showing more progress than others. The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic was overwhelming and has had far-reaching consequences in all areas of UNDP's work, with many questions remaining. The pandemic served as a "stress test" for the UNDS reforms, especially in terms of the UN system's ability to collaborate and co-ordinate coherently, efficiently and effectively under the leadership of the empowered RC. Although the UN (including UNDP) is seen to have passed the test well, it is less clear whether the pandemic will help accelerate further reforms to realise its full potential, especially in areas such as joint programming, ownership of collaborative results and mutual accountability.

One of the key challenges for UNDP will be making sure that its resourcing (both in terms of resource mobilisation and resource management) aligns better with its evolution and direction of travel. There is a risk that certain changes that UNDP seeks to make – e.g. moving to a portfolio approach; addressing the multi-dimensionality of poverty, including issues around structural inequality; strengthening its offer in the context of (post)conflict-affected countries; and building innovative partnerships with the private sector – will be constrained because of today's stringent funding modalities and conditions. It will be critical for UNDP to undertake efforts to engage with donors and partners and to try to influence and align their policies and practices in the context of the Funding Compact, as well as to reduce the share of short-term, earmarked project-based voluntary contributions in favour of more longer-term unearmarked funding of regular resources.

In other areas that fall within UNDP's own sphere of influence, the organisation is well-positioned to make the necessary strategic choices. The next Strategic Plan presents an opportunity to both consolidate the achievements of the current Plan and build a sufficiently strong foundation for whichever role(s) it seeks to play in the future. At present, it is too early to determine how successfully innovation is transforming UNDP's ways of working, its partnerships and its performance at the country level. In pursuing this transformation agenda further, UNDP can capitalise on its key strengths, i.e. robust organisational systems, a decentralised structure, a proven capacity to handle change constructively, and a strong approach to partnerships and thought leadership potential, including the Human Development Reports. Still, more will be needed to achieve the ambitious change agenda and to deliver more effective and sustainable development results.

UNDP will first need to better define its role(s) and complementarity regarding its national partners, other development partners and the RC. The current portfolio is often criticised as being too scattered across too many themes and sectors, including those for which other agencies are better equipped; too focused on "downstream" implementation rather than upstream policy formulation and strengthening of national partners' capacities; and too government-centric, as opposed to applying a "whole of society" approach.

In addition, innovation is yet to be properly "anchored" – both within the organisation and externally with its partners – in terms of conceptual clarity, buy-in, and operational policies, procedures and instruments. Moreover, innovation is constrained by today's stringent funding structure and practice, which favours UNDP's programmatic role. The push for greater quality, efficiency and new ways of working are yet to be embedded in the minds and actions of UNDP's personnel across all layers of the organisation, notably in decentralised offices. Similarly, they also need to be better reflected in programmatic terms, with a move away from "project implementor" to more upstream policy advice and the facilitation of sustainable, integrated solutions to today's complex problems.

UNDP also needs to close the gap between corporate-level policy making and strategising on the one hand, and field-level programmes on the other. It will need to better anchor change by innovating and aligning its structure, business model, funding model and organisational culture to a more strategic and programmatic focus. Taking this one step further, UNDP should consider reviewing its decentralised business model regarding the three not necessarily compatible roles it currently conducts (i.e. project/programme implementation, integrator and operational backbone), and make corrections where necessary. Similarly, within each of these roles, further choices based on UNDP's added value, and that of others, may be required.

Whichever direction UNDP takes, it will need to revise and strengthen its RBM systems to ensure that they not only steer, capture and aggregate results at the global level, but also better integrate lessons from evaluations of past interventions and apply these systematically. This touches on the need for better knowledge management across the organisation. At present, UNDP's aspiration to reinforce its thought leadership role and profile is insufficiently reflected in its structure, systems and organisational culture.

DETAILED LOOK AT KEY FINDINGS

Detailed look at key findings

3.1. ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

This chapter provides a more detailed assessment of UNDP's performance across the five performance areas – strategic management, operational management, relationship management, and performance management and results – and the KPIs that relate to each area, accompanied by their score and rating.

MOPAN Performance scoring and rating scale

- Highly satisfactory (3.51-4.00)
- Satisfactory (2.51-3.50)
- Unsatisfactory (1.51-2.50)
- Highly Unsatisfactory (0.00-1.50)
- No evidence / Not applicable

Assessment key findings draw on information from the three evidence sources (document reviews, interviews and a partner survey – see Chapter 4 for more information) and the section uses quotes from the survey to illustrate findings and highlight feedback from stakeholders. Further analysis per micro-indicator and detailed scoring can be found in Annex A, while the full survey results are included in Annex C. For the full list and citation details of the documents referred to, please see Annex B.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Clear strategic direction geared to key functions, intended results and integration
of relevant cross-cutting priorities

UNDP is a large, multifaceted, heterogeneous and highly decentralised development organisation, operating globally across a broad range of areas and themes. UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 presents an exploratory vision for the organisation and is fully aligned with the 2030 Development Agenda. Its main objectives have been partially achieved, although gaps remain between innovative policies and strategies developed at HQ level and country level practice. Overall, UNDP has handled the United Nations Development System (UNDS) reforms well, including the RC delinking. Its response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been successful. UNDP led on the pandemic's socio-economic impact, supported governments in their short- and medium-term response, and reprogrammed and mobilised close to USD 1 billion in funds.

UNDP is a voluntarily funded organisation, reliant on a few donors for core resources to maintain corporate structures and cover programme expenses. UNDP remains predominantly a decentralised project implementing agency, with 93% of its workforce based at the country level, delivering about 5 000 active development projects. UNDP is mostly recognised and valued for its traditional programmatic and "backbone" roles, as evidenced by the survey results in the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21.

On cross-cutting issues, UNDP has made progress in its approach to gender equality and women's empowerment; however, performance is constrained by only modest increases in resourcing. UNDP takes a holistic approach to climate change and holds its programmes to high standards. It is a key provider of technical support on environmental issues and a primary actor on climate change within the UN system. A human rights-based approach is mandatory for all UNDP programming. While wholly committed to economic and social rights, a challenge for UNDP, as with many other UNDS entities, has been articulating its stance on sensitive (civil-political) human rights issues at the country level.

KPI 1: Organisational architecture and financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results

Score: 2.64

The formulation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 coincided with a period of tremendous change in UNDP. The approval of the 2030 Development Agenda, particularly the shift of the unit of analysis from countries to the "3Ps" of "People, Planet and Prosperity", deeply affected UNDP given its purported focus on national policy support under the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). Concurrently with the formulation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21, the UN Secretary-General put the final touches to his reform agenda, and the transfer of the Resident Coordinator (RC) function triggered the most profound transformation in UNDP since its creation. A new Administrator took over in early 2017, just months before the presentation of the draft strategy to the Executive Board. Considering these tumultuous circumstances, **the resulting strategic plan was more a "licence to operate" than the operationalisation of the organisation's vision, as described by senior management.**

UNDP contends with systemic shortcomings that have been many years in the making. The organisation is still overly reliant on a group of ten donors for over 80% of its core (regular) resources, with a stagnating trend in receipts amounting to between 12-13% during the review period. Core (regular) resource donations dropped to historic lows in 2015 and triggered budgetary pressures, including the threat of an operational deficit for the first time the following biennia. UNDP averted a budget crisis through efficiency measures and cost savings, and has presented balanced accounts since.

On top of these external shocks and systemic challenges, in 2016 UNDP had just emerged from several rounds of structural adjustments that in interviews were described as "traumatic" for staff members. At one stage, one-quarter of policy functions at headquarters were vacant due to planned and unplanned departures. The combination of events has led to a risk-averse culture that is also reflected in a lack of clarity regarding UNDP's position in the UNDS. Several attempts to reset the operating model have been made, but at heart UNDP remains opportunistic, with an eye on country-based resource mobilisation and project implementation.

It speaks to UNDP's resilience that all these shocks were overcome, and in some ways the organisation emerged stronger. UNDP's experience with the COVID-19 pandemic has reaffirmed UNDP's position in the UNDS given its lead role on the socio-economic effects, and the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 attests: "UNDP has demonstrated a new dynamism, especially in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic." Thanks to its decentralised nature and the emphasis on digitalisation and innovation, the organisation was well placed to lead on the response to the pandemic's socio-economic impact and to support governments in the short and medium term. Its operational flexibility and speed allowed for the reallocation of significant funds, and its global and regional shared service centres ensured a degree of organisational resilience that "kept the lights on" in many countries during the pandemic.

UNDP remains the largest provider of operational services in the UN system, and played an essential role in underwriting the UN reforms through its field-based organisation. UNDPs systems, structures, people and resources were essential to the establishment of the new RC system. While currently no other agency has either the capacity or the inclination to be the UNDS service provider, with the possible exception of United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), evaluations question whether UNDP is still well served by adhering to the needs of other UN entities and fulfilling the "operational backbone" support role.

UNDP comprises an impressive number of personnel with rich policy expertise; however, interviews and documentary evidence demonstrate that, by and large, they remain locked in their structures in global policy centres and country offices, and UNDP has not been able to exert the influence that would befit an organisation claiming the role of policy integrator for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some 65% of all staff are national officers and general service staff who cannot be redeployed outside their country; hence, their knowledge

and experience remains mostly untapped. It is too early to judge if the new emphasis on policy integration, innovation and digitalisation in the strategic plan will be successful, partially because feedback from interviews and evaluation results found that these concepts still require more clarity to be understood and incorporated by country offices and development partners.

<table>
<tr><td>**KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda principles**</td><td>Score: 2.89</td></tr>
</table>

While programming requires that cross-cutting issues are embedded in intervention planning and design processes, in practice they are addressed differently across countries. Gender, environmental sustainability and human rights are central to UNDP's successive strategic plans and are clearly embedded in UNDP's programming. For each of these issues, UNDP has taken an integrated approach to ensure that these issues permeate UNDP, recognising their inextricable link to UNDP's core aims. UNDP is clear that achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, addressing climate change, and ensuring the protection of human rights underpin key development challenges. Nevertheless, given UNDP's highly decentralised business model, the way it applies these cross-cutting issues varies in approach and depth, and the effectiveness of these approaches differs significantly across country contexts.

Indicators and targets for gender and environmental sustainability feature prominently in UNDP's results framework, while human rights indicators are less evident. Gender and environmental sustainability are fully mainstreamed in the Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF). There has been a small increase in the number of indicators that explicitly touch on human rights issues in IRRF in consecutive strategic periods, with a greater focus on the rights of beneficiary groups, but arguably less attention on civil society participation. Consequently, this affects the depth in which these issues are presented. UNDP has made efforts to ensure that the IRRF captures information about vulnerable groups, in line with UNDP's mandate to "increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts". Nonetheless, efforts to further disaggregate UNDP's results for vulnerable groups remains a work in progress, as the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 demonstrates. UNDP's recently revised Social and Environmental Safeguards have raised the bar to strengthen the quality of programming and maximise social and environmental opportunities for all UNDP interventions across these cross-cutting issues, which demonstrates a more holistic integration of cross-cutting issues.

UNDP's efforts to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in its programming are substantive, but constrained by limited investment. UNDP has taken strides to ensure that gender is more consistently and more meaningfully embedded in its programming through a strategy and action plan, and has established the aim of allocating 15% of all country programme and project budgets to advancing gender equality and/or empowering women. UNDP has enhanced its programming tools to systematically apply a gender lens to all projects and programmes. As of 2019, 8.4% of projects and programmes had a GEN3 gender marker,[4] which is an increase from 2018, when 6.7% of UNDP's funds were distributed to projects with a principal contribution to gender equality. UNDP's Gender Seal programme incentivises country offices to integrate gender across all aspects of their work. The programme has seen significant uptake by country offices, but has varying levels of adoption and is an opt-in programme. This suite of efforts has helped to move UNDP toward more transformative and more responsive gender programming. Nevertheless, UNDP's effectiveness in integrating a gender dimension across programming, and

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4   UNDP introduced Gender Marker in 2009 as a corporate ATLAS-based tool to track gender investments. Every output for development and management projects is scored on a four-point scale: from 0 (no gender impact) to 3 (gender equality as a significant objective). GEN3 gender marker indicates is gender equality as a significant objective (Source: UNDP).

ensuring a systematically robust approach to its programming, is significantly constrained by the level of resourcing for gender. Although it is a cross-cutting issue, and despite deliberate decisions to allocate more core resources to gender programmes, the evidence amply demonstrates that gender is chronically underfunded and variably resourced across country offices.

UNDP has established its credentials as a key player on environmental issues, providing technical assistance to member states and project-level support, largely funded through vertical funds. UNDP has an extensive and multifaceted climate change mitigation and adaptation portfolio, and approaches climate change as a development issue rather than an environmental phenomenon. Although UNDP does not have an explicit overarching climate change policy or strategy, it mainstreams the human and natural challenges through its environmental and social safeguards. Environmental sustainability is well reported in the IRRF; however, it is not yet fully embedded across all types of programming, as reflected in the limited treatment of environmental aspects of projects not within the climate change portfolio.

UNDP is wholly committed to furthering the realisation of human rights (economic, social, civil and political) at the policy level. It applies a human rights based approach to the design of its programming; however, in practice the commitment is not consistently applied across interventions. UNDP uses the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process at the country level to provide human rights analysis in programming, for example though country fact sheets showing the implementation status of UPR recommendations and their linkages to SDGs. UNDP, in partnership with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), also supports government partners to implement these recommendations. Nevertheless, UNDP operates within a complex and sensitive context in member states, which can constrain its ability to effectively monitor or advocate on human rights issues. While fully committed to economic and social rights, a challenge for UNDP, as with many other UN entities, has been articulating its stance on sensitive (civil-political) human rights issues more widely at the country level. Evaluations are also critical of UNDP's capabilities and positioning, concluding that corporate-level reporting on achievement against human rights and "leave no one behind" targets is limited.

FIGURE 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES
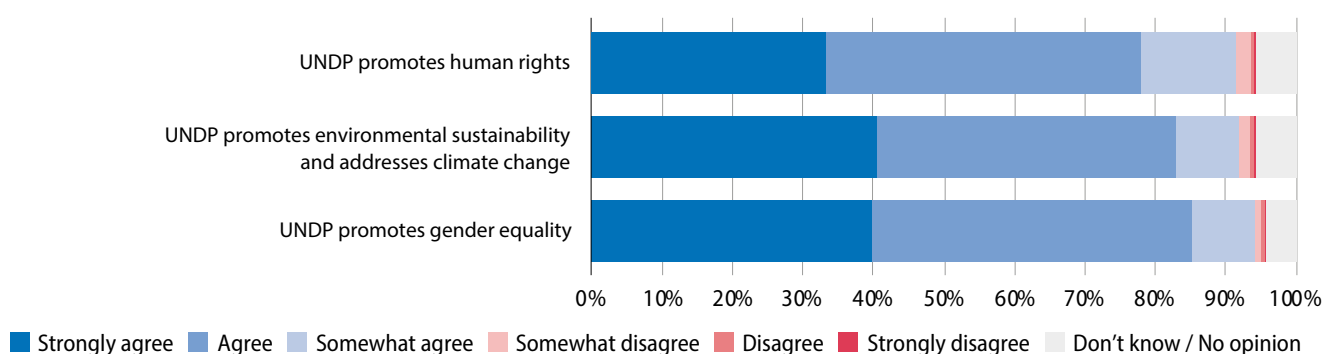
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

Box 5: How has the COVID-19 response affected UNDP's mandate and delivery?

The pandemic presented UNDP with an opportunity to better outline its comparative advantage and role. The organisation's response was based upon its integrator role and large operational and technical capacity. At the request of the Secretary-General (SG), UNDP spearheaded UN system efforts to assess and respond to the socio-economic context and impacts of the pandemic. This included the preparation of 144 socio-economic impact assessments, support for UN country teams in the development of 131 socio-economic response plans, the launch of the data futures platform, and the development of the Integrated Digital Assessments Initiative to assess the impact on vulnerable households.

In particular, the second phase of UNDP's COVID-19 response focused on four areas to support recovery that align with UNDP's key capacities as set out in the Strategic Plan, namely: governance, social protection, green economy, and digital disruption and innovation. The socio-economic assessments conducted as part of UNDP's response to COVID-19 highlighted the worsening of human rights conditions and the increased vulnerability of the least protected and most marginalised. UNDP also held virtual events to highlight the impact of COVID-19 on human rights institutions and on pre-existing racial, class and ethnic inequities.

In response to the MOPAN open-ended survey question, "How has UNDP adapted and responded to the COVID-19 crisis?", 59% of respondents responded positively, with 16.3% of respondents citing UNDP's adaptability and 9.5% referring to UNDP's socio-economic analysis. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 affirms that "UNDP has demonstrated a new dynamism, especially in response to the COVID pandemic." Out of a sample of ten new Country Programme Documents, all made use of UNDP's socio-economic analysis to identify issues in relation to development progress; 7 out of 10 went on to identify specific risks in relation to COVID-19.

FIGURE 8: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO MOPAN SURVEY QUESTION "HOW HAS UNDP ADAPTED AND RESPONDED TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS?"
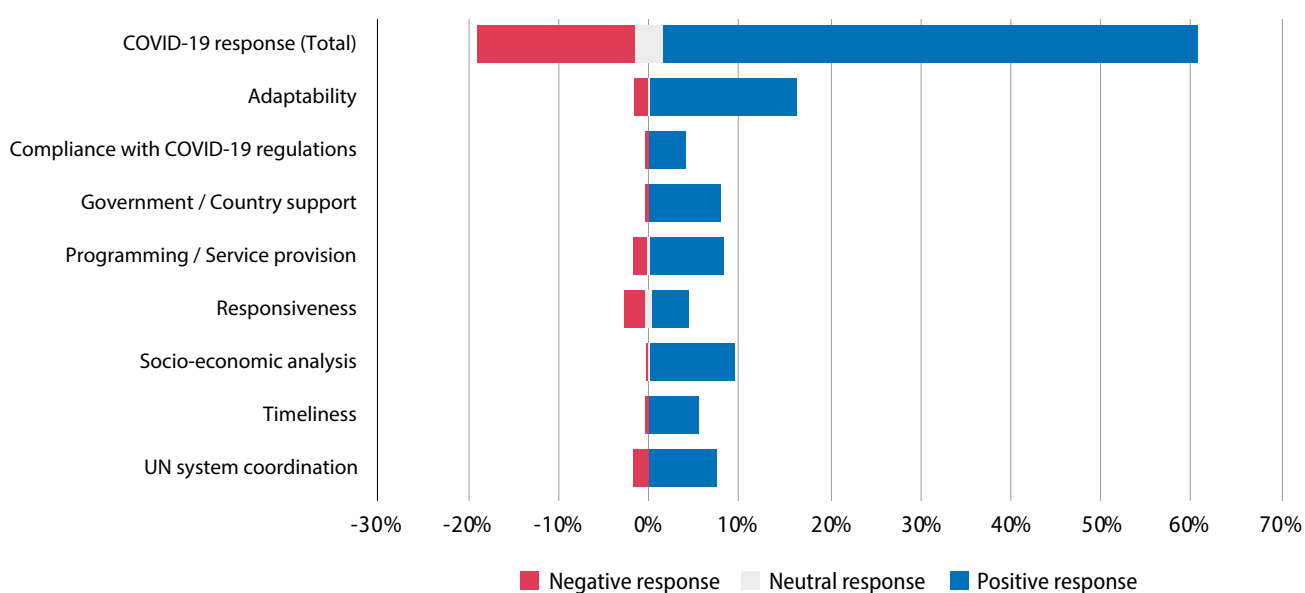
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT
Assets and capacities organised behind strategic direction and intended results, to ensure relevance, agility and accountability.
UNDP continues to streamline and bolster its internal policies, business processes, systems, tools and instruments to enhance delivery. Demonstrable improvements have been made to people management, clustering of services and financial management. UNDP shows determination to become a client-oriented operational services provider, and both its adaptation and contribution to the smooth transition of the RC function are widely acknowledged. With an annual contribution of USD 10.3 million, UNDP is the second-largest UN entity contributor to the RC system, after the UN Secretariat.

All resources are brought together in the integrated resource plan and integrated budget, but the corporate allocation mechanism only affects regular resources, which were between 12% and 13% of total resources in 2016-2020. Results-based budgeting and reallocation of resources are lacking at the corporate level. Moreover, in the integrated budget there does not appear to be any prioritisation of resources. Most resources are project-based and mobilised at the country level. UNDP's decentralised delivery mechanisms are sufficiently capable of withstanding shocks such as COVID-19. A robust risk-informed approach is used to detect potential fraud and corruption. UNDP is recognised as the most transparent UN organisation.

UNDP is making good progress on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH), although more effort is needed to ensure all personnel understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to preventing and responding to SEA and SH. UNDP has established a multi-sectoral task force headed by UNDP's Deputy Chief of Staff to champion its strategy and action plan, which sets out its efforts to prevent and respond to SEA and SH, in line with the Special Bulletin on protection of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (PSEA).

UNDP has a designated policy on sexual harassment (SH), aligned to UN and Chief Executive Board (CEB) standards, which extends to all UNDP personnel. It underscores its adherence to the SG's Bulletin on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and SH and SEA are explicitly proscribed. UNDP has taken steps to ensure that personnel have an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities for preventing and responding to SH. UNDP is attempting a range of formal and informal mechanisms to provide resources and redress to personnel dealing with SH.

UNDP has established a joint strategy and action plan that sets out its efforts to prevent and respond to both SEA and SH, led by a multi-sectoral task force. UNDP designates in-country focal points for PSEA, and in specific country contexts country offices recruit a designated PSEA Coordinator. UNDP has taken steps to ensure that its implementing partners are assessed for their ability to respond to and prevent SEA. **Nevertheless, tracking of progress on PSEA is challenging**. A major challenge remains that UNDP cannot investigate claims against implementing partners. This presents a significant risk for allegations to go un-investigated when they involve an implementing partner.

KPI 3: The operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility   Score: 2.87

The Strategic Plan 2018-21 presupposes two business models and two delivery platforms to achieve its vision, which explains some of the heterogeneity in UNDP's appearance and performance, particularly at the country level. The two roles spelled out in the Strategic Plan – "integrator" and "operational backbone" – require significantly different personnel profiles. The "integrator" function was legislated by the UN General Assembly six months after UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 was approved. To be an effective integrator, personnel with credible development expertise and policy profiles are needed. This led to UNDP issuing a new human resource strategy and making significant efforts to better capture the experience and knowledge of its workforce. Several rounds of restructuring during the review period resulted in few discernible structural changes, but triggered significant turnover

of personnel. UNDP remains a highly decentralised entity, with 93% of its workforce at the country level. About 90% of stakeholders agree that personnel in the field have the right experience to operate in different country contexts.

UNDP is a voluntarily funded organisation with multiple income streams; however, it remains disproportionately reliant on a small group of core (regular) resource donors to maintain corporate structures. The organisation struggled with financial sustainability in the 2018-19 biennium due to reduced core (regular) contributions, and was focused on balancing its books as a priority. Through the clustering approach and global shared services centres, UNDP is trying to professionalise and economise the processing of transactions, while keeping decision making at the field level. According to UNDP, the efforts on business process improvement resulted in approximately USD 240 million in efficiency gains. These resources were subsequently redeployed for programming purposes.

UNDP is still predominantly a project implementing agency, with about 5 000 active development projects listed in its transparency portal. Clear policies on delegated decision making exist, and decisions on resource allocation and programming are largely decentralised to country offices. Resource mobilisation is predominantly field-based and centres on project implementation, not necessarily policy integration or wider SDG financing.

UNDP has consistently championed UN system efforts, such as the use of pooled funding, the application of mutual recognition principles, and the shared ownership of the UN Resident Coordinator system through the application of the mutual accountability framework. UNDP's contribution to the smooth transition of the RC function is widely recognised and acknowledged by the UN Secretariat.

The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found that "UNDP has made good progress improving its management and operations and showing determination to be a more client-oriented operational services provider with commitment to improving people management, learning and development." Still, it also attested that UNDP should "evolve and innovate its business model, […] expand its adaptive management capabilities and develop additional funding models that increase agility and flexibility".

FIGURE 9: STAFFING
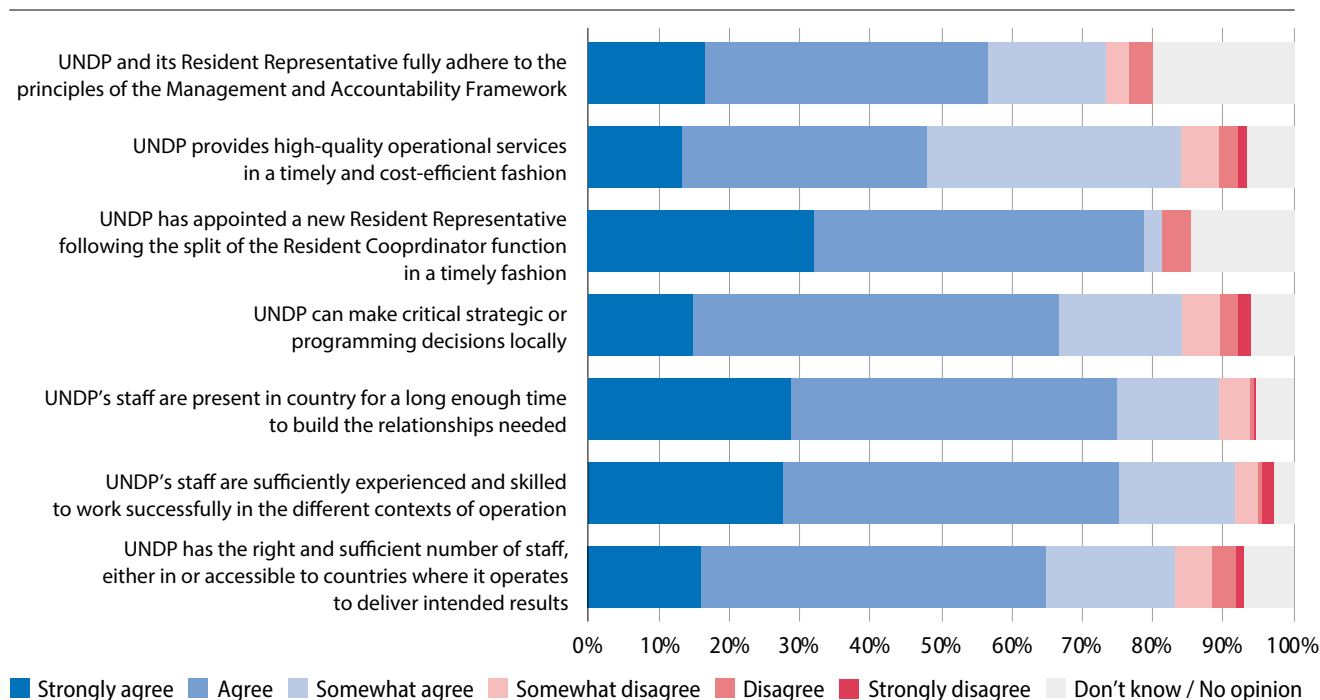
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable transparency and accountability

Score: 3.00

The responsible stewardship of resources is essential for UNDP given its fully voluntarily financed business model. All resources are brought together in the integrated resource plan and integrated budget document, but the corporate allocation mechanism only affects core (regular) resources, which are about 13% of total resources. At the planning stage, no prioritisation of resources (either earmarked or unearmarked) is discernible in the integrated budget, and the level of granularity, particularly on human resources, which constitute the majority of expenses, is not conducive to portraying a meaningful relationship between resources and results. Thus, UNDP's concept of results-based budgeting is deficient, and while budgets disclose the use of all resources, their purpose can only be understood through *ex post* reporting.

UNDP sets itself corporate disbursement targets, and its decentralised delivery mechanisms are sufficiently robust to withstand shocks with delivery, reaching 94% of the planned target in 2019. Even the COVID-19 pandemic did not negatively affect UNDP's delivery overall; in fact, UNDP has played an important role as the UN lead on the socio-economic effects of the pandemic, and was able to reprogramme and, with a 94% delivery rate, still disburse significant resources.

UNDP fully complies with international accounting and audit standards and submits annual financial statements to the Executive Board that are published on its website. The UN Board of Auditors reviews the statements, and its report is submitted to the Board together with management responses on the implementation of audit recommendations. UNDP has an effective accountability framework and an internal control framework that spell out roles and responsibilities, including the responsibility to report any suspicions of fraud and corruption in line with its "zero tolerance" policy. A risk-informed approach is used to detect (potential) fraud and corruption issues, and its internal audit and investigation function includes 91 posts, half of which are based in decentralised centres. **UNDP has regularly been recognised as the most transparent UN organisation.** Its default policy is that all information is published unless there is an overriding reason for information to be kept confidential.

UNDP has made good progress to prevent and respond to SH, while more effort is needed to prevent and respond to SEA. It has a designated policy on SH, aligned to UN and CEB standards, which extends to all UNDP personnel. UNDP has adopted the Secretary-General's Bulletin on special measures for PSEA as its policy, but does not yet have a standalone policy. SH and SEA are explicitly proscribed in UNDP's code of ethics, legal framework and staff rules. UNDP has established a strategy and action plan that sets out its efforts to prevent and respond to SEA and SH, led by a multi-sectoral task force headed by UNDP's Deputy Chief of Staff. Nevertheless, **tracking of progress on PSEA is made difficult by how the strategy is monitored**. UNDP is actively engaged to ensure that all personnel better understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to preventing and responding to SEA and SH, although more effort is needed.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Engaging in inclusive partnerships to support relevance, leverage effective solutions and maximise results.

UNDP is at heart a partnership agency, and has spearheaded many important initiatives that have bolstered collaboration and partnership within and beyond the UN system. UNDP is committed to the aid effectiveness agenda and to supporting nationally led action, driven by strong partnerships with national governments. It has fully incorporated its principles into its programming approach. Its internal guidance for enterprise risk management, programme and operations policies and procedures, and social and environmental safeguards have improved.

UNDP sees itself primarily as a partner of national governments, whose priorities define UNDP's engagement at the country level. This has led to confusion about its comparative advantage in terms of contributing to upstream, "whole of society" policies and strategies, to criticism from other agencies about its lack of thematic focus and complementarity, and to questions about its concept of "beneficiaries" and measures to ensure that "no one is left behind". Knowledge management, which are essential to underpin UNDP's thought leadership, programmatic and integrator roles, deserves a fresh look; there was limited evidence of vertical and horizontal development and systematic use of knowledge.

KPI 5: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility in partnerships

Score: 3.09

UNDP has robust operational planning and intervention design tools and agile responses to emerging challenges, as demonstrated through its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, these strong operational systems do not guarantee good results across all areas of UNDP's work. Despite UNDP's strong programme operation policies and processes and sophisticated tools, their implementation, and the results they generate, vary when implemented across highly heterogeneous contexts and the wide breadth of issues that UNDP broaches across its work.

Country programming is explicitly and consistently guided by national priorities. Consideration of the needs of beneficiaries has evolved from a design parameter to a clear driver of UNDP's strategies, and there is an emphasis on the "leave no one behind" principle with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015. Contextual analysis and capacity assessment is built into UNDP's programme lifecycle. In transitioning from the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), UNDP has consistently maintained a clear line of sight on the government priorities of its member states.

Attention to contextual issues and partners' capacity is at the forefront of programme design. Guidance for programme development requires that comprehensive contextual analysis and capacity assessment of partners are built into the programme lifecycle. UNDP's programme design and management and partnership assessment tools have evolved, and current country programming documents (CPD) aim to provide an in-depth analysis of UNDP's approach to the country context. UNDP has improved its processes to ensure that the design of its interventions more systematically considers the capacity of its partners. It has also refined its tools to ensure a streamlined, systematic and bolstered approach to the capacity assessments of implementing partners. Capacity assessments of implementing partners include a risk assessment of political will, programmatic context, communications capacity, technical capacities, capacity of personnel and ethical standards.

UNDP requires that programmes assess the gender, environmental sustainability and human rights dimensions of its interventions at the design stage. Its recently revised Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES) allow UNDP to take a more advanced approach to assessing cross-cutting issues in programme design. While there is still variability in the depth of the treatment of cross-cutting issues, the SES presents an opportunity for UNDP to

enhance its treatment of such issues. However, an assessment of how programming affects different target groups and the differentiated impacts on different beneficiary groups is not yet borne out by the data that UNDP assesses or collects.

UNDP has made efforts to bolster its approach to enterprise risk management. UNDP has revised its enterprise risk management policy to enhance the capacity and culture surrounding risk management, including the identification and analysis of risks that could affect the achievement of development results, and capacities for risk management. UNDP is currently developing a risk appetite statement.

As a capacity development organisation, for UNDP the strengthening of institutions is an essential aspect of sustainability, and this is reflected in standards for the design of programmes and projects. However, good tools and better plans do not necessarily guarantee effective development results. Programming standards require each project to develop transition and phase-out arrangements that are annually reviewed. UNDP's close working relationship with national institutions means that policy and legislative changes are consistently considered as part of intervention design, but engagement with outside stakeholders is more variable. The updated Social and Environmental Safeguards Screening Procedure requires project managers to identify how projects mainstream sustainability and resilience. The selection of implementing partners explicitly considers the availability, role and commitment of government entities to sustain project results. Despite strong efforts at the design stage to incorporate aspects of sustainability, evidence from evaluations demonstrate that ensuring the sustainability of UNDP's programming is often a challenge in implementation, demonstrating a gap between what the organisation aims for at the design stage, and what it can effectively achieve. This is caused by a combination of factors, including fragmentation, "projectisation", a lack of political acceptance, and insufficient alignment with national context and priorities (see Annex A for detailed evidence).

FIGURE 10: INTERVENTIONS
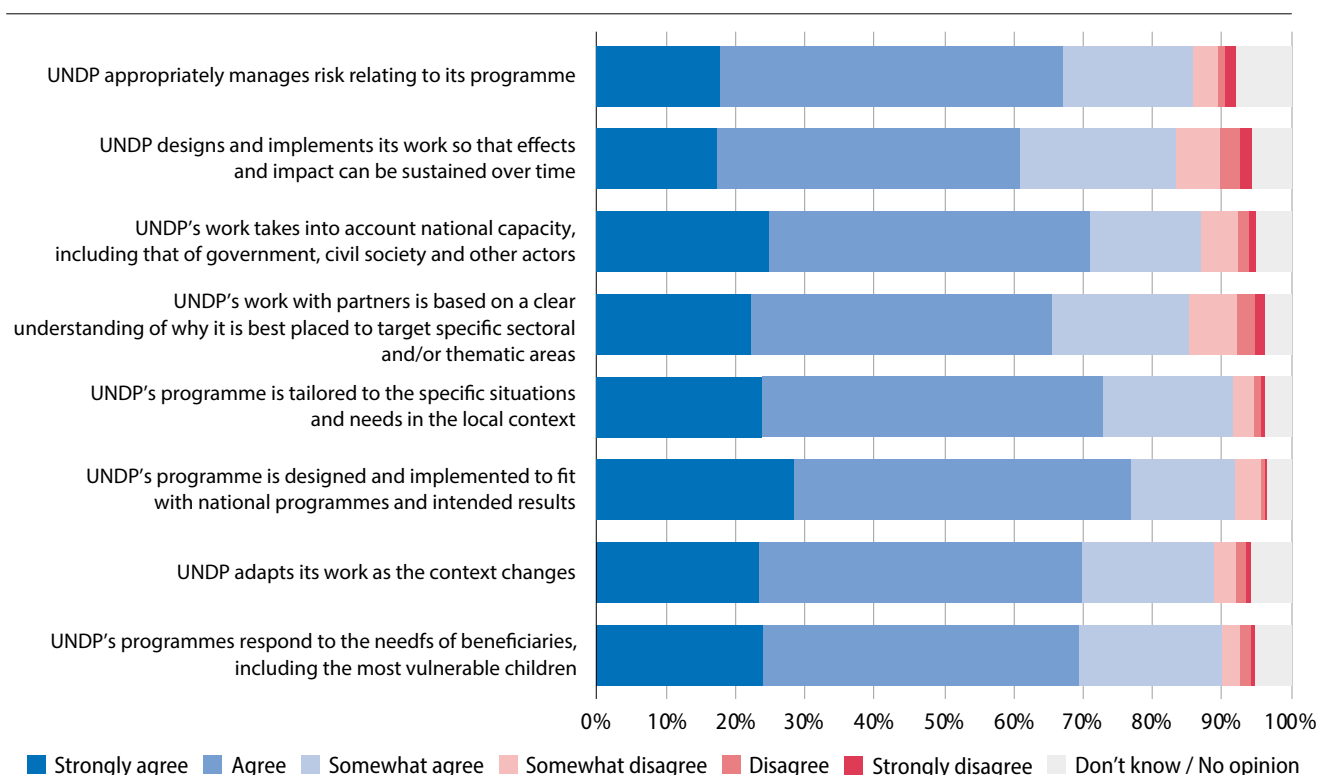
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

Even amid significant upheaval with the COVID-19 pandemic and organisational change with the UNDS reform, UNDP has maintained efficient processes and timely interventions. The challenges presented by COVID-19 and the UNDS reform tested UNDP's systems and processes and provided examples of UNDP's ability to deliver on-time, even under pressure across diverse contexts. Evaluations conducted pre-COVID-19 considered that UNDP's risk aversion hindered the speed of implementation. COVID-19 offers an opportunity for UNDP to try new ways of working that may demonstrate its ability to work flexibly and efficiently, with fewer operational or procedural delays.

KPI 6: Working in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources

Score: 3.20

Although UNDP does not have a clear, uniform concept of partnership, it is at heart a partnership agency. It sees itself primarily as a partner of national governments and understands its role to be in their service. UNDP is highly committed to the aid effectiveness agenda and has fully incorporated its principles into its programming approach. It plays a leading role in multi-agency fora to promote joint planning, monitoring and reporting, such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC). UNDP has a clear sense of what it brings to partnerships, and evaluations generally support that view. Given the broad spectrum of country contexts that UNDP engages in, its understanding of comparative advantage is largely situational, and strategies are clearest on how partners can be leveraged at the country level, or with regards to vertical funds.

The focus on national government has led to confusion among stakeholders on what its comparative advantage is beyond being an operational delivery platform for government and donor priorities. Most importantly, UNDP has no clear concept of beneficiaries beyond the government partners it serves, which is partly a legacy of its MDG role as "scorekeeper" and its focus on national policy change. While the concept of "leave no one behind" is prominent in UNDP programming, its definition of beneficiary is so broad and all-encompassing that it renders the concept inadequate for the purposes of prioritisation.

Over the years, UNDP has spearheaded many important initiatives that have become foundation blocks for collaboration and partnership within and beyond the UN system. As the previous host of the Resident Coordinator function, UNDP developed and led the UN common country programming processes that UNSDCFs are built on. Together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN-Women, UNDP spearheaded the formulation of the so-called "common chapter" that introduces each agency's strategic plan in response to the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) resolution. Previous strategic plans already incorporated QCPR guidance as part of the IRRF in the form of common indicators. As the largest service provider in the UN system, it has supported almost all organisations of the UN system in the delivery of their mandates. At the same time, UN entities criticise UNDP for its lack of thematic focus.

Information-sharing has been a priority for close to two decades, and UNDP has been recognised as the most transparent UN entity. For close to two decades, UNDP has made extensive use of internal and external surveys, and it was among the first UN entities to establish systematic information disclosure. UNDP was joined by several other UN entities to implement the UN's first global enterprise resource planning system, which laid the foundation for close to real-time reporting on programmes and projects. However, knowledge management, which would be essential to underpin its thought leadership, programmatic and integrator roles, deserves a fresh look. While the Human Development Report is widely recognised as a flagship product by the international development community, the role of country offices in the production of knowledge is underdeveloped. The evidence of vertical and horizontal development and use of knowledge is limited and anecdotal.

FIGURE 11: MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

UNDP jointly monitors progress on shared goals with local and regional partners

UNDP is actively engaged, appropriate to its role, in inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms

UNDP supports countries to build development partnerships

UNDP management processes do not cause unnecessary delays for partners in implementing operations

UNDP helps develop the capacity of country systems

UNDP adapts to changing conditions as jointly agreed with partners

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

FIGURE 12: INFORMATION SHARING AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS
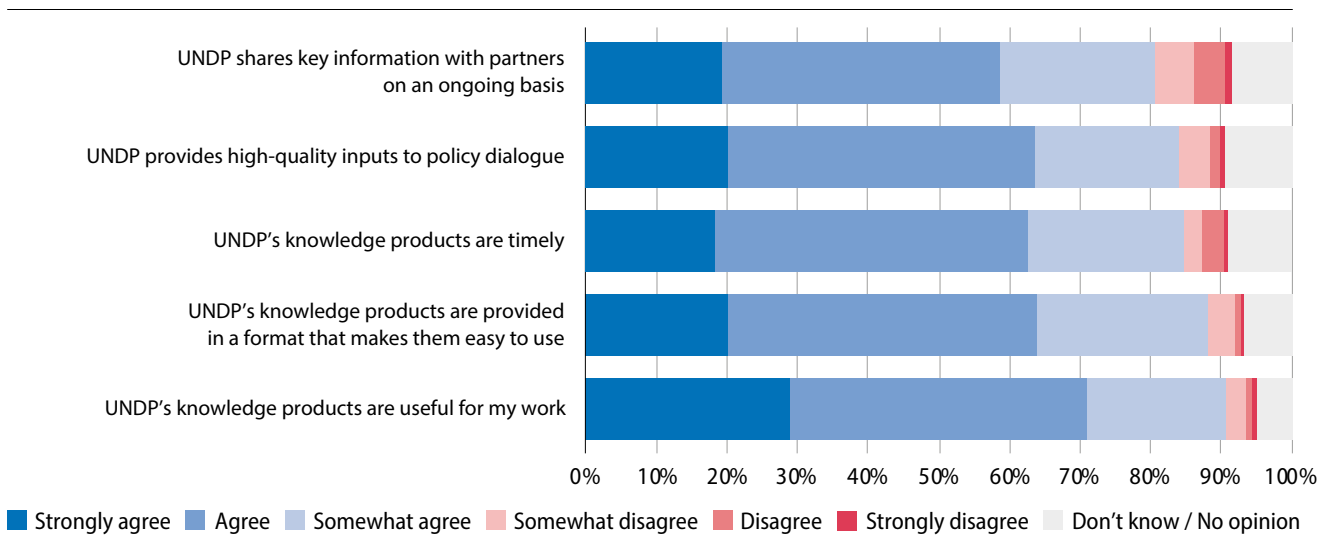
UNDP shares key information with partners on an ongoing basis

UNDP provides high-quality inputs to policy dialogue

UNDP's knowledge products are timely

UNDP's knowledge products are provided in a format that makes them easy to use

UNDP's knowledge products are useful for my work

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
Systems geared to managing and accounting for development and humanitarian results and the use of performance information, including evaluation and lesson-learning.

UNDP is committed to results-based management (RBM) and has taken steps to track results across development contexts and against the SDGs. However, despite efforts to account for heterogeneous results across country contexts, UNDP's systems steer the organisation towards results measurement at the country level, and insufficiently capture planned and intended results at the global level. This is because decentralised offices are not obliged to implement signature solutions; instead, project-level results at the country level are retro-fitted to align with corporate-level outcomes. UNDP's ability to integrate lessons from previous interventions, and particularly learn from failure, has been a persistent weakness. It has a well-established, credible independent evaluation function, an up-to-date evaluation policy, robust systems and a growing evaluation budget. Notwithstanding efforts to improve their oversight and quality, decentralised evaluations remain relatively weak.

KPI 7: The focus on results is strong, transparent and explicitly geared towards function **Score: 2.57**

While UNDP has a strong track record and commitment to RBM, emphasised in successive strategic plans and supported by extensive reporting processes, it has proved difficult to meaningfully plan for and aggregate results at the global level, and the IRRF and Strategic Plan are not fully aligned to be able to proactively manage for results. Strong RBM at the country level is retro-fitted for reporting at the corporate level. The results framework maps out what difference UNDP's interventions have made rather than forward planning of what UNDP planned to achieve. UNDP benefits from strong guidance for RBM at the country level and has based its IRRF on a bottom-up framework that supports extensive reporting on project and country outcomes.

At a country level, mechanisms allow for effective decentralised management for results; however, despite gradual improvements to indicators and sophisticated mechanisms for reporting, it is challenging to have a clear view on UNDP's contribution to results at the global level based upon the IRRF. Specifically, UNDP's corporate reporting does not detail the level of human resourcing in a specific area, which would provide a useful indication of the level of support, and reporting does not show the number or percentage of countries meeting their targets. While the effort to aggregate and simplify is admirable, in practice it dilutes the meaning of the reporting and thus the ability to fully understand how UNDP is achieving the ambitions of the Strategic Plan.

It has been a challenge to devise results indicators that weave together the intricacies of UNDP's performance story at a global level. UNDP has improved and refined its indicators over time, but in aggregating results across diverse contexts and operations, the headline numbers presented in the IRRF do not represent the significance of achievements in some countries, and the stalemate seen in others. Going forward, it has been suggested that UNDP revisits its indicators and targets to ensure that they reflect the heterogeneous contexts in which UNDP works to be able to meaningfully report on the outcomes achieved. While country reporting provides a nuanced story, how it is reported at the global level becomes a blunt instrument which doesn't show the "heavy lift" to achieve outcomes in some contexts versus the "easy wins" in others.

A combination of variable monitoring systems, gaps in the feedback loop and "fear of failure" has meant that UNDP's use of performance data to inform decision making and intervention design has been variable. UNDP has developed sophisticated dashboards and has invested in machine learning to improve its monitoring and reporting on performance. This supports detailed reporting and offers potential for learning from extensive project and programmatic interventions. Monitoring has been a challenge both because of varying capacity and because of inadequate use of data to support performance. Resourcing for monitoring and programme management is

FIGURE 13: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
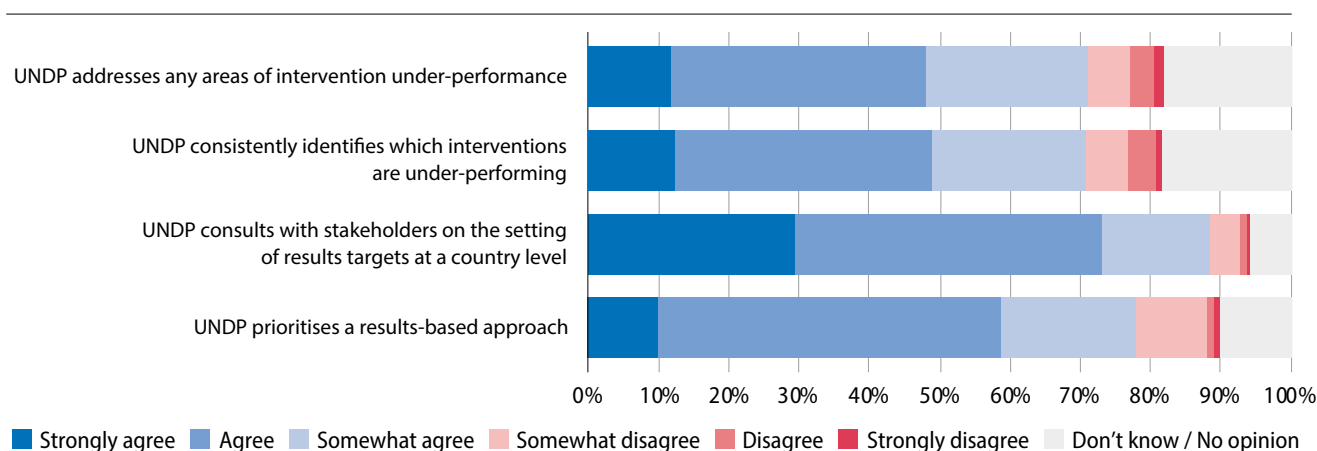
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

decentralised, based upon country size and expenditure. This has led to concerns about variable and sometimes inadequate resourcing and capacity for monitoring. The culture in UNDP has not been one that typically embraces or even fully recognises failure.

Despite efforts to improve organisational capacity and increase corporate investment in RBM, evaluations have pointed to the need for greater efforts to improve UNDP's RBM processes. UNDP has taken steps to improve the use and systemisation of its Results Oriented Annual Report (ROAR), most notably through machine learning, which has been used since 2019 to better understand successes and failures, and the factors therein. The efforts to track and measure performance systematically across UNDP's many interventions, and embedding a culture of learning, are important steps in the journey of learning from past performance.

KPI 8: The organisation applies evidence-based planning and programming   Score: 3.02

UNDP has a structurally and behaviourally Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) with its own budget, structure, and professional and managerial independence. With revisions to the Evaluation Policy, which guides the IEO, the office has experienced an increased volume in its output, an increase in resources available, and consistent oversight of the corporate and country portfolio evaluations that the offices produces. The Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee provides advisory and oversight support to the IEO. The IEO director is appointed by the Administrator, in consultation with the Executive Board, with the advice of the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC). Evaluation priorities are established by the IEO in consultation with the Executive Board.

UNDP has made changes to its evaluation policy to clarify the independence of the office, to improve the quality of decentralised evaluations, and to increase the funds available to support the evaluation function by 0.1% (from 0.1% to 0.2%) of all core and non-core programme funding. The policy revision serves to invest broadly in IEO's ability to manage an increased volume of evaluations without compromising quality, and establishes the broad criteria for the IEO to be able to shape its annual workplan. This translates to an increase in the IEO workforce and an uptick in the number of corporate evaluations produced by the office.

The IEO produces high-quality, highly credible independent evaluations, conducted by IEO and supported by clear guidance and robust quality assurance. However, audits and quality assessments have noted persistent issues with the quality of decentralised evaluations managed by decentralised offices, due to variable resourcing and evaluation capacity across country offices and regional bureaux. In response to this, the IEO has worked closely

with UNDP to strengthen guidance, skills, and oversight for decentralised evaluations, raise quality criteria and appoint designated focal points for each region to follow up on the uptake of (decentralised) evaluations.

Although UNDP emphasises learning, it is not always evident how lessons inform improvements, adjustments or changes in UNDP's work. UNDP is working to close its feedback loop to identify and incorporate lessons from evaluations into new interventions more consistently. There has been a perception, noted in successive evaluations, that UNDP's culture does not foster learning from failure, and that there has been limited reflection on what has not worked. Machine learning, dashboards for results reporting, the evaluation resource centre, required management responses and resourcing from the IEO are now being used to support the application of lessons and performance data in the development of new CPDs. Led by the IEO, there is evidence that UNDP is becoming more serious about organisational learning. It is taking steps and producing evaluative processes and products to foster more systematic learning from evaluations and critical reviews. The IEO now participates in the development of CPDs, which is expected to more systematically incorporate learning from evaluations into the CPD design process.

Box 6: How has UNDP demonstrated its operational flexibility in responding to COVID-19?

Between March and July 2020, UNDP made USD 30 million available through its Rapid Response Facility in support of the COVID-19 response. Its funding model allows for thematic flexibility, and during 2020 UNDP managed to re-programme USD 982 million. UNDP developed an internal COVID-19 dashboard that tracks fund allocation, expenditure and funding source. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the advantage of clustering transactional services, namely increased business continuity and operational resilience, as back-office functions are less location-bound and can be performed by other offices. Evidence from interviews suggests that COVID-19 has been an accelerating factor in the process of digitalisation and the use of the Global Policy Network (GPN) and Sparkblue as collaborative tools across the organisation. Evaluations attest that UNDP procedures are resilient and well suited to withstand shocks: "UNDP was particularly swift to adjust many of its business services, systems and procedures in response to COVID-19."

3.2. DEVELOPMENT/HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS

RESULTS

Achievement of relevant, inclusive and sustainable contributions to humanitarian and development results in an efficient manner.

Given the vast scope and breadth of its programmatic interventions in diverse contexts, there is mixed evidence of UNDP's development results. Evaluative evidence demonstrates relatively strong programmatic performance in three well-funded Signature Solution areas – poverty reduction, governance and environment – but this is less the case for resilience, energy and gender.

Whereas UNDP is making incremental progress on gender equality and women's empowerment, and is organising them more effectively, on balance, progress is limited and not commensurate with the status of gender equality as a Signature Solution. Gender mainstreaming is chronically under-resourced, suggesting a serious gap between policy intent and actual delivery. Evaluations are largely positive about UNDPs achievements regarding environmental sustainability and climate change, but point to the risk of dependence on vertical funds. Limited evidence was found of UNDP's performance in mainstreaming and protecting human rights.

UNDP's interventions are found to be (highly) relevant, responding to the expressed needs and priorities of partners. At the corporate level, UNDP has made relevant contributions to development results. However, especially in middle-income countries (MICs) and high-income countries (HICs), UNDP risks losing some of its relevance, and is constantly challenged to position itself strategically and demonstrate added value regarding its partners and other stakeholders. Cost-efficiency is not evaluated systematically, but evaluations conducted point to satisfactory performance. Timeliness, while also rarely assessed, is seen as a concern. Despite some successes, UNDP's performance in terms of sustainability of results remains unsatisfactory.

UNDP faces structural challenges to achieve relevant results in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner. These challenges include a fragmented portfolio of small-scale, isolated and unsustainable projects, with weak linkages to upstream policy and institutional capacity development; funding-driven priorities and actions; government-centric partnerships; ineffective funding mechanisms; and a need to further strengthen multidimensional approaches and intersectoral co-ordination. Many of these challenges reflect fundamental, systemic concerns in the development arena, which are pertinent to all development actors.

Between 2016 and 2020, UNDP had an active portfolio of between 4 700 and 5 000 projects in 170 countries – fragile states, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), least developed countries (LDCs), MICs, HICs and small island developing states (SIDS) – spread across the full humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus.

The sample of independent, external evaluations included evaluations of support to LDCs (2018), MICs (2019) and conflict affected states (2020); the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 and the Global and Regional Programmes; the evaluation of Climate Change Adaptation support (2020); and the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 (2021), all of which draw on a meta-analysis of corporate, thematic and country programme evaluations, audits and corporate reviews.

The evaluation evidence reviewed for this assessment reflects mainly on performance up to early 2020, except for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21, which also covered most of 2020. This is because IEO evaluations tend to take between 10 and 18 months to complete (from approval of terms of reference to Executive Board approval), and evaluations are retrospective. Nevertheless, it should be noted that an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of development results (KPIs 9-12) based on a relatively small sample of corporate (global, thematic), country programme and project-level evaluations will always be incomplete.

Across all four KPIs, UNDP's presentation of its results (in annual reports and mid-term reviews) is consistently more positive than those demonstrated by independent sources.

KPI 9: Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals

Score: 2.67

At the macro-level, the evaluation of UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 concluded that much of what UNDP had planned has taken root, and that UNDP is moving in the right direction, even though it was too early to assess the results of some new initiatives, especially those in the realm of innovation and integration.

While generally perceived as being relevant to the needs of countries and global commitments, evaluations report mixed performance. UNDP continues to suffer from several common structural weaknesses that, when combined, limit its effectiveness. These include "projectisation"; fragmented programming and portfolios; isolated, short-term focused interventions; lack of an overall strategy towards and (linkages to) upstream policy influence; and weaknesses in terms of multidimensional approaches and intersectoral co-ordination. Evaluations reveal that UNDP's portfolio is aimed more at addressing the symptoms of poverty and inequality than on tackling structural drivers, including governance challenges and needs. Growing fragmentation of the portfolio across all Signature Solutions, combined with high levels of earmarked funding based on donor priorities, risks harming UNDP's programmatic results.

Whereas gender equality and women's empowerment are making incremental progress and becoming more effectively organised, on balance, progress is limited and not commensurate with the status of gender equality as a Signature Solution. Evaluations consistently point to chronic under-resourcing of mainstreaming efforts to promote gender empowerment and women's equality. There is a distinct gap between UNDP's aspirations and actual performance, in large part because of inadequate resourcing and weaknesses in evidence gathering.

Based on the sampled evidence, UNDP's achievements regarding environmental sustainability and climate change are mostly satisfactory. Strong performance was demonstrated in a variety of areas, including positive evaluation results of UNDP's environmental project delivery under the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Through its upstream and downstream support, UNDP has helped build capacities of government agencies for actions in cross-sectoral disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. However, evaluations also conclude that UNDP is overly reliant on the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and GEF vertical funding streams. Here too, fragmentation of projects is seen as undermining UNDP's ability to play a greater policy role.

Overall, there is limited evaluative evidence available to assess whether UNDP has helped improve the protection of human rights and minorities. Where evaluative evidence does exist, on balance, the performance is satisfactory. This concerns targeted programming only, as no evaluative evidence was found on the mainstreaming of human rights and protection of minorities at large.

KPI 10: Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, as the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate

Score: 3.00

Overall, UNDP's interventions are viewed as (highly) relevant and as responding to the expressed needs and priorities of partners, which in most cases are national governments. Intervention designs are based on sound programming guidance, including context and problem analysis, needs assessments, and compliance with government priorities, policies and strategies. Governments rate UNDP's relevance higher than other development partners (non-governmental organisations, UN agencies and donors).

The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 concluded that, at the corporate level, UNDP had made relevant contributions to development results within the three broad development settings and Signature Solutions stipulated in the Strategic Plan. Similar conclusions were drawn in the evaluations of LDCs and MICs.

Although UNDP complies with its own programmatic design requirements, evidence from evaluations and reviews demonstrates that performance itself is more mixed. A meta-analysis of the 29 sampled evaluations shows that interventions are more relevant if they are well-informed based on proper context analysis; the result of a long and participatory planning process; well-aligned with ongoing government policy and programmes; adequately resourced; have a longer-term time horizon and continuity; responsive to short- and long-term needs; larger-scale; focused on establishing an upstream policy partnership; build government policy and capacity simultaneously; connect national and regional/local levels; flexible in the face of fluidity; well-sequenced; complementary to other development actors' interventions; well-coordinated; and build on UNDPs neutrality, global thought leadership and best practices.

Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) point to the risk of UNDP's declining relevance in MICs as their economies continue to grow. In both MICs and HICs, UNDP is constantly challenged to position itself strategically as a leading provider of development support and services, demonstrate added value, and operate at scale and in close partnership with other stakeholders. Here too, results tend to be mixed.

Evaluations criticise UNDP for not always addressing the root causes of national challenges and/or for selecting areas of work that are more likely to attract funding than for their organisational comparative advantage. This chimes with earlier findings regarding UNDP's decentralised business model, which showed that the size and structure of country offices is determined largely by its ability to mobilise resources. This opportunistic approach, in combination with high levels of earmarked funding based on donor priorities, leads to further fragmentation of the portfolio, thus harming UNDP's programmatic relevance and effectiveness.

KPI 11: Results are delivered efficiently Score: 2.50

Most of UNDP's ICPEs and corporate evaluations reviewed for this assessment do not explicitly address the cost-efficiency of development interventions as an evaluation criterion. The few that do conclude that these are mostly satisfactory, despite offering limited supporting evidence. Improvements in management efficiency ratios and administrative support, as well as improvements in programme management processes and instruments, were reported as having contributed to efficiency. For instance, the evaluation of UNDP's engagement in conflict affected states concluded that UNDP had improved its programme management processes and instruments for greater efficiency of country programmes, with the streamlining of surge deployment, fast-track finance processes and access to advisory services. In MICs, one of the arguments put forward by governments to engage with UNDP was its alleged efficient administrative support.

Nonetheless, evaluations did raise concerns with respect to programme and project-level efficiency, as evidenced in terms of fragmentation of projects (raised in all evaluations) and missed opportunities for joint approaches and working in partnership with other agencies in the UN system (noted in most evaluations). At the country level, evaluations identified a correlation between levels of (transaction cost) efficiency and levels of portfolio fragmentation, i.e. the more fragmented the portfolio, the less cost-efficient they become.

Looking at the efficiency of UNDP's performance as an "operational backbone", the 2018 evaluation of inter-agency operational services found that while UNDP had improved its administrative efficiency, it had underperformed in terms of cost recovery. However, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 is positive about the measures put in place to improve UNDP's operational backbone role, which have helped reduce management

costs, balance the budget, streamline processes and procedures, improve client orientation, and reduce the carbon footprint of UNDP's global operations.

The sample of evaluations and reviews offers limited evidence of (un-)timely implementation and achievement of results. Thematic and global evaluations ignore the matter completely, whereas evaluative evidence at the country and project level tends to lean towards unsatisfactory results.

KPI 12: Results are sustainable   `Score: 2.00`

Overall, UNDP's performance regarding the sustainability of results – i.e. to what extent benefits are likely to continue after the intervention completes – remains unsatisfactory. Sustainability is a constant challenge for UNDP, as each evaluation included in the sample demonstrates.

The sustainability of results depends very much on the extent to which UNDP has successfully leveraged partnerships at the global, regional and national level. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 underscores the importance of applying systemic approaches to the complex issues. Such an approach involves working in partnerships to address the multidimensionality of the challenges involved and, in the case of fragile and conflict-affected states, working across all dimensions of the triple nexus.

At the corporate level, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 concludes that UNDP has made concerted efforts to apply a systemic approach to promote collaborative partnerships to support and finance the SDGs; to integrate approaches more systemically for more balanced consideration of economic, social and environmental dimensions; and to mainstream the principle of leaving no one behind. It finds that UNDP is well positioned to increase its focus through leadership and contributions to inclusiveness and sustainability.

The previous MOPAN assessment already underscored the need to focus on areas where UNDP brings comparative advantage to achieve greater sustainability of results, and this remains valid. The Strategic Plan 2018-21 also states that the changes brought about through the reform of the UN development system compel UNDP to reposition itself with a more clearly articulated and focused value-added proposition, based on its comparative strengths.

At the programme and project level, evaluations see sustainability as a main concern. Despite some successes – including a focus on developing structures and systems to manage and co-ordinate policy making and its implementation at national and sub-national levels, which helped to institutionalise change processes, as well as contributions to strengthening institutions and reform processes – on the whole, evaluations are mostly critical about the prospects for the sustainability of UNDP's interventions.

A synthesis of the conclusions of the sampled global, thematic and country-level evaluations and reviews shows that interventions are likely to be less sustainable if they lack political acceptance; are not aligned with national policies and legal frameworks; are not properly informed by local context; face funding constraints and/or are dependent on donor funding; lack a systemic approach; apply too short timeframes; are too small; lack an exit strategy; are run in parallel to national structures; are insufficiently co-ordinated with other development actors; skew market forces; have insufficiently built/lack national capacity; and occur in conditions of political instability.

By contrast, interventions are likely to be more sustainable if they connect upstream (national level) policy making with downstream (local) implementation partnerships; involve the creation of structures and systems to better manage and co-ordinate interventions; apply an integrated, longer-term perspective, with a clear and well-designed exit strategy; are backed up by the strong political commitment of the government and viable financial models for future funding; and are aligned with national policies and embedded within legal frameworks.

ABOUT THIS ASSESSMENT

About this assessment

4.1. THE MOPAN APPROACH

The approach to MOPAN assessments has evolved over time to adjust to the needs of the multilateral system. The MOPAN 3.1 Approach, applied in this assessment, is the latest iteration.

MOPAN conducted Annual Surveys from 2003 to 2008 and used a methodology titled the MOPAN Common Approach during 2009-14. The MOPAN 3.0 Approach was first adopted for the 2015-16 cycle of assessments.

In 2019, MOPAN 3.0 was relabelled as MOPAN 3.0* to acknowledge a change in how ratings (and their corresponding colours) were aligned with the scores defined for indicators. Compared to previous cycles conducted under MOPAN 3.0, the threshold for ratings was raised to reflect increasing demands for organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring remained unaffected.

Starting in 2020, all assessments have used the MOPAN 3.1 Methodology,[5] which was endorsed by MOPAN members in early 2020. The framework draws on the international standards and reference points, as described in the MOPAN Methodology Manual. The approach differs from the previous 3.0 approach in the following ways:

- Integration of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda into the framework.

- Two new micro-indicators (MIs) for the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment (SEA/SH).

- The incorporation of elements measuring key dimensions of reform of the UN Development System (UNDS Reform).

- A reshaped relationship management performance area, with updated and clearer key performance indicators (KPIs) 5 and 6, which better reflect coherence and which focus on how partnerships operate on the ground in support of partner countries (KPI 5), and how global partnerships are managed to leverage the organisation's resources (KPI 6).

- A refocused and streamlined results component.

- A change to how ratings (and their corresponding colours) are applied, based on scores defined for indicators. Compared to previous cycles conducted under MOPAN 3.0, the threshold for a rating has been raised to reflect the increasing demands for organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring are unaffected. This approach was already implemented in MOPAN 3.0* (2019 cycle).

Table 2 lists the performance areas and indicators used in MOPAN 3.1.

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5   MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, 2020 Assessment Cycle, http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf.

Table 2: Performance areas and key performance indicators

Aspect	Performance area	Key performance indicator (KPI)
Organisational effectiveness	Strategic management	**KPI 1**: Organisational architecture and financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results
		KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda principles
	Operational management	**KPI 3**: Operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility
		KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable financial transparency and accountability
	Relationship management	**KPI 5**: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility in partnerships
		KPI 6: Working in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources
	Performance management	**KPI 7**: Strong and transparent results focus, explicitly geared to function
		KPI 8: Evidence-based planning and programming applied
Development/ humanitarian effectiveness	Results	**KPI 9**: Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals
		KPI 10: Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, as the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate
		KPI 11: Results are delivered efficiently
		KPI 12: Results are sustainable

Source: MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, 2020 Assessment Cycle,
http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf

4.2. APPLYING MOPAN 3.1 TO UNDP

Interpretations and adaptations to the methodology

This assessment has used MOPAN 3.1 Methodology,[6] but the KPIs have been interpreted so as to be meaningful given UNDP's specific mandate.

The MOPAN 3.1 methodology was applied in its entirety, without any adjustments. It has been interpreted in ways that reflect the realities of UNDP's mandate, operating context and systems. Governance is at the heart of UNDP's policies, strategies and interventions. It is one of UNDP's six Signature Solutions and an integral part of the programming across the organisation. Because governance is more than a cross-cutting theme, MI 2.4 has been replaced with a Box 4 in Chapter 2. Governance is also captured in all relevant KPIs and referenced as needed.

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6   MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, 2020 Assessment Cycle, http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf

Lines of evidence

This assessment relies on three lines of evidence: a document review, a partner survey, and staff interviews and consultations. The assessment team collected and reviewed a significant body of evidence, as shown in Figure 14.

- **Document review:** This process covered 246 publicly available documents published between 2008 and 2021, including management reports and evaluations, as well as guidelines and policies that are "current and in force". They were limited to those in final form (not draft versions), recognised by management, and available in English.

  Out of the 246 documents reviewed, a sample of 29 independent evaluations and corporate reviews from the current strategic period were included to assess development results for KPIs 9-12 (Annex B).

- **Online survey:** The survey, conducted between 4 February and 15 March 2021, was designed to gather both perception data and an understanding of practice from a diverse set of well-informed partners of UNDP. Out of 1 727 participants, 501 responses were received from 10 partner categories in 10 sampled countries: Bangladesh, Cuba, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Mali, Serbia, Timor Leste and Uruguay. The assessment analysed both quantitative and qualitative data from the UNDP partner survey. These were used for triangulation purposes to corroborate or challenge other sources of evidence. Please refer to Annex C for further details of the survey.

- **Interviews and consultations:** The MOPAN assessment team interviewed 154 UNDP staff members from 35 units at the organisation's headquarters in New York, regional hubs and country offices.

  UNDP provided feedback on the draft interim document review and offered additional documentation to update the review and address gaps before the review fed into the overall analysis. The team participated in an informative call with MOPAN members convened by the MOPAN Secretariat in December 2020, and another informal call with the Institutional Lead representatives from the United Kingdom and Switzerland in March 2021 to discuss preliminary findings.

  At the request of MOPAN members, the assessment team prepared a preliminary note with a summary of assessment findings in May 2021. These preliminary findings were shared with UNDP and MOPAN members to inform Executive Board negotiations on the UNDP 2022-25 Strategic Plan, taking place in June 2021.

  General information about the sequence and details related to these evidence lines, the overall analysis, and scoring and rating process as applied to UNDP can be found in the MOPAN 3.1 methodology.

FIGURE 14: LINES OF EVIDENCE

Document review	**Interviews and consultations**	**Online survey**
244 documents including management reports, independent evaluations and corporate reviews from the current strategic period.	154 UNDP staff members from 35 units at the organisation's headquarters in New York, Regional Hubs and Country Offices.	501 responses from 10 different partner categories, in 10 sampled countries: Bangladesh, Cuba, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Mali, Serbia, Timor Leste and Uruguay.
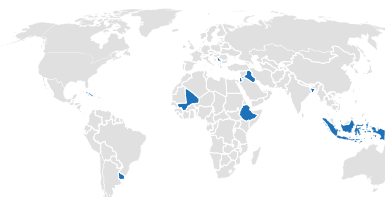
4.3. LIMITATIONS

Other than the inability to visit UNDP headquarters in New York and meet with UNDP interlocutors and Institutional Leads in person due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the assessment encountered no significant limitations in conducting the review. The assessment team was able to select interviewees freely and was given broad access to UNDP documentation. UNDP worked hard to facilitate the assessment. As some aspects of UNDP's strategies and corresponding effect on its business models are relatively new and/or still in the design stage, the assessment team was unable to assess progress implementation across all levels of the organisation.

The assessment has involved the application of a methodology designed primarily for multilateral organisations engaged in country programming to an organisation whose primary roles are wider ranging and include global thought leadership, UNDS Reform support, crisis prevention and response across the full triple nexus spectrum, and operational service delivery.

As the largest, highly decentralised UN organisation, UNDP operates through a large number of offices at the regional and country level, as well as representation offices and global policy centres. While the assessors interviewed several staff working in regional bureaux and several regional hubs and country offices, the inability of the team to conduct interviews at representation offices and global policy centres and more UNDP regional and field offices limited the assessment's evidence collection.
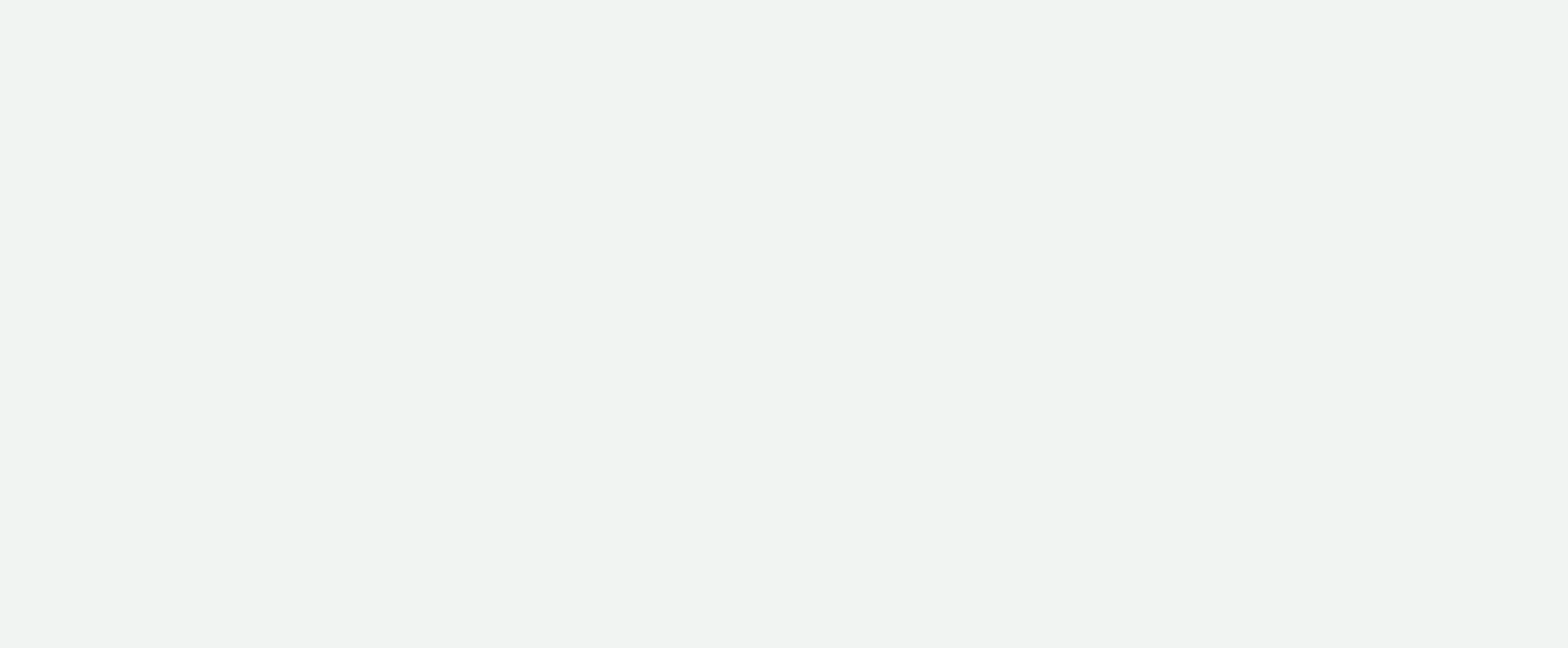
ANNEXES
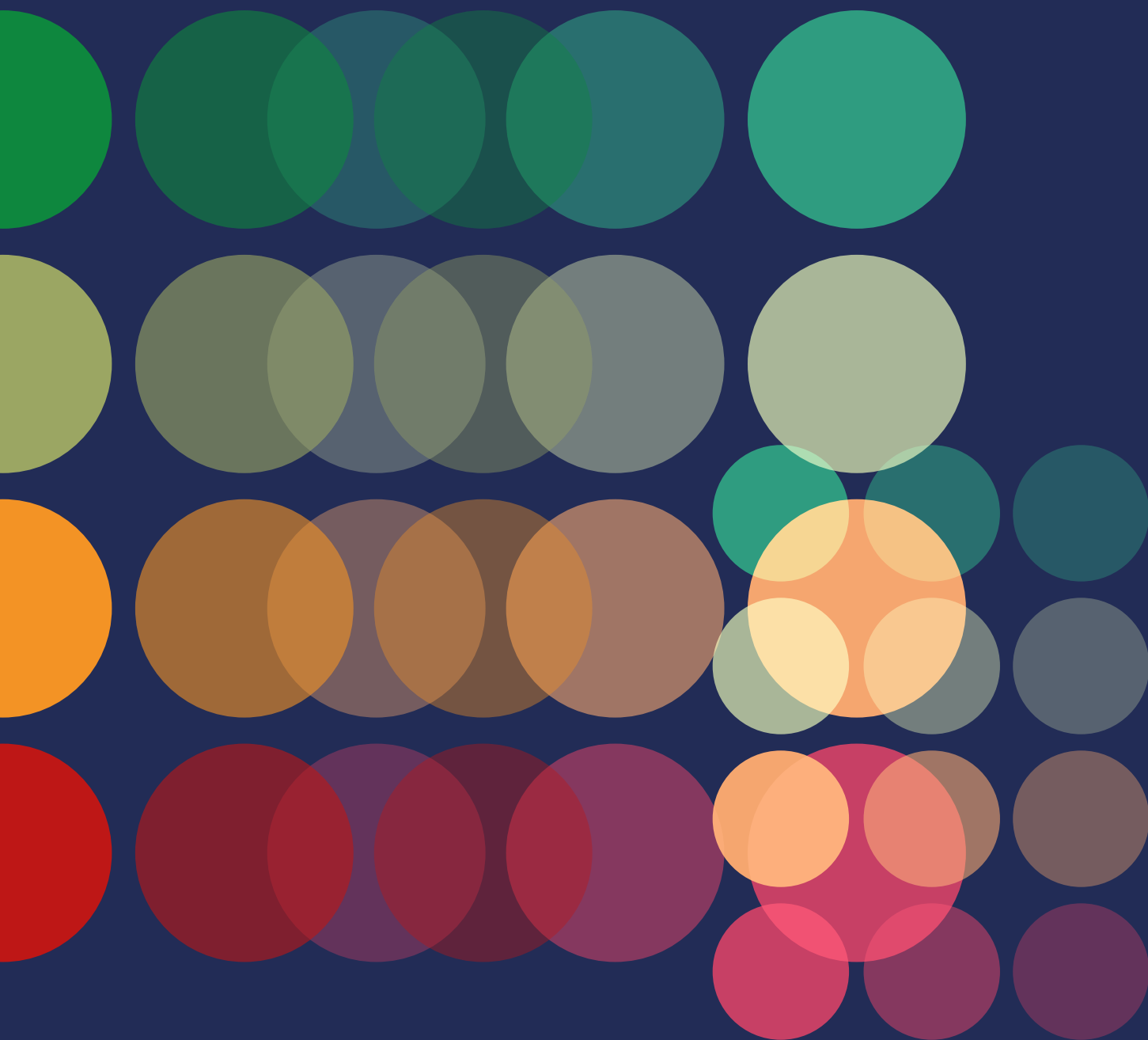
Annex A. Performance ratings and analysis table

METHODOLOGY FOR SCORING AND RATING

The approach to scoring and rating under MOPAN 3.1 is described in the 2020 Methodology Manual,[7] which can be found on MOPAN's website.

Each of the 12 key performance indicators (KPIs) contains several micro-indicators (MIs), which vary in number. The KPI rating is calculated by taking the average of the ratings of its constituent MIs.

Scoring of KPIs 1-8

The scoring of KPIs 1-8 is based upon an aggregated scoring of the MIs. Each MI contains several elements, which vary in number, that represent international good practice. Taking the average of the constituent scores per element, a score is then calculated per MI. The same logic is pursued at aggregation to the KPI level, to ensure a consistent approach. Taking the average of the constituent scores per MI, an aggregated score is then calculated per KPI.

Scoring of KPIs 9-12

The scoring of KPIs 9-12 is based upon a meta-analysis of evaluations and performance information, rated at the MI level and aggregated to the KPI level. For KPI 9, results against the mandate and contribution to cross-cutting results are given equal weight. KPIs 9-12 assess results achieved as assessed in evaluations and annual performance reporting from the organisations.

Rating scales

Whenever scores are aggregated, rating scales are used to translate scores into ratings that summarise the assessment across KPIs and MIs. The rating scale used under MOPAN 3.1 is shown below.

Highly satisfactory (3.51-4.00)　　　　**High evidence confidence**

Satisfactory (2.51-3.50)　　　　**Medium evidence confidence**

Unsatisfactory (1.51-2.50)　　　　**Low evidence confidence**

Highly Unsatisfactory (0.00-1.50)

No evidence / Not applicable

A score of "N/E" means "no evidence" and indicates that the assessment team could not find any evidence but was not confident of whether or not there was evidence to be found. The team assumes that "no evidence" does not necessarily mean that the element is not present (which would result in a zero score).

Elements rated N/E are excluded from any calculation of the average. A significant number of N/E scores in a report indicates an assessment limitation (see the Limitations section at the beginning of the report). A note indicating "N/A" means that an element is considered to be "not applicable". This usually owes to the organisation's specific nature.

7　MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, 2020 Assessment Cycle, http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf

UNDP SCORING OVERVIEW

Strategic management

KPI 1: Organisational architecture and financial framework
- 1.1 Long-term vision
- 1.2 Organisational architecture
- 1.3 Supports normative frameworks
- 1.4 Financial framework
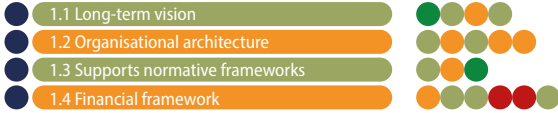
KPI 2: Cross-cutting issues
- 2.1 Gender equality
- 2.2 Environment
- 2.3 Human rights
- 2.4 Other cross-cutting issues
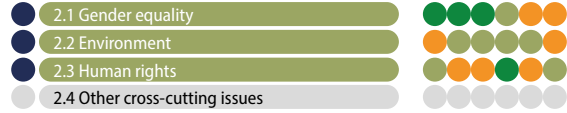
Operational management

KPI 3: Resources support, relevance and agility
- 3.1 Resources aligned to functions
- 3.2 Resource mobilisation
- 3.3 Decentralised decision making
- 3.4 Performance-based human resources
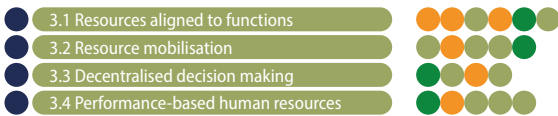
KPI 4: Cost and value consciousness, financial transparency
- 4.1 Transparent decision making
- 4.2 Disbursement as planned
- 4.3 Results-based budgeting
- 4.4 Audit
- 4.5 Control mechanisms
- 4.6 Anti-fraud procedures
- 4.7 SEA prevention / response
- 4.8 SH prevention / response

Relationship management

KPI 5: Planning / intervention design support, relevance and agility
- 5.1 Alignment to country
- 5.2 Context analysis
- 5.3 Capacity analysis
- 5.4 Risk management
- 5.5 Cross-cutting issues in intervention design
- 5.6 Sustainability
- 5.7 Implementation speed
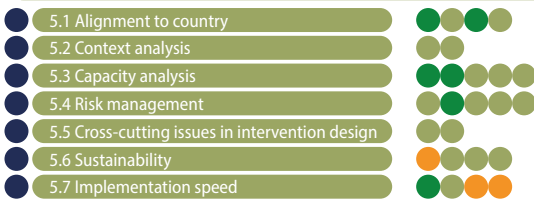
KPI 6: Work in coherent partnerships
- 6.1 Agility
- 6.2 Comparative advantage
- 6.3 Use country systems
- 6.4 Synergies
- 6.5 Co-ordination
- 6.6 Information sharing
- 6.7 Accountability to beneficiaries
- 6.8 Joint assessments
- 6.9 Knowledge
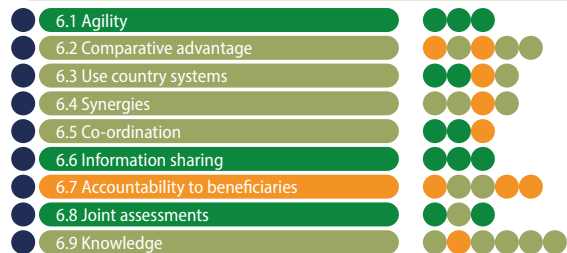
Performance management

KPI 7: Transparent results focus, explicitly geared to function
- 7.1 RBM applied
- 7.2 RBM in strategies
- 7.3 Evidence-based targets
- 7.4 Effective monitoring systems
- 7.5 Performance data applied

KPI 8: Evidence-based planning and programming applied
- 8.1 Independent evaluation function
- 8.2 Evaluation coverage
- 8.3 Evaluation quality
- 8.4 Evidence-based design
- 8.5 Poor performance tracked
- 8.6 Follow-up systems
- 8.7 Uptake of lessons

Results

KPI 9: Achievement of results
- 9.1 Achieves objectives
- 9.2 Gender equality / empowerment
- 9.3 Environment / climate change
- 9.4 Human rights
- 9.5 Other cost-cutting issues
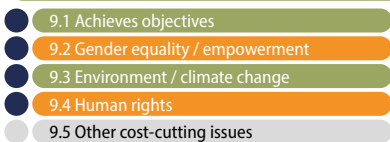
KPI 10: Relevance to partners
- 10.1 Interventions relevant to needs

KPI 11: Results delivered efficiently
- 11.1 Results are cost-efficient
- 11.2 Results achieved on time

KPI 12: Results are sustainable
- 12.1 Benefits likely to continue

Legend:

- High confidence
- Medium confidence
- Little to no confidence

- Highly satisfactory
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Highly unsatisfactory
- No evidence/Not applicable

Key performance indicator

Evidence confidence

Micro-indicator

Element 1
Element 2
Element 3
Element 4
Element 5
Element 6
Element 7
Element 8
Element 9

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS TABLE

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Clear strategic direction geared to key functions, intended results and the integration of relevant cross-cutting priorities

KPI 1: Organisational architecture and financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results	KPI score
Satisfactory	2.64

UNDP publishes four-year strategic plans, and the strategic plan 2018-21 is fully aligned with the 2030 Development Agenda. UNDP's long-term vision to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms is based on clear analysis and aligns with the 2030 Development Agenda. However, its role in bringing about this vision appears less clear, its comparative advantage is not sufficiently articulated, and the lack of an effective theory of change limits the strategic plan's utility in implementation. The formulation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 coincided with a period of tremendous change in UNDP. The resulting plan is less an operationalisation of the organisation's vision than a "licence to operate", as described by senior management.

UNDP's business model puts the emphasis on "how" results are delivered and less on "what" is delivered. At the country level, the operating model firmly anchors the responsibility for results with country offices; however, no effective ownership of corporate results and no mechanism for collaborative achievement of results exist. Several attempts to reset the operating model have been made during the review period, but at heart UNDP remains opportunistic, with an eye on country-based resource mobilisation and project implementation. Its staffing, systems and structures are more geared to deliver on its operational backbone role than its policy integrator role. It is too early to judge if the new emphasis on integration, innovation and digitalisation in the strategic plan will be successful, partially because evaluations found these concepts still require more clarity to be understood by country offices.

UNDP's overall structure, much more than its staffing, has remained stable for the last 20 years and is mostly geared to deliver on its role as operational backbone to the UNDS and the implementation of projects. The transfer of the Resident Coordinator (RC) function triggered the most profound transformation in UNDP since its creation. UNDP encompasses an impressive number of personnel with rich policy expertise. The creation of the Global Policy Network (GPN) has not yet unlocked expertise stuck in global policy centres and country offices, and UNDP has not yet been able to fully grow into the role of policy integrator for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The financial framework is regularly reviewed, but UNDP's Executive Board only controls the steadily diminishing core (regular) resource budget directly. Although the integrated budget underpins UNDP's strategic plan, UNDP has not made the shift from "funding to financing" that its strategy calls for, and has accumulated USD 9.4 billion in unspent resources based on its financial statement. The organisation is still overly reliant on a group of ten donors for over 80% of its core (regular) resources, with at best a stagnating trend in receipts. UNDP's funding windows are largely irrelevant to its resource mix due to a mismatch between the window structure and donor priorities. UNDP has championed the use of multi-partner trust funds and hosted the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office on behalf of the UN development system since 2003; however, its use of pooled funding is still below target.

UNDP has developed a strong culture of co-operation on administrative and advisory functions; however, the pursuit of results is done on a country-by-country basis, with little meaningful cross-country collaboration. UNDP remains the largest provider of operational services in the UN system and played an essential role in underwriting the UN reforms through its field-based organisation. While currently no other agency has either the capacity or the inclination to be the UN development system's service provider, evaluations question if UNDP is still well served by putting such heavy emphasis on its role as "operational backbone". UNDP's strong decentralisation practices are both a strong advantage, for instance with regards to responsiveness, and a shortcoming, for instance with regards to the pursuit of cross-border or regional results.

Thanks to its decentralised nature and the early emphasis on digitalisation and innovation, the organisation was well placed to take the lead on the pandemic's socio-economic impact and to support governments in their short- and medium-term response. Its operational flexibility and speed allowed for the re-programming and mobilisation of USD 982 million of funds (USD 103 million of which were core resources), and its global and regional shared service centres ensured a degree of organisational resilience that "kept the lights on" in many countries. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 affirms this: "UNDP has demonstrated a new dynamism, especially in response to the COVID pandemic."

MI 1.1 Strategic plan and intended results based on a clear long-term vision and analysis of comparative advantage in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: A publicly available strategic plan (or equivalent) contains a long-term vision	4
Element 2: The vision is based on a clear analysis and articulation of comparative advantage	3
Element 3: The strategic plan operationalises the vision and defines intended results	2
Element 4: The strategic plan is reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance and attention to risks	3
MI 1.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: **UNDP publishes four-year strategic plans and is guided by a long-term vision to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms; however, its role in bringing about this vision appears less clear.** The review period covers two strategic plan periods, 2014-17 and 2018-21. Both plans were presented to the Executive Board and are published online. Strategic Plan 2014-17 captured the vision as "Helping countries to achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion", while Strategic Plan 2018-21 intended "to help countries to achieve sustainable development by eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development and building resilience to crises and shock". The purpose of a vision is to communicate the aspirations to external stakeholders, and to steer internal stakeholders involved in the pursuit of results. Data from UNDP's 2020 partnership survey suggest that UNDP is largely successful, with 60% and 40% of respondents recognising UNDP's contribution in the areas of governance and poverty, respectively. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found that it "presented an exploratory vision for the organisation and a license to operate, rather than an (operational) detailed strategy". Strategic Plan 2018-21 describes two roles: 1) "UNDP as integrator", spearheading a multidisciplinary "whole-of-society" response in line with the SDGs; and 2) "UNDP as operational backbone", offering an operational platform, particularly to other UN entities at the country level. What is missing is UNDP's traditional role as project implementor, which is what the MO is best known and adapted for. UNDP's partnership survey for 2020 reveals that 75% of partners saw UNDP best placed to support governments with development implementation, while only 51% saw UNDP best placed to provide multisector policy support. Particularly programme governments see UNDP first and foremost as programme and project implementors (close to 80%), while policy advice and on-the-ground presence were less recognised (by 30% and 14%, respectively) as important features. The Strategic Plan 2018-21 describes three development settings that should guide the development of country programmes. The three development settings are not per se country typologies (e.g. least developed countries, middle-income countries, crisis settings) and could be present in a single country. Hence, their practical utility for country programming is unclear, and the development settings do not tie back to UNDP's vision.	1-2, 4-7, 15, 48, 67, 86, 95-97, 133, 182, 199, 200, 207, 214

Element 2: UNDP's long-term vision is based on clear analysis and aligns with the 2030 Development Agenda; however, its comparative advantage is not sufficiently articulated.
UNDP annually publishes the Human Development Report (HDR), which is widely regarded as an analytical flagship product, according to the evaluation of the strategic plan 2014-17. The analysis contained in the HDR, as well as national HDRs and other analytical studies, clearly impacted UNDP's vision and strategic planning. Interviews revealed that the planning process for the Strategic Plan 2018-21 considered four additional sets of data: 1) past results and lessons; 2) feedback from member states and partners; 3) the aspirations of UNDP leadership; and 4) nuancing by technical teams and staff feedback.

UNDP's comparative advantage is primarily presented as its presence on the ground, its impartiality and its longstanding relationships with partners, which is frequently repeated in speeches of senior managers. The COVID-19 response attests to the fact that physical presence can indeed be a comparative advantage; however, it is at odds with UNDP's focus on digitalisation, innovation, #NextGen remote service delivery models and partners' perception. In the 2020 UNDP partnership survey, about 50% and 38% of respondents regarded UNDP as relevant in digital transformation and innovation, respectively, while just under 67% of respondents valued UNDP's programme and project implementation. Similar results were also reported in the MOPAN partner survey.

According to recent evaluations, many of the key concepts contained in the Strategic Plan 2018-21 are too vague (e.g. integration, Signature Solutions) and hence cannot be effectively used by country offices to guide country programme formulation and the use of UNDP's new global and country platforms. While UNDP has been operating across a wide spectrum of different country contexts, it is not equally successful at articulating its role and added value everywhere. In particular, its programmatic offering to middle-income countries is not specific and consistent enough. With regards to its operational backbone role, evaluations conclude that "UNDP can provide nearly all services to UN entities from nearly all country offices, and this is a competitive advantage". However, they question whether UNDP should continue playing this role.

1-2, 4-7, 15, 48, 67, 86, 95-97, 133, 182, 199, 200, 207, 214

Element 3: UNDP regards its strategic plan as a "licence to operate", but the plan provides little effective steer to its country offices in the operationalisation of country programmes.
UNDP experienced tremendous changes during the current planning cycle. The formulation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 coincided with the preparation of the latest round of UN reforms, including the "delinking" of the Resident Coordinator (RC) function from UNDP. A new Administrator took over UNDP only months before the first draft of Strategic Plan 2018-21 was scheduled to be presented to the Executive Board, which led to the postponement of the final presentation and approval of the strategic plan at a special session of the Executive Board in November 2017. In 2015, UNDP experienced its lowest level of core (regular) contributions in its history, and the organisation faced budgetary pressures going into the new planning cycle. Consequently, UNDP primarily saw the Strategic Plan 2018-21 as a flexible "licence to operate" and to be "reform-ready" in the face of unprecedented uncertainty, as was confirmed in interviews.

Despite its complicated origin, the Strategic Plan 2018-21 presents a significant departure from earlier strategic plans. The number of results was reduced from 7 outcomes and 39 outputs grouped into 3 areas of work in Strategic Plan 2014-17, to 3 outcomes and 6 "Signature Solutions" applicable to 3 development contexts in Strategic Plan 2018-21. Both strategic plans were supported by integrated results and resource frameworks, which – despite the significant difference in results architecture between the two plans – retained a surprisingly high number of indicators. Interviews revealed that the retention of indicators was largely driven by a desire to preserve comparability and time-series data, and less because of a fit between results and indicators. While UNDP has

a long history of spearheading results-based management and results-based budgeting, recent evaluations have revealed significant systemic and protracted deficiencies in these areas.

UNDP's country programme documents are formulated in line with national planning processes, as per the Busan principles of national ownership. The implication is that country programmes typically lag two to three years behind the approval of a new strategic plan. Even then, country programmes are designed purely based on local theories of change with their own results and indicators as part of UN common country programming processes. Hence, it is less that the strategic plan influences the design of country programmes, but rather the reverse, whereby the totality of country programmes influences the direction of the strategic plan.

Element 4: UNDP's strategic plan is regularly reviewed in terms of results and resources, but these reviews trigger only marginal change. For the last three planning cycles UNDP has presented a mid-term review of its strategic plan to the Executive Board, usually in conjunction with its annual report on progress against the strategic plan. The Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) is the primary monitoring tool for the strategic plan. It captures reporting by country offices against their country programmes though the Results-Oriented Annual Report (ROAR). The ROAR exercise is based on country-specific results and indicators that are mapped to corporate results contained in the strategic plan.

Even though the strategic plan is reviewed mid-term, the actions triggered by that review are less apparent. The mid-term review presented in 2020 highlighted many indicators that far exceeded their cumulative target, even in areas that received significantly less resources than the plan had anticipated; however, it appears that the consequence was not any reallocation of funding, changes in resource mobilisation to support underfunded results, or programmatic direction to country offices to focus on neglected results, but instead a mechanistic adjustment of the indicator target. In addition, the evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan highlighted that the indicators presented in the IRRF do not accurately track UNDP's contribution to impact at the global level, and can even be considered misleading regarding UNDP's contribution to progress.

The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan was published in April 2020 and therefore did not account for the effects of COVID-19. However, the pandemic presented UNDP with an opportunity to better outline its comparative advantage and role. The organisation's response was based upon its integrator role and large operational and technical capacity. In particular, the second phase of UNDP's COVID-19 response focused on four areas to support recovery that align with UNDP's key capacities as set out in the strategic plan, namely: governance, social protection, green economy, and digital disruption and innovation.

1-2, 4-7, 15, 48, 67, 86, 95-97, 133, 182, 199, 200, 207, 214

MI 1.1 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 1.2: Organisational architecture congruent with a clear long-term vision and associated operating model	Score
Overall MI rating	Unsatisfactory
Overall MI score	2.40
Element 1: The organisational architecture is congruent with the strategic plan	3
Element 2: The operating model supports implementation of the strategic plan	2
Element 3: The operating model is reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance	3
Element 4: The operating model allows for strong co-operation across the organisation	2
Element 5: The operating model clearly delineates responsibilities for results	2

MI 1.2 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: UNDP's overall structure, much more than its staffing, has remained stable over the last 20 years and is mostly geared to deliver on its role as operational backbone to the UN development system and the implementation of projects. UNDP is a highly decentralised entity headquartered in New York with regional and field presence covering 170 countries and territories. The headquarters is composed of nine bureaux, including five regional bureaux, which oversee and service country offices programmatically, and four central bureaux fulfilling corporate functions. Each regional bureau in New York also maintains a regional hub with a specific, non-standardised setup and organisation. UNDP maintains two global shared service centres, in Copenhagen on human resource administration and in Kuala Lumpur on financial services. The overall bureau structure has remained remarkably stable over the last 20 years, apart from the abolition of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery in 2014, and the subsequent establishment of the UNDP Crisis Bureau in 2018. In 2018, UNDP embarked on setting up the Global Policy Network (GPN), which is not a structure or organisational unit (no staff or resources are assigned to the GPN), but a confederation of units that aspires to eventually encompass all of UNDP. The GPN is "anchored" by the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support and the Crisis Bureau, and all offices or even individual staff members are encouraged to see themselves as part of the GPN. Interviews have stressed that the GPN is not a brand or a label; instead, it is an attempt to "integrate UNDP" so that it would be able to deliver integrated solutions in response to the SDGs. In particular, the GPN is supposed to help shift incentive structures away from mobilising resources for offices to delivering integrated solutions, and to lift UNDP's level of sophistication from project administration to more advanced policy advice. In UNDP's own assessment, the GPN has had a rocky start, but early examples of co-operation among different units on policy matters are cited. However, most refer to co-operation among units in a reporting relationship (vertical), so it is less clear how successful the GPN is in fostering horizontal co-operation among offices. The recent evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan highlighted that although the communities of practice established through the GPN are considered useful for knowledge sharing, the GPN's technical infrastructure is not yet fully in place, the concept is not fully understood throughout the organisation, the GPN is not capitalising on country office or global policy centre expertise, and practical benefits have not yet been realised at the country level. On the administrative side, UNDP has been significantly more successful in establishing organisation-wide collaboration. Particularly the global shared service centres have professionalised human resource administration and financial services and have freed up resources in country offices. The ongoing "clustering exercise" is an attempt to further lift operational, non-standardised services, such as procurement, out of individual country offices and to "cluster" them at a sub-regional level. The goal is to remain close to the operational reality on the ground, while at the same time realising efficiencies due to scale and scope. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated another advantage of clustering, namely increased business continuity and operational resilience as back-office functions are less location-bound and can be performed by other offices. All this depends on modern information technology (IT) infrastructure, and UNDP has invested in a new cloud-based enterprise resource planning system, Atlas, that will be launched in 2022. UNDP is the largest provider of services to over 80 UN entities, and in many regards anticipated the UN reforms issued in 2018. Its Copenhagen Service Centre, focused on human resource administration, was created in 2003, and since 2004 UNDP has maintained service agreements	1, 2, 7-8, 24, 37, 39, 67-68, 70, 86, 95, 97-98, 128, 140, 159, 190, 214

with UN entities on procurement, payment, IT, human resources and security services worldwide. Previously, services were provided in a decentralised, ad hoc fashion by each office. UNDP's largest challenges in service provision are its ability to recover the cost-of-service provision and the variable quality of services, particularly for services performed in a decentralised fashion. The Evaluation of Inter-agency Operational Services found that from 2010-2017 UNDP only partially recovered the cost of providing agencies' services, recovering an average of roughly USD 53 million per year, which amounts to less than 10% of the total amount that UNDP recovers for implementing its own development projects.

Element 2: UNDP's business model puts the emphasis on "how" results are delivered and not on "what". Its staffing, systems and structures are more geared to deliver on its operational backbone role than its integrator role(s). The Strategic Plan 2018-21 defines the business model as "the combination of systems, processes, instruments, partnerships and financing that effectively and efficiently support the delivery of programmes and projects". Its emphasis on improving the business model through performance and innovation further attests to the fact that the business model is mostly about performance (the "how") and not results (the "what" UNDP is doing).

The setup of the innovation facility in 2014, roughly 90 accelerator labs in the years since 2019 and the Strategic Innovation Unit in 2020 were all attempts to rebalance the operating model to be more in line with the aspirations of the strategic plans. While the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found it too early to consider results, the accelerator lab network has generated greater exposure for social innovation and digital technologies. At the same time, the roughly 180 people employed in accelerator labs represent barely 1% of UNDP's workforce. Out of a total workforce of 19 000 people, close to 3 000 are in the general service category, and close to 10 000 are service contract holders in the field. With half of its workforce consisting of short-term personnel, in addition to the large number of administrative support staff, it stands to reason that UNDP is better geared to its operational service and project implementation roles than upstream integrated policy advice and being an innovation catalyst.

1, 2, 7-8, 24, 37, 39, 67-68, 70, 86, 95, 97-98, 128, 140, 159, 190, 214

Nevertheless, UNDP has a significant staff complement of policy advisors, particularly aligned with the implementation of vertical funds from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Fund (GFATM). The resources from vertical funds are highly earmarked and non-fungible and account for 66%, 53% and 28% of funding for Signature Solutions 4, 5 and 3, respectively. While these resources – and the projects they fund – fit UNDP's strategic plan, it is noteworthy that interviews revealed that they primarily deliver on results defined by the funding source. Direct support to governments in project implementation is another important aspect of the business model, as UNDP receives about USD 1 billion in government cost-sharing per year. While less prominent in the strategic plan, government cost sharing is a major feature of UNDP's decentralised operating model, and is aligned with the organisational makeup at country level.

Element 3: Several reviews of UNDP's operating model and organisational architecture have delivered little tangible change. Strategic Plan 2018-21 very explicitly affirmed the need for continuous improvement of the business model, and the mid-term review reported on progress in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP experienced several change processes during the review period, all of which included reviews of its operating model. The structural review of 2013/2014 came at the tail-end of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) era and was intended to position UNDP for the new development agenda that the organisation actively helped to shape, not least through its online consultations. A key feature of the structural review was to decentralise policy functions from headquarters to the regions so that they can better service country offices, and to cluster back-office functions from country offices to regional hubs to gain efficiencies. At the same

time, policy teams were reshuffled to remove silos and create greater interdisciplinarity. However, the net result was that many policy functions had to be completely rebuilt. The most extreme example is the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, which was abolished in 2014. A Crisis Response Unit was then established in the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support in 2014, prior to the creation of the UNDP Crisis Bureau in 2018.

At the country level, past criticism of UNDP's operating model has focused on its "scattered presence". However, emergencies from Yemen to Ukraine have meant that partners turned to UNDP for programmatic and operational support. While humanitarian organisations might describe their presence model as "first in, last out", UNDP consistently emphasised the permanence of its presence. Hence, the "delinking" of the RC function did not trigger a more profound reconsideration of presence, and indeed UNDP pushed back on any notion that its comparative advantage would be clearer in low-income countries. Country offices were also spared any systematic reviews because they each tend to operate like a franchise. For most, resources allocated by headquarters are negligible due to dwindling core (regular) resources. Instead, they largely rely on the entrepreneurial spirit of the office and its management to secure the cost for premises and infrastructure ("Government Contributions to Local Office Cost [GLOC]" amounted to USD 18 million in 2019), to mobilise resources for programmes from government and local donors, and to finance administration and operation through cost recovery (USD 256 million from donor contributions and USD 445 million from UN entities). Hence, the structure and size of each country office is primarily determined by its ability to attract resources, and not by any corporate business model.

Element 4: UNDP has developed a strong culture of co-operation across the organisation on administrative and advisory functions; however, the pursuit of results is done on a country-by-country basis, with little meaningful cross-country collaboration. UNDP's strong decentralised culture implies that its country offices operate more like the spokes of a wheel – all touch their own piece of ground independent from the others – than as a true network. Having said that, strong collaboration among country offices is primarily evident in relatively homogeneous regions with shared challenges and similar development contexts, as is the case with Spanish-speaking middle-income countries in Latin America. Solutions to programme and policy challenges quickly circulate among well-connected individuals. Even across regions and between headquarters and country offices, collaboration on policy and operational issues is encouraged, for instance through temporary assignments of personnel in line with the People for 2030 strategy. UNDP has made heavy investments in modern collaboration software and tools. Moderated discussion platforms on UNDP's SparkBlue (its digital engagement platform) allow for almost real-time exchange on integrated policy solutions across all SDGs. Still, the evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan found that "the GPN infrastructure is currently not geared to capitalise on the expertise that resides in country offices". However, evidence from interviews did suggest that COVID-19 had been an accelerating factor in the process of digitalisation and the use of the GPN and SparkBlue as collaborative tools across the organisation.

While a lot of knowledge circulates throughout UNDP, little co-operation exists on results. Largely, this is because the results in each country programme are conceived and delivered independently. No mechanism exists to balance out capacities and resources among units or to assign the delivery of a result to another unit. Each country programme exists in its own universe, as the strategic plan contains no guidance on how corporate results could be jointly pursued. Thus, each office is largely dependent on assets that it controls for its delivery, aside from cursory policy advice from regional and global units they receive upon request.

1, 2, 7-8, 24, 37, 39, 67-68, 70, 86, 95, 97-98, 128, 140, 159, 190, 214

Element 5: At the country level the operating model anchors the responsibility for results with country offices; however, no effective ownership of corporate results and no mechanism for collaborative achievement of results exists at the corporate level. UNDP's accountability framework supports performance and accountability for programming and management. Indeed, the accountability framework, the internal control framework and the system of delegated authority go to great lengths to establish responsibility for **processes**; however, the responsibility and steer for programme **results** is less apparent at the corporate level. UNDP's operating model relies on the achievement of results through its country offices, and at that level the **responsibility is anchored in country programme documents**. At the corporate level, however, it is unclear who is responsible for the achievement of the outcomes and outputs contained in the strategic plan. In fact, UNDP has no mechanism to apportion responsibility for the achievement of corporate results to its bureaux and country offices. During the Strategic Plan 2014-17 period, the Bureau for Development Policy, through its six thematic practices areas, served as corporate owner for the results contained in the strategic plan. The corporate monitoring and reporting function in the Executive Office provided an independent assurance function. The structural review in 2014, which transferred the corporate monitoring and reporting function into the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, and the creation in 2018 of the Global Policy Network with 12 cross-functional teams, largely erased any ownership of **corporate-level** results and meaningful linkage to responsible units, aside from collective ownership by UNDP senior managers, which does not represent effective accountability for results.	1, 2, 7-8, 24, 37, 39, 67-68, 70, 86, 95, 97-98, 128, 140, 159, 190, 214
MI 1.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 1.3: Strategic plan supports the implementation of global commitments and associated results	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: The strategic plan is aligned to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, wider normative frameworks and their results (including, for example, the Grand Bargain and the QCPR)	3
Element 2: A system is being applied to track normative results for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and other relevant global commitments (for example the QCPR and the Grand Bargain, where applicable)	2
Element 3: Progress on implementation and aggregated results against global commitments are published at least annually	4
MI 1.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP's strategic plan is fully aligned with the 2030 Development Agenda, but the lack of an effective theory of change limits its utility in implementation. The Strategic Plan 2018-21 is UNDP's first strategic plan following the approval of the SDGs, and is fully aligned with the spirit of the 2030 Development Agenda. The common chapter with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women references SDG indicators in each of the six areas of collaboration. The strategy also references other intergovernmental frameworks, for instance the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Recovery, and the humanitarian response system created by the General Assembly. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found that the lack of conceptual clarity and the missing holistic theory of change make it difficult to judge to what extent UNDP's outputs contribute to normative results.	1-2, 5-6, 8, 55, 68, 70, 103, 134, 206, 214

In terms of substance, the Strategic Plan 2018-21 picks up on the call for more integration and collaboration within the UN development system through the role of integrator ascribed to UNDP. Financial data also show that UNDP contributes to all SDGs, albeit to greatly varying degrees. Its largest contribution is to SDG 1 (28%) and SDG 16 (24%). UNDP reports on its contribution to the SDGs on its transparency portal; however, guidance to country offices on how programmes relate to SDGs is insufficient. Country offices can "tag" programme outputs, budget and expenditure to SDG targets, but are not able to specify which SDG target is most relevant or the exact proportion of expenditure going towards different SDG targets.

UNDP presented a theory of change to its Executive Board in 2017, together with an early draft of the strategic plan. However it was never updated following later changes and has not been used subsequently to guide the development of country programmes, which all rely on their own local theories of change.

Element 2: UNDP maintains an elaborate system for tracking its contribution to results at the country level, but conceptual weakness in the monitoring and the decentralised nature of how results are conceived (Ref 1.1.4) is pervasive. The IRRF is the monitoring and reporting tool supporting the strategic plan. It includes normative indicators aligned with the SDGs and the QCPR, which are shared with other UN entities. However, the measurement methodologies are not sufficiently robust to present an **aggregate corporate picture** of UNDP's contribution to the achievement of results through its country programmes. In addition, there is often a mismatch of data due to the lag in reporting, so that results data presented against the current IRRF are instead based on data captured during the previous planning cycle. UNDP has experimented with new tools based on artificial intelligence and machine learning to capture the qualitative aspects of its contribution across 170 countries and territories; however, it is too early to judge the utility of this, not least because of the challenges of reporting in multiple UN working languages.

Element 3: UNDP regularly publishes progress against global commitments through a variety of means, but global aggregation of country-level progress presents challenges. UNDP publishes two main documents describing its results every year. The annual report of the administrator is a colour brochure that presents a snapshot of UNDP's achievements for the year and is primarily geared to the interested public and other global stakeholders. In addition, UNDP presents a report on its contribution to results to the Executive Board every year, primarily for accountability purposes. The two documents are largely based on the same monitoring data, and hence share similar challenges, such as the meaningful aggregation of results information across country programmes that were individually conceived at different times, with a variety of locally conceived results definitions, indicators and monitoring methodologies. UNDP also maintains a transparency portal that presents information by strategic plan outcome, Signature Solution, and SDG in an aggregated form. The data is updated monthly (depending on the nature of the indicator) and includes project, financial and some results information; however, since the data source is the same as for annual reporting, the same conceptual limitations apply. UNDP also reports annually on its implementation of country programmes to its host country, and reporting at this level tends to be more meaningful; however, the quality of reporting varies significantly across country programmes.

1-2, 5-6, 8, 55, 68, 70, 103, 134, 206, 214

MI 1.3 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 1.4: Financial framework supports mandate implementation	Score
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.17**
Element 1: Financial and budgetary planning ensures that all priority areas have adequate funding in the short term or are at least given clear priority in cases where funding is very limited	2
Element 2: A single integrated budgetary framework ensures transparency	3
Element 3: The financial framework is reviewed regularly by the governing bodies	3
Element 4: Funding windows or other incentives in place to encourage donors to provide more flexible/un-earmarked funding at global and country levels	1
Element 5: Policies/measures are in place to ensure that earmarked funds are targeted at priority areas	1
Element 6: [UN] Funding modalities with UN reform: 15% of total resources are from pooled funding	3
MI 1.4 Analysis	**Source documents**

Element 1: The integrated budget underpins UNDP's strategic plan, but UNDP has not made the shift from "funding to financing" that its strategy calls for, and has an accumulated USD 9.4 billion in unspent resources, based on its financial statement. UNDP's Financial Regulations and Rules outline the financial and budgetary planning process that covers all areas of activity. This includes the programme, development effectiveness, management activities, UN development co-ordination and special purpose activities. Confusingly, the integrated budget presents its own six objectives that are not aligned with the management objectives included in the strategic plan.

In general, core (regular) resources are allocated strictly through a formula on a country-by-country basis, (TRAC1). The Target for Resource Assignment from Core (TRAC) system is a core resource allocation formula. It includes TRAC1, which is earmarked directly to each country; TRAC2, which is earmarked for a region; and TRAC3, which is earmarked for crisis settings. Other TRAC lines provide a fixed allocation to corporate functions, such as evaluation, the human development report, and global and regional programmes. Given that the formula has several overlapping criteria, the net effect is that core (regular) resources for programmes are locked in, and UNDP management has little to no room to manoeuvre. Non-core (extrabudgetary) resources tend to be highly earmarked, leaving UNDP management with little flexibility to favour priorities unless explicitly agreed to by donors and programme countries. The integrated budget is a negotiated document and UNDP has shown deftness in exploiting the limited flexibility inherent in the integrated budget. This was highlighted in its COVID-19 response, where UNDP reallocated USD 30 million between March and July 2020 through its Rapid Response Facility.

5-8, 15-16, 22-24, 31, 37-38, 48, 70, 82, 90, 94, 97, 128, 197, 214

Over the last two budget cycles, the focus of financial and budgetary planning was on ensuring a balanced budget, which implied leaving staff positions vacant and reducing costs on discretionary line items. Notwithstanding the financial pressure on UNDP's budget, the organisation has steadily accumulated a resource surplus, which on 31 December 2019 stood at USD 9.4 billion of unspent money. UNDP's Financial Regulations and Rules require it to operate on a fully funded basis for non-core (extrabudgetary) resources, which means that even for future year commitments, cash must have been received in advance. In addition, the implementation of new revenue recognition accounting rules and the need for reserves to cover future liabilities for After Service Health Insurance explain part of the balance; however, even on core (regular) resources the balance has steadily increased to USD 756 million, which points to weaknesses in the allocation and implementation process.

The Strategic Plan 2018-21 puts emphasis on a shift from "funding to financing", meaning that resource flows outside its direct control should be positively influenced. To this end, UNDP issued elaborate guidance to its country offices on blended finance, impact investing, social impact bonds, crowdfunding and debt swaps. However, the integrated budget underpinning the strategic plan does not consider these resource flows in the achievement of outcomes, and hence the strategic plan's intention to shift from "funding to financing" remains incomplete.

Element 2: UNDP presents all financial resources in an integrated manner and has a track record as the most transparent UN entity; however, the link to results is tenuous and staffing is no longer presented in a separate table. The integrated budget presents all core (regular) and non-core (extrabudgetary) resources for all programme and management cost categories. UNDP spearheaded a harmonised budget presentation with UNFPA, UNICEF and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), which also led to harmonised cost categories that were adopted by the High-level Committee on Management. All resources are linked to the three outcomes contained in the Strategic Plan 2018-21. However, UNDP has not undertaken any outcome-level costing as part of its strategic plan. Hence, the amounts listed neither represent the required resources to achieve the results, nor an appropriation of resources, nor a plan to invest in programmatic areas, but at best are an aspirational resource mobilisation target. Annual reports further demonstrate the tenuous relationship between the budget amounts and results, presenting cases in which significantly fewer resources were secured, but results indicators were still met or even exceeded.

Personnel expenditures are the largest budget positions in UNDP's programmatic and institutional components. However, the integrated budget provides almost no information on personnel costs, aside from a reference to USD 897 million under the institutional component, which combines development effectiveness, UN development co-ordination, management and special purpose. An annex to the midterm review of the integrated budget includes a table for 212 positions funded from core (regular) resources at the D1 level and above. Given UNDP's 19 000 personnel, that represents barely more than 1% of the total workforce.

Element 3: The financial framework is regularly reviewed, but UNDP's Executive Board only controls the steadily diminishing core (regular) resource budget directly. UNDP presents the integrated budget, which is aligned to the strategic plan, every two years to its Executive Board, and reports against that framework every year. The Executive Board approves notional allocations of resources for each country through its review of country programme documents; however, these approvals are fully dependent on the subsequent mobilisation of core (regular) and non-core (extrabudgetary) resources. Hence, the only effective appropriations the Executive Board has control over are for core (regular) resources, which are steadily diminishing, accounting for 12% of total resources in 2020, compared with 20% a decade earlier. UNDP recognises that its funding model is one of the most significant constraints in its realignment with the strategic plan, and renegotiations with member states to gain more flexibility are underway.

Element 4: UNDP's funding windows are largely irrelevant to its resource mix due to a mismatch between the window structure and donor priorities. UNDP has maintained thematic funding windows for several planning cycles. Currently, four broad themes exist: 1) poverty and inequality; 2) governance, peacebuilding, crisis and resilience; 3) nature, climate and energy; and 4) gender. In 2019, thematic funding amounted to USD 103 million, which represents a 54% increase over the previous year. In 2020, thematic funding increased further to USD 147 million due to the pandemic response, but the amount is negligible compared to the total of non-core (other) resources. Moreover, the funding windows were only able to attract eight donors in 2018.

5-8, 15-16, 22-24, 31, 37-38, 48, 70, 82, 90, 94, 97, 128, 197, 214

The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 ascribes the low level of funding to a mismatch in priorities between the funding window structure and the donor financing machinery with its range of resource allocation limitations **(Ref 2.2.5)**. Particularly the closure of the crisis thematic trust fund – triggered by the abolition of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery – is seen by interviewees as a mistake in hindsight, as that thematic fund alone attracted around USD 150 million annually for over 10 years.

Element 5: Earmarked funding of priority areas is primarily donor-driven, without effective measures to provide steer. UNDP's funding model is largely opportunistic and "driven by donor contributions" earmarked for individual projects. Past efforts to provide more steer through mechanisms such as funding windows have fallen short. Resource mobilisation for non-core (other) resources is highly decentralised with no corporate allocation mechanism. The articulation of priority areas within the strategic plan is missing and the Signature Solutions offer no help as they are only used to track resource allocations *ex post*. Within the small core (regular) resource envelope, UNDP has some flexibility to allocate programme resources at the regional level (TRAC2) or to crisis situations (TRAC3). Therefore, although core (regular) resources for programmes cannot be shifted across countries, thematically UNDP can agree with programme countries on their use in line with national priorities, which may or may not coincide with UNDP's corporate priorities.

Element 6: UNDP has championed the use of multi-partner trust funds and hosted the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office on behalf of the UN development system since 2003; however, its use of pooled funding is still below target. Despite the Funding Compact, the level of core (regular) resources remains low, and competition for non-core (other) resources remains high. UNDP received USD 453 million (about 11%) in pooled funding in 2019, which is a steady increase compared to prior years, but still below the 15% target set by the Secretary-General's reform. It must be noted that achieving a percentage of total resource target is significantly more challenging for larger UN development entities compared to humanitarian entities, given the absolute amounts and differences in fundraising approaches. At the same time, about half the amount in pooled resources was for programmes where UNDP serves as managing agent with no discretion over programming. UNDP was instrumental in the setup of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO), and hosts this entity on behalf of the UN development system, with 44 UN entities participating. It was through the efforts of the MPTFO, staffed by UNDP personnel, that pooled funding became a significant resource flow of over USD 8 billion since its creation. In the MOPAN survey, over 80% of respondents, including 100% of all sampled co-ordinating ministries, agreed that UNDP promotes the use of pooled funding and multi-partner trust funds.

5-8, 15-16, 22-24, 31, 37-38, 48, 70, 82, 90, 94, 97, 128, 197, 214

MI 1.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda principles	**KPI score**
Satisfactory	**2.89**

UNDP has made progress in its approach to gender equality and women's empowerment. UNDP's programming addresses transformative aspects of gender, and a greater proportion of UNDP's initiatives include gender as an explicit objective. UNDP partners with UNFPA, UNICEF, and particularly UN Women to pursue gender objectives. UNDP's results framework includes gender equality targets and indicators, but there are continuing challenges in fully mainstreaming gender. The Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan identifies entry points for mainstreaming gender and translates development actions on gender to the development settings articulated in UNDP's Strategic Plan. The Gender Action Plan has helped UNDP to strengthen its structures, guidance and tools for its approach to gender, both institutionally and through its programming.

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While the percentage of core funds available for gender mainstreaming is relatively high compared with other UN agencies, gender equality remains underfunded and under resourced in terms of staffing. The UNDP Country Offices have the discretion to integrate gender equality into all aspects of their development work, for which they must mobilise predominantly extrabudgetary resources.

Although UNDP does not have an explicit climate change/environmental sustainability strategy or policy, it takes a holistic approach to climate change and holds its programmes to high standards, as set out in its recently revised Social and Environmental Standards. UNDP's programming on environmental sustainability and climate change is driven, in large part, through its partnerships with the climate finance institutions and vertical funding arrangements, particularly with the GEF and GCF. UNDP's organisational outcomes, and integrated results and resources framework reflect a strong and integrated approach to environmental sustainability and climate change, which touches on climate risk reduction, nature-based solutions and energy. All projects must meet Social and Environmental Standards (SES), which were updated in 2019 to further strengthen the quality of programming and maximise social and environmental opportunities and benefits, and minimise risks. Identifying climate related issues across portfolios is a work in progress, as demonstrated by the limited identification of climate risks in projects not traditionally considered climate sensitive. As an organisation, UNDP has several initiatives underway which are dedicated to mainstreaming environmental issues in practice and training. According to data collected through UNDP's project quality assurance exercise, 85% of projects had met corporate social and environmental standards in 2019, dropping 2% from the 2017 baseline.

Taking a human-rights based approach is a requirement for all UNDP programming, and much of UNDP's work has an implicit human rights focus. While wholly committed to economic and social rights, a challenge for UNDP has been articulating its stance on sensitive human rights issues at a country level. UNDP's mandate has always focused on reaching the most vulnerable, and therefore the explicit focus on the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) agenda is, conceptually, a natural extension of UNDP's work in the Strategic Plan 2018-21. UNDP has one indicator that explicitly assesses countries' capacity to fulfil human rights obligations and several indicators that implicitly assess human rights dimensions, including access to essential services (basic economic and social rights), rule of law and justice, disability rights, and land rights. To report on progress toward SDGs, UNDP introduced a LNOB marker to track the progress of marginalised and vulnerable groups. However, there is still a lack of disaggregated data to be able to meaningfully assess UNDP's support to those most vulnerable, and a need to support country offices to assess and address the LNOB agenda. A human rights strategy is in development, which will support human rights mainstreaming.

MI 2.1 Corporate/sectoral and country strategies respond to and/or reflect the intended results of normative frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment	Score
Overall MI rating	Satisfactory
Overall MI score	3.17
Element 1: Dedicated policy statement on gender equality available and showing evidence of application	4
Element 2: Gender equality indicators and targets fully integrated into the MO's strategic plan and corporate objectives	4
Element 3: Accountability systems (including corporate reporting and evaluation) reflect gender equality indicators and targets	4

Element 4: Gender equality screening checklists or similar tools inform the design for all new interventions	3
Element 5: Human and financial resources are available to address gender equality issues	2
Element 6: Staff capacity development on gender is being or has been conducted	2
MI 2.1 Analysis	**Source documents**

Element 1. **UNDP's gender equality strategy articulates its commitment to supporting transformative changes for gender equality and women's empowerment, mainstreaming gender into all aspects of UNDP's work, and building mechanisms to support UNDP's own gender practice. It requires that at least 15% of UNDP's budget should be invested on gender specific interventions.** Moving beyond an instrumental approach, requirements for gender equality and women's empowerment are being addressed in a more integrated way. UNDP has strengthened the structures, guidance and tools to provide a more complex understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) work, and build the foundations for more transformative work. Implementation of the gender strategy varies across portfolios: the governance portfolio has integrated gender well and the environment portfolio has improved the mainstreaming of gender due to new GEF requirements that require gender mainstreaming for all interventions. In the 2020 UNDP partnership survey, partners recognised UNDP's contribution to gender development priorities (63% of partners agreed or strongly agreed that UNDP promotes gender equality). However, the integration of gender in UNDP's upstream policy work has yet to be fully embedded. There are also gaps in gender integration in crisis settings, including in capacity, budget and investment.

The gender equality strategy aligns with the UN system and global practice on gender equality, and consolidates and strengthens UNDP's approach to addressing the unique and structural challenges facing women and girls. It also engages men and boys through the "HeforShe" initiative. UNDP's revision of its Social and Environmental Standards, which apply to all UNDP projects and programmes, provides concrete guidance for applying the gender equality strategy. Uptake of the gender equality strategy is evident through the high performance of UNDP in its performance in the UN Country Teams System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality scorecard (meeting or exceeding requirements for 88% of indicators), a gradual increase in the level of mainstreaming across Signature Solutions, increased investment in gender, and the uptick of projects with gender marker GEN-3 (which denotes that gender equality and the empowerment of women is the principal objective of the outcome).

1-2, 4, 6, 9-11, 16, 48-49, 57-58, 63, 66, 75, 77-78, 82, 95-97, 99, 103, 107-108, 110-111, 115-116, 133, 174, 187, 204-205, 214

Further evidence of the application of the gender strategy comes through UNDP's Gender Equality Seal programme for country offices. The Gender Equality Seal measures and incentivises UNDP country offices' systems, capacities, knowledge and programmes related to gender. While capability does vary across country offices, the Gender Seal programme has seen an increase of 160% in country office participation since the previous MOPAN assessment. Thereby there have been improvements in the capacity of country offices regarding gender. At the end of the 2019-2020 round, 79 country offices were certified by the Seal, compared to the 48 country offices participating when the previous 2015-16 MOPAN assessment was conducted. The Gender Equality Seal is voluntary for all country offices, which is considered critical to supporting country ownership of the process.

UNDP's Annual Reports point to the steady improvement in UNDP's attention to gender equality and its move from projectised to structural approaches to tackling gender inequality. Alignment on gender norms with UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women, and a multifaceted partnership with these

organisations, particularly with UN Women, supports UNDP's infrastructure to advance gender objectives at global, regional and country levels. UNDP's partnership with UN Women is broadly strategic and complementary at the global and regional level, with some variability at the country level. UNDP's country presence and relationship with country governments is a comparative advantage for its work on gender. The Evaluation of the Strategic Plan and global and regional programmes (2017) concludes that UNDP has more effectively organised and promoted its work on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan finds that UNDP has been on a trajectory of continued improvement from an instrumental approach (counting women) to a more sophisticated approach (engaging in more gender responsive programmes). In qualitative responses to the MOPAN survey related to gender, both partners and donors highlighted that the mainstreaming of gender in UNDP's policies and strategies was largely successful. UNDP's partners generally viewed gender as a well-integrated aspect of UNDP projects, with time and resources dedicated to gender mainstreaming at the country level. UN entities highlighted the Gender Seal as playing a part in improving UNDP's gender mainstreaming. However, eight responses from donors highlighted that capacity, implementation and delivery at the country level was uneven and lacking in some contexts. In response to the survey question "UNDP promotes gender equality", 40% strongly agreed, 45% agreed and 9% somewhat agreed.

In terms of UNDP's COVID-19 response, although the evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan highlighted a lack of gender integration in UNDP's early response, UNDP's COVID 2.0 response had a much stronger gender focus. UNDP launched, together with UN Women, the COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker to monitor national policy measures and encourage governments to add a gender lens to their COVID-19 response. UNDP gender teams have developed resources to support the COVID-19 recovery process, including the Women's Economic Empowerment Index (WEEI) and the gender sensitivity checklist for the social and economic impact assessment; worked to integrate gender into strategies, including UNDP's post-COVID-19 governance offer; and supported policy dialogue to integrate gender into national response plans.

1-2, 4, 6, 9-11, 16, 48-49, 57-58, 63, 66, 75, 77-78, 82, 95-97, 99, 103, 107-108, 110-111, 115-116, 133, 174, 187, 204-205, 214

Element 2: UNDP's 2018-21 Strategic Plan mainstreams gender equality indicators and targets across its indicators and Signature Solutions, particularly through Signature Solution 6, which codifies UNDP's commitment to strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. To operationalise this commitment, the IRRF includes gender responsive and sex-disaggregated outputs, monitoring progress across outcomes and Signature Solutions. Progress on gender equality and women's empowerment is tracked through the Gender Inequality Index, and, since the 2014-17 IRRF, through gender markers. Gender Marker ratings measure the percentage of project expenditures for GEN2 (significant contributions to gender equality) or GEN3 (gender equality as a principal objective). In 2019, out of the total provisional programme expenditure of USD 4 419 million, USD 2 224 million (or 50%) was for GEN2 and USD 372 million (8%) was for GEN3. Across other results areas, reporting is extensive, ranging from indicators that monitor women's political participation, to gender focused partnerships, to reporting on gender-based violence (GBV). These improvements are notable, as the Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 and global and regional programmes pointed to continuing challenges in mainstreaming work on gender equality and women's empowerment across the organisation, and meeting relevant financial and results targets. The Evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan notes that UNDP was responsive to addressing weaknesses in UNDP's approach to gender mainstreaming, while highlighting that there is still a need for continued work to deliver transformative results that address the root causes of gender inequalities.

Element 3: All UNDP programming applies the core principle of gender equality. UNDP provides regular reporting on implementation of the gender equality strategy, reporting against development results under each outcome of the UNDP strategic plan (2018-21) and performance indicators of the System-Wide Action Plan. As per the Gender Action Plan, UNDP applies gender sensitive indicators and targets across its programmes, internal processes, audits and evaluations. The Gender Equality Seal measures and certifies the achievements and competence of country offices in advancing gender equality and women's rights by measuring performance across 39 benchmarks. UNDP's IRRF includes gender responsive outputs and sex disaggregated indicators, and monitors progress through sex disaggregated data across outcomes and Signature Solutions. UNDP worked with UN Women on a new UN-SWAP Gender Equality scorecard to push commitment on gender at the country level. Evaluation approaches must integrate gender equality concerns and are all subject to assessment against the revised UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator.

The scorecard for the IRRF finds that gender is consistently integrated into UNDP programmes and projects. In 2019, UNDP exceeded its targets for the percentage of expenditure with a significant gender component and with gender as a principal objective (QCPR related), and the percentage of UN-SWAP minimum standards met or exceeded. The Evaluation of Inter-agency Operational Services (2018) notes that gender equality and women's empowerment policies and regulations are consistently applied by UNDP. The newly revised UNDP Social and Environmental Standards elevate and enhance programming principles for gender equality and women's empowerment through revisions that better reflect sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), sexual harassment (SH) and GBV. Evaluations conducted or commissioned by UNDP must apply a gender equality lens and aim to "meet" the requirements of the UN-SWAP on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Evaluation Performance Indicator 4. The UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI) assesses the extent to which the evaluation reports of an entity meet the gender related United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, and demonstrate effective use of the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation during all phases of the evaluation. The UNDP EPI reporting follows the UN-SWAP EPI Technical Notes published by UNEG. The UNDP Evaluation Office fully incorporated the UN-SWAP EPI into its online QA system in November 2020. In 2020, UNDP exceeded requirements for performance indicator 4 of the UN-SWAP.

Element 4: UNDP has moved beyond gender "checklists" that measure compliance with policies to applying more substantive gender standards for projects and programmes. This is operationalised through complementary mechanisms that aim to apply a gender lens at multiple stages. UNDP quality assurance tools for projects and country programmes integrate a set of questions to guide offices and ensure the full integration of gender concerns throughout the programming cycle. They also ensure that gender equality is central to programming, based upon the minimum requirements agreed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) in the UN-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard. UNDP screens programmes early in their development through the SES.

For country office management, UNDP has a mechanism in place to address gender equality issues, which requires that country offices develop and implement a gender equality strategy for the country office; establish an effective gender architecture and gender expertise; adequately implement a gender accountability framework; implement the UNDP gender parity strategy; and lead by example, fostering an inclusive and respectful organisational culture.

1-2, 4, 6, 9-11, 16, 48-49, 57-58, 63, 66, 75, 77-78, 82, 95-97, 99, 103, 107-108, 110-111, 115-116, 133, 174, 187, 204-205, 214

Element 5: UNDP has adjusted the organisational architecture to make human resources available to address gender equality issues, but funding limitations constrain implementation of the ambitious targets set in the UNDP gender equality strategy. Although UNDP has prioritised gender across its programming, this has not yet been matched with the resources for implementation. As of 2019, The Gender Team consisted of 19 staff in the Central Unit and regional hubs, which is the pillar of the UNDP gender architecture. In 2018, the first year of the gender strategy, although UNDP achieved gender parity of its staff, at the senior level (D2, D1, P5, P4) staff are still predominantly men (an average of 58% men to 42% women across these categories). There are more women at the P1 level than men (67% compared with 33% men). This suggests either that UNDP is newly focusing on hiring more women than men into entry level roles, or that not enough women are being promoted to senior posts. UNDP has a Gender Team within the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support that provides guidance across UNDP for work on gender equality and women's empowerment. It provides leadership, technical support and policy advice on integrating gender across all UNDP practice and interventions. Through the Gender Equality Strategy, countries are given a menu of options to tailor to their contexts.

Country offices have variable levels of gender expertise, which is supported by regional gender experts and the Global Policy Network and overseen at the HQ level. In 2019, 61% of country offices (up from 2017 baseline of 55%) and 67% of regional and central bureaux (down from 2017 baseline of 80%) had in-house gender equality expertise, according to the Organisational Effectiveness Scorecard. This represents a plateau in resourcing for country offices, but a significant decrease for regional and HQ, and resourcing that is far below what is required to meet the 2021 target of 85% for regional and central bureaux.

Resourcing decisions on how gender expertise is provided can be made at the country level. These management decisions are reflected in the different levels of achievement of the Gender Equality Seal, a voluntary programme which currently (as of 2021) has 82 out of 170 countries participating. Through the Seal programme, high performing offices achieve a gold rating, while offices that meet standards achieve silver or bronze levels. Internally, the Seal has shifted the culture in offices and improved planning and programming. Gender expertise is available at the regional level and through the GPN, which provides strong support on GEWE to country offices. The gender team have regional advisors that act as "expert brokers" to find specialist advisors within the GPN and connect them with country offices. This is driven by demand and by proactive initiatives at the country level. Therefore, while some country offices have mature gender programming, and high levels of technical expertise, gender is less embedded in other country offices and operations. The Evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan points out that UNDP does not meet UN System Wide Action Plan standards for providing technical expertise on gender at the country level. UN System-wide Action Plan country offices with annual budgets of USD 25 million should have dedicated gender expertise with a P4 or P5 level. For the 60 offices that meet the criteria, there are only four gender specialists. The evaluation points out that this limits UNDP's ability to "internalize the importance of gender as an accelerator for development". The evaluation points to ROAR data that indicated that 65% of gender specialists were designated as contractors, and 38% were part-time roles, which significantly limits the extent that gender expertise can be embedded in UNDP's internal processes and decision making.

Variability in resourcing translates to different approaches taken at the country level in terms of the approach, substance and level of investment for gender mainstreaming and gender equality. For example, in Iraq there is a high investment in gender equality (in 86% of programmes, gender equality and empowerment of women (GEN2) is considered as a 'significant objective'), largely due

1-2, 4, 6, 9-11, 16, 48-49, 57-58, 63, 66, 75, 77-78, 82, 95-97, 99, 103, 107-108, 110-111, 115-116, 133, 174, 187, 204-205, 214

to gender dimensions included. In Indonesia, there are numerous project-level efforts to mainstream gender, which vary in their ambition and approach, with a range of GEN1 to GEN3 outputs.

UNDP has increased its investments in gender mainstreaming across all portfolios since 2016, and the percentage of core funds available for gender mainstreaming is relatively high compared with other UN agencies. However, Signature Solution 6 on gender receives the least programme expenditure across all funding channels. The amount of funding earmarked for the gender Signature Solution (USD 40 million) is a fraction of that allocated to the other five Signature Solutions, and the funding for the gender equality and women empowerment funding window is only USD 0.46 million. Nevertheless, it is important to note that increased investment in gender equality is visible in UNDP's programmes where gender equality was a principal objective (from 4-8% between 2017 and 2019) and use of regular (core) resources for Signature Solution 6 (funded 44% through regular resources). UNDP is in the process (2020-2021) of establishing financial targets for gender equality, including for GEN2 and GEN3, that can gradually increase the ambition of UNDP's investment in gender equality.

Element 6: UNDP requires that gender equality and the empowerment of women is integrated into the core values and/or competencies for all staff, particularly those at P4 level and above. Furthermore, UNDP ensures that as part of performance review and ongoing staff assessment, gender-related technical competencies are integrated into the UNDP technical competency framework. As such, the gender equality strategy establishes mechanisms for staff capacity development on gender. There is a requirement that country offices have multidisciplinary gender focal teams led by senior management (deputy resident representative/country director) to ensure gender mainstreaming in the programme portfolio, monitor and evaluate gender equality results, and address institutional issues to complement dedicated gender expertise. In addition, country offices are required to have a dedicated gender specialist who can provide technical backstopping to programme and operational units, lead on developing and implementing gender-focused and women-specific programmes, and build partnerships with women's movements. UNDP commits to striving for all training, communities of practice and other learning opportunities to incorporate sessions on gender equality and women's empowerment that are led by a gender expert.

"I Know Gender" is a UN Mandatory Course and "The Gender Journey: Thinking outside the box" is a UNDP mandatory course. Audits have raised the issue of non-completion of UNDP mandatory training. Despite the broad efforts to provide training and awareness of gender, there is some evidence that further efforts are needed to raise awareness of UNDP's work and policies on gender. The 2018 Evaluation of UNDP's Inter-agency Operational Services found that there was variable awareness from UN entities and UNDP staff of UNDP's guidelines and requirements for ensuring that UNDP's inter-agency operational services were gender sensitive. Similarly, the Evaluation of UNDP Development Cooperation in Middle-income Countries (MICs) (2020) found that projects in the environment and energy portfolio in MICs have not demonstrated very strong gender awareness. The Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 notes that countries without in-house gender specialists have less access to training and workshops, and therefore less capacity, across the office, on gender issues.

1-2, 4, 6, 9-11, 16, 48-49, 57-58, 63, 66, 75, 77-78, 82, 95-97, 99, 103, 107-108, 110-111, 115-116, 133, 174, 187, 204-205, 214

| **MI 2.1 Evidence confidence** | **High confidence** |

MI 2.2: Corporate/sectoral and country strategies respond to and/or reflect the intended results of normative frameworks for environmental sustainability and climate change	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.67**
Element 1: Dedicated policy statement on environmental sustainability and climate change available and showing evidence of application	2
Element 2: Environmental sustainability and climate change indicators and targets fully integrated into the MO's strategic plan and corporate objectives	3
Element 3: Accountability systems (including corporate reporting and evaluation) reflect environmental sustainability and climate change indicators and targets	3
Element 4: Environmental screening checklists or similar tools inform design for all new interventions	3
Element 5: Human and financial resources are available to address environmental sustainability and climate change issues	3
Element 6: Staff capacity development on environmental sustainability and climate change is being or has been conducted	2
MI 2.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP is a key provider of technical support on environmental issues to member states, and a key and primary actor on climate change within the UN system through project level support that is largely funded through vertical funds. Although UNDP does not have an explicit climate change policy or strategy, subsequent Strategic Plans (2014-17 and 2018-21) have strengthened and mainstreamed UNDP's work to respond to the human and natural challenges presented by climate change. UNDP approaches climate change as a development issue, rather than an environmental phenomenon, and its 2018-2021 Strategic Plan frames climate change and environmental sustainability as determinants of vulnerability, inequality and poverty in developing countries. Over the 2018-21 strategic period, UNDP's leadership has stressed the urgency and need for a multidimensional (and multilateral) approach with respect to climate change. In his 2019 statement, UNDP's Administrator stressed that climate change (and its drivers and root causes) is the defining issue of the time. UNDP's 2020 partnership survey reflects that UNDP's environment work is acknowledged by more than half of partners (53.2% agree or strongly agree) and a smaller proportion recognise UNDP's contribution to energy development priorities (36.8% of partners agree or strongly agree). UNDP has adopted a multifaceted climate change mitigation and adaptation portfolio, underpinned by a commitment to working with countries to turn their climate goals into action. UNDP aims to increase the ambition of climate plans and integrate climate risks into national and local planning, which varies as much as the needs of the countries it serves. UNDP is also making internal efforts to make its work environmentally sustainable. UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 moves UNDP forward in its programming on climate change, with specific attention paid to supporting countries develop ambitious National Development Commitments, supporting least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), and providing leadership in relation to the Paris Agreement. UNDP's work in climate change is strongly guided by its partnerships with environmental vertical funds, which are the third largest source of funding for UNDP (accounting for USD 783 million, or 14.6%, of UNDP's total funding in 2020, down from USD 861 million, 18%, in 2019). In particular, UNDP holds longstanding partnerships with GEF and GCF. UNDP also partners with the Nagoya	2-4, 6, 15-16, 24, 26-27, 36, 48-49, 57, 59, 61, 63, 67, 77-78, 90, 93, 97, 99, 102, 127, 129, 133, 140, 192, 204-205, 207, 214-215

Protocol Implementation Fund (NPIF), the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and is an accredited entity of the Adaptation Fund (AF). UNDP manages the second largest portfolio of projects for the GCF.

UNDP has several initiatives underway to operationalise its work on environmental sustainability. For example, UNDP committed to support countries enhance their ambitions under the Paris Agreement through its Climate Promise by providing countries with technical support to help them to reduce their emissions, increase resilience and support sustainable development priorities. The Climate Promise has been adjusted to help countries address climate action within their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this, UNDP works with UN partners and 102 countries to enhance their nationally determined contributions.

The "Greening UNDP Moonshot" is an internal initiative that aims to significantly accelerate UNDP's "greening" ambitions, and involves committing to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from global operations by 25% by 2025, and 50% by 2030. UNDP tracks its environmental performance through the environmental management tool, providing technical support to UNDP offices to develop energy efficiency solutions and establish country greening plans. To promote institutional environmental sustainability, UNDP established its own environmental data collection and management systems, through which it monitors its own organisation-wide carbon footprint, as reported in the Greening the Blue reports. Environmental reporting via UNDP's Environmental Management Tool has increased significantly, with 65 offices reporting their 2018 carbon footprint.

In qualitative responses to the partner survey question, "Additional information on how UNDP addresses cross-cutting issues across its work", both partners and donors highlighted that climate change and the environment are large parts of UNDP's work, with high levels of funding and integration in UNDP's strategy and policies. In response to the survey question "UNDP promotes environmental sustainability and addresses climate change", 40% strongly agreed, 42% agreed and 9% somewhat agreed.

Element 2: **Although UNDP does not have a specific sustainability policy, climate change cuts across UNDP's initiatives, and UNDP's 2018-21 Strategic Plan has specific initiatives and targets aligned to SDGs 1.5 and 13.2 that address climate change and environmental sustainability through different angles.** Contributions from specific Signature Solutions (SS) describe outputs under each outcome area in the IRRF. SS3: Crisis prevention and increased resilience; SS4: Environment: nature-based solutions for development; and SS5: Clean, affordable energy, particularly focus on the effects of climate change. UNDP's organisational targets for climate change and environmental sustainability are integrated into UNDP's key outcome areas and embedded in UNDP's signature solutions.

Element 3: **Although UNDP's IRRF reflects environmental sustainability and climate change indicators and targets aligned to the SDGs (1.5, 13.2), there are challenges in accounting for the environmental aspects of projects not within the climate change portfolio.** The indicators fall under Development Report Card outcomes 2 (accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development) and 3 (strengthen resilience to shocks and crisis); and SS3 (Enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies), SS4 (Promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet), and signature solution 5 (Close the energy gap). Examples of relevant outputs include the number of additional countries that integrated the Paris Agreement (1.1.1.1(b)); the number of additional countries with development, risk reduction and recovery interventions informed by multi-hazard and other risk assessments (1.3.1.2); progress towards sustainable forest management (2.10); and the number of additional countries with targets for low emission and climate resilient development in plans and strategies, budgets, etc. (2.1.1.1).

2-4, 6, 15-16, 24, 26-27, 36, 48-49, 57, 59, 61, 63, 67, 77-78, 90, 93, 97, 99, 102, 127, 129, 133, 140, 192, 204-205, 207, 214-215

The indicators are embedded across the IRRF against multiple outcome areas and signature solutions, which reflects the multisectoral, multifaceted nature of the causes and effects of climate change and environmental sustainability. Although there are indicators in place for measuring UNDP's holistic development impact through climate change, the Evaluation of UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Support (2020) highlights the challenges of identifying, monitoring, tracking and accounting for projects and programmes related to climate change adaptation that are not within the climate change portfolio. The 2020 IRRF Scorecard has not yet reported on the percentage of projects that meet corporate social and environmental standards. The baseline in 2017 was 87% of projects, which dropped to 85% in 2019 (data are collected through the project quality assurance exercise every other year). Environmental sustainability and climate change are assessed in UNDP's centralised and decentralised evaluation functions.

Element 4: **UNDP has raised the bar to strengthen alignment with the 2018 GEF safeguards policy, the UN Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards, and the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework**. All UNDP projects and programmes are required to meet UNDP's quality standards and safeguards for environmental sustainability, and principles of "do no harm", but there are weaknesses in the application of the risk assessment system. All projects must meet UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES), which were updated in 2019 to further strengthen the quality of programming and maximise social and environmental opportunities and benefits and risks. UNDP's environmental safeguards include programming principles and project-level standards to mainstream sustainability and resilience, and to assess pollution prevention and resource efficiency; biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management; and climate change and disaster risks.

In its organisational effectiveness and efficiency report card, UNDP tracks the percentage of projects that meet UNDP's corporate Social and Environmental Standards. As of 2019, 85% of projects met corporate social and environmental standards, with a target of 90% for 2021. During the design phase, all projects are screened to ensure that potential harm to the environment is mitigated and managed and assessed for social and environmental risks (pre-Strategic Plan) to determine the overall risk categorisation of the projects and highlight potential safeguarding risks. In addition, vertical funds have specific project documentation templates which establish environmental and social safeguarding processes. These assessments include mitigation and management measures for moderate and high risks.

Although the screening standards and SES standards are sound, the Evaluation of UNDP's Climate Change Adaptation Support (2020) raises concerns about the application of the SES, noting a tendency to rate projects "low risk". The evaluation points to the absence of climate risk assessment in some of UNDP's large crisis interventions in climate sensitive sectors. This suggests that while the systems are generally sound in design, their application has not been fully developed, particularly to account for climate risk in areas of work not traditionally considered climate-oriented, and for interventions not directly related to the vertical funds. In response to the partner survey question, "Additional information on how UNDP addresses cross-cutting issues across its work", the need for better assessment of environmental sustainability in UNDP's work is highlighted in responses from several implementing partners. UNDP is tackling some of these challenges by building a cadre of experts based in the regional hubs who will be able to provide training and capacity building to UNDP staff on climate and environmental sustainability. They will also provide specific advice on how to apply the SES to assess and mitigate climate risks across sectors.

Element 5: Vertical funds are UNDP's third largest source of funding, accounting for 18% of UNDP's funding (Ref 1.4.5). More than half of this funding (57%) is dedicated to UNDP's

2-4, 6, 15-16, 24, 26-27, 36, 48-49, 57, 59, 61, 63, 67, 77-78, 90, 93, 97, 99, 102, 127, 129, 133, 140, 192, 204-205, 207, 214-215

cross-cutting work on climate change and environmental sustainability, and channelled through its poverty, resilience and environment Signature Solutions. UNDP revised its funding windows to align its work on environmental sustainability and climate change from climate change and disaster risk reduction (established in 2014), to nature, climate and energy (in 2019), which received USD 86.86m in 2019-20. The Vertical Funding Unit was established in the Nature, Climate and Energy Team to better manage and engage with vertical funding. The vertical fund portfolio has an experienced cadre of technical experts based in headquarters and in the regions who advise central, regional and country offices. UNDP personnel provide technical assistance, as well as project implementation support to member states. Despite gradual increases in the number of projects and volume of work in climate change and environmental sustainability, staff capacity in disaster risk reduction has declined, and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) evaluation of UNDP's support for climate change support highlighted that weak competence and high turnover of national project staff had contributed to "delays and inefficiencies" in UNDP's work on climate change. **Element 6**: **In 2019, new mandatory training on environmental sustainability, "Greening the Blue", was launched, along with several central and local interventions to drive compliance**. Greening the Blue is a mandatory course for all UNDP staff. It has only been provided in English, although translation is planned for 2021. The rate of completion for all mandatory courses in 2019 was 41%, suggesting that there is some work to be done to ensure that staff have sufficient capacity on environmental sustainability issues.	2-4, 6, 15-16, 24, 26-27, 36, 48-49, 57, 59, 61, 63, 67, 77-78, 90, 93, 97, 99, 102, 127, 129, 133, 140, 192, 204-205, 207, 214-215
MI 2.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 2.3: Corporate/sectoral and country strategies respond to and/or reflect the intended results of normative frameworks for human rights, including the protection of vulnerable people (those at risk of being "left behind")	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.83**
Element 1: Dedicated policy statement on human rights available and showing evidence of application	3
Element 2: Human rights indicators and targets fully integrated into the MO's strategic plan and corporate objectives	2
Element 3: Accountability systems (including corporate reporting and evaluation) reflect human rights indicators and targets	2
Element 4: Human rights screening checklists or similar tools inform design for all new interventions	4
Element 5: Human and financial resources are available to address human rights issues	2
Element 6: Staff capacity development on human rights is being or has been conducted	3
MI 2.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: While UNDP is increasingly committed to furthering the realisation of human rights (economic, social, civil and political) across its programming, it operates within a complex and sensitive context in member states which can constrain its ability to effectively monitor or advocate on human rights issues. In its corporate policies and strategies, UNDP is dedicated to furthering the realisation of human rights, as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights conventions and instruments. UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 commits UNDP to taking a human rights-based approach in pursuing development outcomes. Human	1-2, 4-6, 26, 27, 49, 57, 59, 63, 75, 77-78, 80, 82, 85, 93, 97, 111, 126, 129, 140, 168, 173, 204-205, 207, 214

Rights constitute one of six "key principles" in the Strategic Plan. A human rights lens is implicit in UNDP's approach to development and embodied in its work on Rule of Law, strengthening access to justice, national capacity building, and reform of discriminatory laws and policies. By taking this approach, UNDP commits to refraining from providing support for activities that may contribute to violations of a state's human rights obligations and the core international human rights treaties. For example, the Global Programme on Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human Rights for Sustaining Peace and Fostering Development aims to "contribute to establishing a culture of respect for the rule of law and embedding human rights principles in UNDP's work". In 2019, the Global Programme has funded interventions in more than 40 crisis affected contexts.

At the country level, UNDP seeks to support state efforts to meet their human rights obligations as requested. Although UNDP no longer has a monitoring and oversight role with respect to human rights (since the delinking of the RC position), in the context of its programmes and projects, UNDP's due diligence obligations do require it to monitor compliance with its policies. These commit UNDP to upholding the principles of accountability and the rule of law, participation and inclusion, and equality and non-discrimination, noting that prohibited grounds of discrimination include race, ethnicity, gender, age, language, disability, sexual orientation, religion, political or other opinion, national or social or geographical origin, property, birth, or other status including indigenous person or member of a minority.

In response to the recommendations of the Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 to strengthen UNDP's support to the poorest and most marginalised members of society, the Strategic Plan 2018-21 integrates the ambition of "leaving no one behind" (LNOB) as a key element. As part of its integrated approach, UNDP commits to tailoring its response to addressing vulnerabilities faced by the poor and marginalised, and enabling greater voice and participation of the poor and providing particular attention to key target groups, including people with disabilities; women and children; elderly people; ethnic minorities; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, and intersex people (LGBTQI); and to addressing systemic racial discrimination.

1-2, 4-6, 26, 27, 49, 57, 59, 63, 75, 77-78, 80, 82, 85, 93, 97, 111, 126, 129, 140, 168, 173, 204-205, 207, 214

In 2018, UNDP signed a strategic partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions to help scale up joint support to national human rights institutions (NHRIs) as key independent bodies to promote and protect human rights and ensure that no-one gets left behind. UNDP is in the process of developing a Human Rights Strategy that will support UNDP's approach to mainstreaming human rights. UNDP's socio-economic assessments conducted as part of its response to COVID-19 take note of the worsening of human rights conditions and the increased vulnerability of the least protected and most marginalised. In addition, UNDP has held virtual events to highlight the impact of COVID-19 on human rights institutions and the impact of the pandemic on pre-existing racial, class and ethnic inequities. UNDP has also put social and racial justice issues high on the corporate agenda, with a task force and a staff survey in place.

In response to the survey question, "UNDP promotes human rights", most respondents agreed, although to a lesser extent than for gender and climate change: 33% strongly agreed, 45% agreed and 14% somewhat agreed. However, qualitative responses from both partners and donors indicated that the application and mainstreaming of human rights policies tended to be uneven at the country level. UNDP's human rights work was highlighted as a sensitive area by multiple donors and partners responding to the survey question, "Additional information on how UNDP addresses cross-cutting issues across its work". They were critical of UNDP's close relationship with government and reported hesitance to speak out on sensitive civil-political human rights such as "media freedom, police brutality, due process or the independence of the judiciary".

Element 2: UNDP's integration of human rights issues is not fully apparent in the IRRF, despite UNDP's explicit commitment to human rights and LNOB at the policy and strategy level. Of all 86 indicators to measure Strategic Plan 2018-21 results at impact, outcome and output level, the IRRF includes one indicator that assesses human rights dimensions. Few other indicators speak to human rights dimensions with respect to accountability, meaningful participation and non-discrimination. Under Signature Solution 2, at the output level there is one sub-indicator focused on human rights, which measures the capacities, functions and financing of rule of law, as well as national human rights institutions and systems strengthened to expand access to justice and combat discrimination, with a focus on women and other marginalised groups. This sub-indicator is measured by counting the number of additional countries with strengthened institutions and systems supporting the fulfilment of nationally and internationally ratified human rights obligations. Across human rights related indicators identified by the Global Human Rights Programme, UNDP achieved 82% of targets in 2019. This includes progress toward access to justice, capacity for governance, community-oriented policing, strengthened institutions in support of human rights obligations, and justice and security in place to respond to GBV.

The IRRF measures performance on the extent to which UNDP's programming reaches people with disabilities through the percentage of new country programme documents (CPDs) that address the needs and rights of people with disabilities. The proportion of CPDs that integrate disability programming increased from 17% to 49% in 18 months due to its inclusion in the IRRF and the development of additional guidance in this area. Non-discrimination is a core human rights principle that has not yet been writ large into UNDP programming.

Although the IRRF provides a positive appraisal of UNDP's integration of a human rights approach and the application of the SES, evaluations are critical of UNDP's capabilities and positioning in this area. The 2018-21 Evaluation of the Strategic Plan highlights examples of projects where UNDP has operationalised LNOB principles, but also points to challenges that UNDP faces in systematically integrating the LNOB agenda, given that it does not routinely assess the systemic and underlying reasons for vulnerability. The evaluation recommends that UNDP focuses more on data collection and analysis, and on enacting inclusive and integrated strategies and policies to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

Element 3: **Corporate-level reporting on achievement against human rights and LNOB targets is limited**. A majority of the sampled independent evaluations (including global and thematic evaluations and country programme evaluations) evaluated results on human rights; however, decentralised evaluations did not.** The UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 (SERF) requires UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to ensure that the UN's programmatic and non-programmatic interventions address human rights concerns and advance human rights; integrate international norms, standards and principles in the design and implementation of socio-economic responses; and advise states on how to steer away from policies that could aggravate inequalities and human rights grievances for at-risk groups. The recently revised SES have bolstered the inclusion of disability rights. UNDP quality standards for programming require that all programming applies the core principles of human rights, gender equality, resilience, sustainability and LNOB. For its evaluations, UNDP applies UNEG standards on IEO evaluation guidelines, which require that human rights are assessed, where relevant.

Element 4: **Human rights are given greater attention and prominence than before, as demonstrated in the revised SES. All new projects and programmes are quality assured against human rights-based approach (HRBA) standards**. Principle 1 of UNDP's SES is Human Rights. The SES provide for the application of a human rights-based approach to development

1-2, 4-6, 26, 27, 49, 57, 59, 63, 75, 77-78, 80, 82, 85, 93, 97, 111, 126, 129, 140, 168, 173, 204-205, 207, 214

programming and the application of human rights principles at the programme and project levels. This translates into updated checklists and quality assurance methods to ensure that human rights standards have been considered and applied throughout UNDP's programme and management cycle. UNDP assesses the extent to which its programming applies the core principle of human rights (along with gender equality, resilience, sustainability and LNOB). New projects are assessed in terms of whether the project applies a human rights-based approach. To meet the standard, projects need to 1) provide evidence that they meet the three components of the human rights-based approach: accountability, meaningful participation and non-discrimination; and 2) assess potential adverse effects on the enjoyment of human rights and appropriate mitigation and management measures for the project design and budget. The human rights-based approach is applied throughout the project life cycle (design, implementation and closure). In 2019, for all new projects that were quality assured, 58% (763 out of 1 314) met minimum standards, and 41% (536 out of 1 314) exceeded minimum standards. Some 87% (3 983 out of 4 582) of UNDP's established projects were rated satisfactory or higher on human rights quality standards. The Guidance Note on Disability Inclusive Development is intended to assist UNDP to support disability inclusion to further the SDGs in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, using a human rights-based approach.

Element 5: **UNDP has a core team of staff working on human rights in the Global Policy Network within the integrated Rule of Law, Security and Human Rights team, which leads UNDP's human rights work and has the corporate responsibility for supporting human rights and its mainstreaming within the organisation.** This includes at global and regional levels where there are advisors and a focal point in Geneva to support UNDP's engagement at the Human Rights Council. UNDP has projects supporting human rights (either stand-alone or integrated) in 40 country offices with project teams. Human rights is also a mainstreamed responsibility whereupon individual teams are expected to mainstream human rights with the support of the human rights team. In 2019, USD 5.4 million was expended on technical capacity, policy development, knowledge management and capacity for the UNDP Global Programme on Human Rights and Rule of Law.

Element 6: Following the Human Rights Up Front initiatives, UNDP issued a mandatory course on UN Human Rights and Responsibilities, which was co-written across the UN by UNDP, OHCHR and other entities. Staff capacity is supported through rolling out tools to build capacity on human rights such as the Human Rights-Based Approach Checklist on socio-economic country responses to COVID-19 for UNDP country offices and UNCTs in 2020. The tool was sent to all resident representatives and regional hubs. When rolling out new tools, UNDP supports uptake through knowledge events. As such, UNDP launched a series of knowledge events to support the rollout of the checklist, including webinars to introduce the tool and gain feedback. Regional hub team leaders and leaders in UNDP were briefed on the tool in a dedicated session by the Global Response Team for COVID-19. UNDP also conducted staff training and webinars for the UNDP Human Rights Due Diligence Policy Implementation Framework tool.

UNDP is the only development system actor with its own Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) tool for staff, which includes guidance for implementation and regular direct support to country offices from a dedicated team. Therefore, tools are developed but also rolled out across the organisation using HRDDP methodologies and the community of practice. A survey conducted by the Development Effectiveness Group (2018) showed a high number of country offices felt they had the information on human rights-based approaches internally in UNDP. This informed the quality assurance support SES roll-out.

1-2, 4-6, 26, 27, 49, 57, 59, 63, 75, 77-78, 80, 82, 85, 93, 97, 111, 126, 129, 140, 168, 173, 204-205, 207, 214

| MI 2.3 Evidence confidence | High confidence |

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Assets and capacities organised behind strategic direction and intended results to ensure relevance, agility and account-ability

KPI 3: The operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility	KPI score
Satisfactory	2.87

The Strategic Plan 2018-21 proposes two business models and two delivery platforms to achieve its vision. The two roles spelled out in the Strategic Plan 2018-21 – "integrator" and "operational backbone" – require significantly different personnel profiles. In addition, UNDP is still predominantly a project implementor, with about 5 000 active development projects listed in its transparency portal. UNDP remains a highly decentralised entity, with 93% of its workforce at the country level. Clear policies on delegated decision making exist in principle, and decisions on resource allocation and programming are largely decentralised to country offices. Through the clustering approach and global shared services centres, UNDP is trying to professionalise and economise the processing of transactions, while keeping decision making at the field level. About 90% of stakeholders agree that personnel in the field have the right experience to operate in different country contexts. To be an effective integrator, personnel with credible development expertise and policy profile are needed, and UNDP captures the experience and knowledge of its workforce.

UNDP is a voluntarily funded organisation with multiple income streams; however, it remains disproportionately reliant on a small group of core (regular) resource donors to maintain corporate structures. Resource mobilisation is predominantly field-based and centres on project implementation, not necessarily policy integration or wider SDG financing. The organisation struggled with financial sustainability in the 2018-19 biennium due to reduced core (regular) contributions and was focused on balancing its books as a priority. Several rounds of restructuring during the review period, which were conceived at different time with different objectives, resulted in few discernible structural changes. Nevertheless, efforts on business process improvement resulted in approximately USD 240 million in resources being redeployed for programming in UNDP's own account. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found that "UNDP has made good progress improving its management and operations and showing determination to be a more client-oriented operational services provider with commitment to improving people management, learning and development." Still it also attests that UNDP should "evolve and innovate its business model, […] expand its adaptive management capabilities and develop additional funding models that increase agility and flexibility".

UNDP has consistently championed UN system efforts, such as the use of pooled funding, the application of mutual recognition principles, and the shared ownership of the UN Resident Coordinator system through the application of the mutual accountability framework. UNDP's contribution to the smooth transition of the RC function is widely recognised and acknowledged by the UN Secretariat.

MI 3.1: Organisational structures and staffing ensure that human and financial resources are constantly aligned and adjusted to key functions	Score
Overall MI rating	Satisfactory
Overall MI score	2.67
Element 1: Organisational structure is aligned with, or being reorganised to, requirements set out in the current strategic plan	2
Element 2: Staffing is aligned with, or being reorganised to, requirements set out in the current strategic plan	2
Element 3: Resource allocations across functions are aligned to current organisational priorities and goals as set out in the current strategic plan	3
Element 4: Internal restructuring exercises have a clear purpose and intent aligned to the priorities of the current strategic plan	2

Element 5: [UN] engagement in supporting the Resident Coordinator systems through cost-sharing and Resident Coordinator nominations	4
Element 6: [UN] application of mutual recognition principles in key functional areas	3

MI 3.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP's decentralised structure is well aligned to its role as operational backbone, including the delivery of programmes and projects; however, the structure is less adapted to the role of integrator. UNDP remains a highly decentralised entity, with 93% of its workforce in the field. UNDP's structure encompasses nine (five regional and four central) bureaux located in New York, five regional hubs, three global shared service centres, and 135 country offices covering 170 countries and territories. The overall bureau structure has remained remarkably constant over the last decade, even though UNDP witnessed far-reaching external changes to which it responded with significant shifts in strategy. Headquarters and regional hubs went through a series of corporate restructurings (including structural change of headquarters, abolition of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery [BCPR], creation of GPN, RC delinking), which were less strategy and more a desire to improve organisational performance. Not all restructurings were successful; for instance, the abolition of BCPR was reversed four years later. The creation of the Global Policy Network was welcomed by the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21, but its infrastructure needs to be completed, regional barriers removed and global centres more integrated for it to deliver on its promise. Only a very small team at headquarters is tasked with SDG integration, while other structures still appear to follow a sectorial/thematic logic. With two Under-Secretary-General (USG) and nine Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) roles, the number of top positions is high compared to other United Nations Development System (UNDS) entities with similar resource volume (e.g. UNICEF and one USG and four ASG). The abolition of the BCPR did not result in a reduction at the ASG level, nor did the transfer of the RC function impact the level of regional director positions. The Strategic Plan 2018-21 anticipated "vertical and/or subregional horizontal clustering of operational services as determined by a clear cost/benefit case". However, progress has been uneven across country offices so far, and by the end of 2021 an estimated USD 15 million in cost avoidance is anticipated, but has not yet materialised. In the MOPAN survey, over 80% of respondents agreed that UNDP has the right and sufficient number of staff available to deliver intended results, and over 90% of sampled co-ordinating ministries agreed that UNDP provides high-quality operational services in a timely and cost-efficient fashion.	1-2, 6, 8, 24, 35, 37, 39, 67, 70, 95-98, 158, 177, 189, 190, 203, 214
Element 2: While UNDP has started important staffing initiatives to strengthen its policy advisory function, the large numbers of general service staff and service contract holders appear at odds with UNDP's policy integrator role. The two roles spelled out in the Strategic Plan 2018-21 – "integrator" and "operational backbone" – require significantly different personnel profiles. The workforce includes only about 13% of international professionals and above positions, typically associated with policy advisor profiles. To be an effective integrator, personnel with credible development expertise and policy profile are needed, and UNDP has now put in place a new system, called DELVE (a database of staff profiles), to better capture the experience and knowledge of its workforce so that the GPN can better draw on it. The appointment of new senior managers across 140 offices following the RC delinking was a major staff realignment opportunity that UNDP took advantage of, and which resulted in gender-balanced and geographically diverse country leadership. The creation of 60 accelerator labs also provided an opportunity for professionals to return to their country of origin, and 24% of those who joined were repatriates. The joint assessment of UNDP's institutional effectiveness found that UNDP was challenged to fill policy advisory functions, with 124 out of 524 positions vacant at the end of 2015. The evaluation	

of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 found that UNDP had become a leaner organisation by reducing the number of staff while increasing the number of consultants. By 2015, the number of headquarter staff fell from 980 to 668, with workforce planning being "ad-hoc and reactive".

The new People for 2030 strategy was launched in 2020 and puts more emphasis on the needs of knowledge workers, including through fostering diversity, rewarding excellence and providing flexible career paths. However, the evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan highlights that the Office of Human Resources needs to be more closely aligned with the Executive Office or the Organisational Performance Group to ensure that human resourcing and capabilities are better considered in strategic planning and decision making. In addition, the evaluation found that UNDP needs to be "more adequately equip[ped]" with specialised gender staff in line with their commitments on gender.

For the role of operational backbone, a more transaction-oriented administrative profile is needed. The evaluation of inter-agency operational services found that UNDP faces significant challenges in providing these services at the country level. As the largest service provider in the UN development system, with USD 1.3 billion in payroll disbursements in 114 currencies, 50% of personnel are service contract holders and 17% general service staff, which tend to be staff operational and administrative roles. The UNDP Executive Board expressed concerns in 2015 and 2016 over the high number of service contracts and the delays in the evaluation of their work, which runs counter to UNDP's policies. Since the average country office only has a handful of international professionals, national personnel increasingly carry all programmatic and operational functions, except for representation, for which they are not eligible. Moreover, national officers (8% of the workforce) and general service categories are bound to their home country. Even though national officers tend to use "global knowledge" and best practice – to which they also contribute – they cannot be deployed globally. So the national officer category increasingly appears anachronistic.

Element 3: UNDP is a voluntarily funded organisation with multiple income streams; however, it remains disproportionately reliant on a small group of core (regular) resource donors to maintain corporate structures. UNDP total resources increased from USD 4.4 billion in 2015 to USD 4.8 billion in 2019; however, during that period the share of core (regular) resources shrunk from 16% (USD 704 million) to 13% (USD 629 million). The organisation struggled with financial sustainability in the 2016-17 biennium due to reduced core (regular) contributions, and was focused on balancing its books as a priority. The allocation of core programme resources (about USD 414 million in 2019) follows an elaborate board-approved formula, using gross national income (GNI) per person and population figures as key factors, which assigns resources country-by-country with little management discretion. Core resources (USD 214 million in 2019) also fund minimum structures at headquarters (i.e. fixed costs) and base funding for corporate functions, such as evaluation.

The bulk of UNDP functions depend on other resources and earnings from cost recovery, particularly for operational services. At the corporate level, cost recovery is well organised through global service level agreements with UN entities that are executed by global shared service centres. At the country level, however, UNDP continues to struggle to recover the cost for its services. The audit of cost-recovery practices in 2015 found that the Atlas module was cumbersome and difficult to use, and therefore there was no effective way to ensure that costs were recovered. Over the years covered in this assessment, cost recovery performance has been somewhat erratic, with an 18% increase in recovery in 2016 followed by an 11.4% decrease the following year. Overall, country offices, which are largely self-financing, had to adapt to an increasingly scarce funding

1-2, 6, 8, 24, 35, 37, 39, 67, 70, 95-98, 158, 177, 189, 190, 203, 214

environment, resulting in the downsizing of offices and programmes during the previous strategic planning period. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, cost recovery exceptions had been made, with a general management support rate of 5% proposed, down from 8%.

Element 4: While corporate restructurings appear to have a clear purpose, it is less clear to what extent that purpose is achieved. The three most significant corporate reorganisation efforts were the establishment of the Crisis Bureau, the appointment of resident representatives following the delinking of the RC function, and the creation of the GPN in 2018. The GPN is an attempt to respond to UNDP's policy integrator role; however, it is neither a structure nor an operational entity given that resources and people remain assigned to bureaux. The Bureau for Programme and Policy Support and the Crisis Bureau are the two "anchor bureaux" of the GPN and were subjected to several rounds of restructuring during the review period. The Crisis Bureau was created in 2018 after the BCPR was abolished in 2014. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 found that "institutional restructuring dissolved a well-recognised and integrated crisis prevention and recovery unit". The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 notes that although the GPN marks an improvement in policy support, the GPN's infrastructure, capacity mapping and engagement with policy centres, external stakeholders and regional units are still works in progress. Therefore, the GPN's potential for improved and more efficient country-level policy support has not yet been fully realised. However, interview data and the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 show that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an "accelerating effect" on the use of the GPN.

In response to their "integrator" role, UNDP has also implemented country support platforms (in 55, or 45%, country offices as of 2019) to support countries in designing and delivering multisectoral and multi-stakeholder solutions to the SDGs. Again, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 highlights that the platforms have strong potential and can improve innovation, integration and engagement at the country level, but they have not yet fully realised their potential. The evaluation found that planning for effectiveness and sustainability, monitoring and guidance and support for country offices were all issues that had limited the success of the country support platforms thus far.

Element 5: UNDP's contribution to the smooth transition of the RC function is widely recognised. In its own assessment "UNDP powered United Nations reform", and objectively that is not an overstatement. Following the decision to delink the RC function from UNDP, the organisation actively supported the UN Secretariat in a remarkably smooth transition. As of July 2020, 54 senior UNDP staff were seconded to the UN Secretariat to serve as UN Resident Coordinators. An additional 133 staff members are part of the Resident Coordinator pool of assessed candidates ready for deployment. UNDP is clearly committed to ensuring that the UN Secretariat has sufficient qualified people to deploy as needed. During the transition in 2019-2020, UNDP continued to support Resident Coordinators in-country through their systems, procedures and people. It directly administered 129 Resident Coordinator offices and three UN Development Co-ordination regional offices. UNDP's partnership survey showed that 73% of respondents were satisfied with UNDP support to the Resident Coordinator. UNDP fully paid its increased cost-sharing contribution of USD 10.3 million per year. Issues on the exact division of labour between the UN Resident Coordinator, with a focus on "co-ordination", and the UNDP Resident Representative, with a focus on "integration", have not yet been fully resolved and have occasionally become a source of tension. In the MOPAN survey, over 85% of co-ordinating ministries sampled felt that UNDP appointed resident representatives in a timely fashion following the split of the RC function.

Element 6: UNDP makes use of mutual accountability, particularly for procurement, but understanding is uneven across country offices. UNDP is fully committed to business process simplification in line with UN reform efforts in its strategic plan. Even prior to the latest round of

1-2, 6, 8, 24, 35, 37, 39, 67, 70, 95-98, 158, 177, 189, 190, 203, 214

UN reforms, UNDP spearheaded the concept of mutual recognition in inter-agency fora, such as the High-level Committee on Management, and was one of the first agencies to sign the "Mutual Recognition Principles". However, at the country level concerns persist as to whether vendor sourcing using long-term arrangements negotiated by another UN entity holds up to the scrutiny of auditors, as pointed out by the evaluation of inter-agency operational services (2018). At the country level, very few staff across agencies understood the concept of mutual recognition, which limits its uptake and application.	1-2, 6, 8, 24, 35, 37, 39, 67, 70, 95-98, 158, 177, 189, 190, 203, 214
MI 3.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 3.2: Resource mobilisation efforts consistent with the core mandate and strategic priorities	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.80**
Element 1: Resource mobilisation strategy/case for support explicitly aligned to current strategic plan	2
Element 2: Resource mobilisation strategy/case for support reflects recognition of need to diversify the funding base, particularly in relation to the private sector	2
Element 3: Resource mobilisation strategy/case for support seeks multi-year funding within mandate and strategic priorities	3
Element 4: Resource mobilisation strategy/case for support prioritises the raising of domestic resources from partner countries/institutions, aligned to goals and objectives of the strategic plan/ relevant country plan	3
Element 5: [UN] 1% levy systematically collected and passed on to the UN Secretariat	4
MI 3.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: Resource mobilisation is predominantly field-based and centres on project implementation, not necessarily policy integration or wider SDG financing. UNDP issued a corporate resource mobilisation strategy notionally aligned to its strategic plan in 2018. The strategy details five major funding streams, including unearmarked regular resources and various types of earmarked funding mobilised at global, regional and country levels. Reflecting UNDP's decentralised nature, while the strategy explicitly references the Strategic Plan 2018-21, it does not attempt to orchestrate resource mobilisation in support of specific results. Instead, the strategy focuses on types of donors (e.g. OECD/DAC, government cost-sharing) and resource mobilisation processes (e.g. funding dialogue). While UNDP has made efforts to align thematic funding windows more explicitly with the strategic plan, in practice, most other resources are mobilised at the country level and/or through vertical fund arrangements to support results contained in individual country programmes.	2, 4-5, 8, 16, 33, 55, 70, 86, 96-97, 99, 104, 128, 187, 197
Element 2: UNDP still relies on about a dozen OECD/DAC donors for 85% of its predictable core funding, and broadening the core donor base remains a significant challenge. With regards to other resources, UNDP has been able to secure broad support for its country presence, with 75% of host governments meeting their obligations for local office costs (GLOC). However, particularly in MICs, a declining donor base has triggered an overreliance on government cost-sharing and vertical funds as the only programme resources, with implications for alignment to the strategic plan. With regards to new donors, such as the private sector or high-net-worth individuals, efforts to broaden the donor base are underway, but still need to go beyond anecdotal incidents.	

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP has intensified efforts to broaden the donor base, particularly with the private sector and international financial institutions (IFIs). UNDP launched COVID-19 Private Sector Global Facility and has collaborated with IFIs on socio-economic assessments and recovery planning. **Element 3: UNDP is increasingly able to secure multi-year commitments, with 43% of core contributions in 2018 due to multi-year donor arrangements. This share increased to 58% in 2019.** Interviews attested to significant efforts to secure multi-year funding commitment at the country level, but also noted the reluctance of donors to invest in medium-term institutional work. UNDP's work on COVID-19 showcased the importance of flexible multi-year funding in crisis response, which generated donor interest. **Element 4: UNDP raises significant amounts of programme country cost sharing, which amounted to USD 1.8 billion in the 2018-19 biennium.** Furthermore, UNDP supports programmatic efforts aimed at increasing domestic revenue, such as the UNDP-OECD Tax Inspectors Without Borders initiative, which resulted in an additional USD 532 million. UNDP also supports the conceptualisation and development of new financial instruments, such as green bonds, social impact bonds and Islamic sukuk bonds intended to attract private investors. While private sector funding to UNDP is still in its infancy, the focus on private financing for the SDGs fully aligns with the "move from funding to financing" principle of the 2030 Development Agenda. The case of the Accelerated Delivery Initiative in Serbia highlighted that attempts to raise government cost-sharing can lead to unintended consequences, such as the diversion of funding away from agreed outputs as shown in the Serbia independent country programme evaluation (ICPE) (2019). **Element 5: UNDP has put systematic measures in place to collect and pass on the 1% levy in line with instructions by the UN Secretariat.** By the end of June 2020, UNDP had collected USD 1.5 million, while in 2019 it collected a total of USD 2.68 million. Interviews indicate that the reduction in the amount collected is due to changes in donor behaviour, such as direct payment of the levy to the UN Secretariat and less tight earmarking, and are not a reflection of UNDP's commitment. The MOPAN survey revealed that only half of the sampled donor representatives know if their governments have arrangement for collection of the levy in place; however, among the rest almost all affirmed that UNDP has arrangements in place. This points to further need to communicate arrangements concerning the levy by the UN Secretariat and donors.	2, 4-5, 8, 16, 33, 55, 70, 86, 96-97, 99, 104, 128, 187, 197

MI 3.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 3.3: Resource reallocation/programming decisions responsive to need can be made at a decentralised level	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**33.00**
Element 1: An organisation-wide policy or guidelines exist that describe the delegation of decision-making authorities at different levels of the organisation	4
Element 2: Policy/guidelines or other documents provide evidence of a sufficient level of decision-making autonomy available at the country level (or other decentralised level as appropriate) regarding resource reallocation/programming	3
Element 3: Evaluations or other reports contain evidence that reallocation/programming decisions have been made to positive effect at country or other local level as appropriate	2
Element 4: The MO has made efforts to improve or sustain the delegation of decision-making on resource allocation/programming to the country or other relevant levels	3

MI 3.3 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: A robust system of delegated decision making is in place. UNDP traditionally has been one of the most decentralised UN entities, with most project approval, payment, procurement and recruitment delegated to heads of offices. Resident representatives in crisis contexts can invoke "fast track" procedures, that allow for speedier processing with an emphasis on *ex post* reviews instead of *ex ante* controls and with direct accountability of the head of office. The corporate accountability framework takes a function view of accountabilities and serves as the single point of reference for authorities of the Administrator, other officials explicitly empowered through UNDP's Financial Regulations and Rules, and the system of delegated authority. Programmatic responsibility is shared with programme countries in line with the principles of mutual accountability of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the standard basic agreement of assistance. In the MOPAN survey, over 80% of donors and peer organisations agreed that UNDP can make critical strategic decisions locally, and over 85% of implementing partners stated that UNDP openly communicates the basis for resource allocations.	
Element 2: Clear policies on delegated decision making exist, and decisions on resource allocation and programming are largely decentralised to country offices. Through the clustering approach and global shared services centres, UNDP is trying to professionalise and economise the processing of transactions while keeping decision making at the field level. Internal reviews and Executive Board feedback signal strong support for this approach. However, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found that the clustering process on where transaction-level services are performed "is still much delayed and poorly communicated".	2, 4-5, 7, 17, 23-24, 37-39, 48, 76, 80, 94
Element 3: In practice the ability of country offices to reprogramme and/or reallocate funding is limited by the nature of UNDP's funding model. Regular resources are distributed based on a formula, and no reallocation across countries is possible. However, within a country these resources can and are being reprogrammed with consent of the host government, in particular in response to shocks and crises, as seen in the case of COVID-19. Other resources can allow for higher degrees of reprogramming, usually with the agreement of a steering committee, as in the case of pooled funding. However, interview evidence shows that in most cases, reallocation is not possible due to restrictive donor provisions.	
Element 4: UNDP holds regular internal and external discussions on the appropriate level of delegation. Delegations to heads of offices are issued by the Chief Financial Officer based on an assessment of the capacity of the office and the local needs. Changes in the level of delegation of authority can be triggered by changes in personnel, as well as external events. Most recently, the delinking of the Resident Coordinators required a new set of delegations of authority to be issues to newly appointed resident representatives. The Board of Auditors noted "opportunities to refine the internal control framework" in personnel management and in some instances found shortcomings in the segregation of duties due to limited staffing and/or the assignment of staff functions to personnel holding other contract types.	
MI 3.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 3.4: HR systems and policies are performance based and geared to the achievement of results	Score
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: A system is in place which requires all staff, including senior staff, to undergo performance assessment	4
Element 2: There is evidence that the performance assessment system is systematically and implemented by the organisation for all staff and to the required frequency	2
Element 3: The performance assessment system is clearly linked to organisational improvement, particularly the achievement of corporate objectives, and enables staff to demonstrate ability to work with other entities	3
Element 4: Staff performance assessment is applied in decision-making on promotion, incentives, rewards, sanctions, etc.	3
Element 5: A clear process is in place to manage disagreement and complaints regarding staff performance assessments	3
MI 3.4 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: Clear policies and online systems are in place to assess the performance of all staff members, including senior managers. A separate procedure is in place for the performance assessment of ASG and USG positions who report directly to the Administrator. The new performance management policy does not include a rating scale as such number ratings are not comparable across different the country contexts that UNDP operates in. Instead, the new system relies more on a contextual assessment of results, performance, competences and future career potential, and includes feedback from several people, including the direct supervisor. **Element 2: The performance assessment system is systematically used by all staff members, but does not cover large parts of other personnel, especially service contract holders.** UNDP has struggled with performance assessment compliance for some time, but overall compliance has improved as the performance system has become more relevant to staff members' career aspirations. Completion rates were only 31% in 2013, but moved up to 87% in 2016 and have remained stable since. However, the current system does not cover the large number of service contract holders (10 000 employees), and their performance assessment is much more variable. **Element 3: Through unit work plans, the performance of individual staff members is linked to unit and corporate results.** However, not all areas of work are captured by unit work plans, and particularly operational services to UN entities other than UNDP at the country level are not linked back to individual performance. This might explain the variance in service quality and the gaps in service feedback between UNDP and UN entities. **Element 4: Personnel decisions, including assignments and promotions, are expected to be based on performance assessments in line with the policy.** Interviews revealed that greater efforts are being made to incentivise staff members, for instance through international temporary assignments, and to link personal performance more clearly to organisational performance. The proportion of non-performers in UNDP is about 5%, and processes are being put in place to address this in line with UN staff regulations and rules. Only staff members who achieve "satisfactory service" are eligible for within-grade salary increments. In cases of non-performance, the staff member is required to develop a Performance Improvement Plan to identify and improve upon performance issues. In case of non-compliance with the Plan, the staff member's contract can be terminated.	18, 95, 97, 214

Element 5: Formal recourse mechanisms are part of the performance assessment policy and system through rebuttal panels and the UN Dispute Tribunal in extreme cases. The new talent review and performance management policy somewhat limits the formal appeals process to cases of non-performance, as the assessment is no longer undertaken using a scale. While staff members make use of recourse mechanisms, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 suggests that "the organisation is not as open as it should be". The Strategic Plan 2018-21 evaluation suggests that progress has been limited, indicating that the management of poor performance is avoided even in cases where complaints were made by partner organisations.	18, 95, 97, 214
MI 3.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable financial transparency and accountability	**KPI score**
Satisfactory	**3.00**

The responsible stewardship of resources is essential for UNDP given its fully voluntarily financed business model. All resources are brought together in the integrated budget, but the corporate allocation mechanism only affects core (regular) resources, which are about 13% of total resources. Thus, UNDP's concept of results-based budgeting is deficient; while budgets disclose the use of all resources, their purpose can only be understood through *ex post* reporting. No prioritisation of resources is discernible in the integrated budget, and the level of granularity, particularly on human resources, is not conducive to portraying a meaningful relationship between resources and results. UNDP's decentralised delivery mechanisms are sufficiently robust to withstand shocks with delivery, reaching 94% of the planned target in 2019. A risk-informed approach is used to detect potential fraud and corruption issues, and its internal audit and investigation function includes 91 posts, half of which are based in regional hubs. UNDP has regularly been recognised as the most transparent UN organisation. Its default policy is that all information is published unless there is an overriding reason for information to be kept confidential.

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is prohibited through the Secretary-General's Bulletin on sexual exploitation and abuse, which applies to all UNDP personnel. UNDP has a designated policy on sexual harassment (SH), which is aligned to UN and Chief Executive Board (CEB) standards and extends to all UNDP personnel, and a code of ethics which bans SH of all types and SEA. UNDP has taken the important step of establishing a strategy and action plan which sets out UNDP's efforts to prevent and respond to SEA and SH, which is led by a multi-sectoral task force headed by UNDP's Chief of Staff. Nevertheless, tracking progress regarding protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) is made difficult by how the strategy is monitored. UNDP is actively engaged to ensure that all personnel better understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to preventing and responding to SEA and SH, although more effort is needed.

MI 4.1: Transparent decision-making for resource allocation, consistent with strategic priorities over time (adaptability)	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.00**
Element 1: An explicit organisational statement or policy is available that clearly defines criteria for allocating resources to partners	2
Element 2: The criteria reflect targeting to the highest priority themes/countries/areas of intervention as set out in the current strategic plan	2
Element 3: Resource allocation mechanisms allow for adaptation in different contexts	3
Element 4: The organisational policy or statement is regularly reviewed and updated	1

MI 4.1 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: As a matter of policy, all planned resources are indicated in country programme documents, and authority over resources is delegated to country offices; however, for the most part these are not allocations to partners but in effect resource mobilisation targets given that the bulk of resources are raised at the country level. UNDP maintains the "Target for Resource Assignment from Core" (TRAC) allocation model for core (regular) resources, which is implicitly approved by the Executive Board as part of the integrated budget. The model reserves a defined share of total core (regular) resources for each country, but thematically country offices are free to programme these resources in agreement with the government. "The TRAC-1 calculation is complex, having evolved over almost two decades to replace the previous entitlement-based system". However, 87% of all UNDP resources are non-core (other) resources for which no allocation mechanism exists, and each office is responsible for its own resource mobilisation. In the MOPAN survey, over 70% of recipients of UNDP financing agreed that criteria for the allocation of resources were openly communicated.	
Element 2: The allocation model for core (regular) resources does not contain explicit criteria, and no allocation model for non-core (other) resources exists. Within the TRAC system, regional directors have flexibility over a small proportion of core (regular) resources that can be allocated to priority countries. In addition, the model also provides a small share of resources for crisis and emergency response. No programmatic criteria are in place and interviews indicate that the allocation of these resources is driven by several considerations, including country and office needs, risks, and opportunities. Due to the complexity of the formula, regional directors have very little flexibility with regards to location, but offices are not bound thematically. UNDP's own analysis shows: "While regular resources funding was distributed across the signature solutions, earmarked funding and government financing mostly funded UNDP work in poverty eradication and governance."	1, 7-8, 16, 23, 96, 187
Element 3: While the allocation model does not provide for reallocation between countries, thematically country offices have full flexibility, subject to agreement with stakeholders. The COVID-19 experience demonstrates that the funding model can be quite flexible thematically, as UNDP managed to re-programme USD 982 million in support of the COVID-19 response. Even if reallocation across countries is not possible for core (regular) resources, their purpose is not centrally controlled beyond the broad strokes of the strategic plan, and on non-core (other) resources UNDP is free to agree with stakeholders, including donors and programme countries, on the repurposing of projects and resources. The MOPAN survey found that all stakeholders, including 100% of Executive Board representatives, agree that UNDP adjusts its work to changing contexts.	
Element 4: The core (regular) resource allocation model is lightly adjusted and presented again with every new strategic plan as part of the underpinning integrated budget; however, the basic concept has not changed for two decades. An annex to the integrated budget explains the TRAC model in reasonable detail, including the two basic allocation parameters (GNI per capita and total population), how regional allocations are derived, and various thresholds and allocation safeguards that benefit least developed countries and low-income countries. The evaluation of UNDP Development Cooperation in MICs (2020) pointed out that the use of GNI as part of the allocation formula is a "significant constraint for UNDP programming", particularly in middle-income countries and in light of the 2030 Development Agenda, with emphasis on "Leave No One Behind".	
MI 4.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.2: Allocated resources disbursed as planned	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.25**
Element 1: The institution sets clear targets for disbursement to partners	3
Element 2: Financial information indicates that planned disbursements were met within institutionally agreed margins	3
Element 3: Clear explanations, including changes in context, are available for any variances against plans	3
Element 4: Variances relate to external factors rather than to internal procedural blockages	4
MI 4.2 Analysis	**Source documents**

Element 1: UNDP sets clear disbursement targets to implementing partners through project documents; however, its delivery against its results framework is uneven. UNDP delivered 94% of its quadrennial expenditure target of USD 22.6 billion. However, significant gaps exist between planned and disbursed resources at the level of UNDP outcomes and Signature Solutions. In other words, these resources were not always spent on the outcomes that were initially intended. This has been a challenge for UNDP during the last and the current planning cycle, as revealed by the evaluation of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan: "The large gap between planned and actual expenditures of both core and non-core resources under outcome 6 suggests a need for improved planning and budgeting of UNDP's work." In the MOPAN survey, about 80% of co-ordinating ministries and implementing partners agreed that UNDP provides reliable information on financial allocations and disbursements.

Element 2: UNDP's annual reporting includes financial information by type of funding source, and at that level, planned expenditures and actual expenditures aligned within an institutionally acceptable 10% margin in 2018 and 2019. UNDP submits audited financial statements every year that include financial information, including income, budgets and disbursement data. Expenditure rations based on income, which can reflect multi-year commitments, and budgets, which show planned expenditures, are presented. The country-level planning cycles are independent from the corporate planning cycle, so UNDP tends to carry forward "legacy allocations" for projects aligned with the previous strategic plan, which amounted to USD 587 million for 2018-19. There is no corporately agreed transition period for disbursements planned under a previous planning cycle to be brought in line with the new planning cycle.

Element 3: UNDP's annual reporting, both programmatic and financial, includes a high-level analysis of delivery trends across country offices. The most significant variances are less because of challenges in delivery, and primarily due to resource mobilisation shortfalls. For instance, several Signature Solutions (energy, gender) were only able to attract 1% or 2% of total resources. At the country level, offices report to national stakeholders on an annual basis on the level of implementation of the country programme, and at this level explanations on changes in context and the materialisation of risks are presented to contextualise divergence in output levels. Regarding the COVID-19 response, UNDP has developed an internal COVID-19 dashboard that tracks fund allocation, expenditure and funding source. However, this does not track variance in crisis response packages or changes in the underlying development context.

Element 4: UNDP's delivery machinery is robust, which means that internal blockages only rarely have corporate-wide impact. Given the large number of partners UNDP interacts with to deliver its programme, internal blockages tend to be temporary and confined to a few country

4-5, 8, 24, 60-61, 86, 97, 128, 187, 214

contexts. The development of "fast track procedures" applicable to crisis countries is an example of how UNDP removed potential administrative hurdles to speed up delivery within a defined risk context. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 attests to that: "The results achieved with over 900 government partners accounted for USD 4.6 billion in programme delivery – the highest in five years – while resources increased by 6% with the support of 134 Governments." The COVID experience showed that UNDP procedures are resilient and well-suited to withstand shocks, with the evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan stating: "UNDP was particularly swift to adjust many of its business services, systems and procedures in response to COVID-19."	4-5, 8, 24, 60-61, 86, 97, 128, 187, 214
MI 4.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.3: Principles of results-based budgeting applied	Score
Overall MI rating	**Highly unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**1.50**
Element 1: The most recent organisational budget clearly aligns financial resources with strategic objectives/intended results of the current strategic plan	1
Element 2: A budget document is available that provides clear costs for the achievement of each management result	2
Element 3: Systems are available and used to track costs from activity to result (outcome)	2
Element 4: There is evidence of improved costing of management and development results in budget documents reviewed over time (evidence of building a better system)	1
MI 4.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: Results-based budgeting is poorly implemented by UNDP, as has been documented by the evaluations of both the current and the previous strategic plan. UNDP's integrated budget presents both programmatic and management results funded by all types of resources. The strategic plan 2018-21 presents three outcomes, and core (regular) and non-core (other) resources are linked to each outcome. The plan also contains UNDP's outputs, also referred to as "Signature Solutions"; however, no resources are linked to this level. UNDP uses a format harmonised with other agencies for its integrated budget, but the Signature Solutions are unique to UNDP and do not conform with the harmonised template. While UNDP controls outputs, but only contributes to outcomes, it appears that the level at which resources are matched is misaligned. Interviews indicate that outputs (Signature Solutions) are not used for budgeting, but only for reporting purposes. The integrated budget document explains that "the amounts of the resource plan presented in the IRRF are indicative only, based on historical data, and actual expenditure will be analysed every year in the Annual Report of the Administrator". The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 reiterates many of the findings of previous evaluations concerning results-based budgeting: "results-based budgeting is not very evident in UNDP's funding strategy".

Element 2: The logic and structure of management results in the strategic plan and in the integrated budget is different. In addition, there is evidence of enhanced cost control in the achievement of management results. The strategic plan includes three "UNDP enablers" at the institutional level, while the integrated budget presents six objectives that only partially overlap with institutional results. Moreover, resource allocation at the institutional level cannot be easily reconciled between the integrated budget and the strategic plan. Interviews revealed that the objectives contained in the integrated budget are a holdover dating back two planning cycles that were never fully adjusted to the current strategic plan. | 1, 4, 6-8, 15-16, 48, 55, 95, 97, 187, 214 |

Element 3: The strength of cost-tracking systems compensates in part for some of the weaknesses in UNDP's budgeting process. UNDP's enterprise resource planning system is effective in tracking costs from activity to outcomes, and additional systems have been put in place to track its contribution to results. However, given that resources are insufficiently linked to results in the planning phase, the benefit of resource tracking is limited to reporting and does not support adaptive planning. UNDP is currently planning to replace its 15-year-old enterprise resource planning system, which was the first global system in the UN, with a newer, user-friendly and more adaptable model. Evaluations consistently pointed out that "Large claims in results-oriented annual reporting often cannot be substantiated. Programme units need to be measured against actual results rather than against financial delivery."

Element 4: While UNDP is effective at controlling management costs, it has not made progress – or has even regressed – in the conceptual linkage of results to resources. The evaluation of the strategic plan 2014-17 found: "The organisation has yet to transition from political budgeting to more risk-and-results-based budgeting." Particularly with regards to human resources, which represent the largest cost category, UNDP's recent approach of "monetising positions" as part of the budget in effect obfuscates the true level of effort required to achieve results and erases the possibility of distinguishing between efforts undertaken by UNDP personnel compared to implementing partners and others who receive resources from UNDP. The annex to the integrated budget only discloses about 2% of personnel out of a 19 000-strong workforce, so there is no effective linkage of people to results.

	1, 4, 6-8, 15-16, 48, 55, 95, 97, 187, 214
MI 4.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.4: External audit or other external reviews certify that international standards are met at all levels, including with respect to internal audit	Score
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**4.00**
Element 1: External audit conducted which complies with international standards	4
Element 2: Most recent external audit confirms compliance with international standards across functions	4
Element 3: Management response is available to external audit	4
Element 4: Management response provides clear action plan for addressing any gaps or weaknesses identified by external audit	4
MI 4.4 Analysis	**Source documents**

Element 1: UNDP falls under the scope of the UN Board of Auditors and is reviewed annually in line with international standards. Reports by the UN Board of Auditors are submitted to the Executive Board and are posted on UNDP's website. The Office of Audit and Investigation Charter reflects that the office is responsible for independent and objective assurance and advisory activities in conformity with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. UNDP has also set up an Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC) to advise the Administrator.

20, 24, 26-31, 36-38, 66, 70, 128, 178

Element 2: The annual reports of the Board of Auditors confirm that UNDP's financial statements fairly present its financial position in line with the International Public Sector Accounting Standard.

Element 3: In line with UNDP's disclosure policy, audits and management responses are published. UNDP has published audits on a dedicated website since 2012. In 2020 alone, 90 audits of country offices and other organisational units were published. The Director of the Office of Audit and Investigation may choose to redact or withhold the audit report in extraordinary circumstances. **Element 4: The Administrator reports on the implementation of management responses to the Executive Board.** UNDP's prescriptive content on financial management includes guidance on the preparation of management responses to audits, including the acceptance of audit recommendations. As of December 2019, UNDP reported that it had fully implemented all long-standing audit observations. In its assessment, the clustering of transactional services, which is currently still ongoing, will mitigate 64% of recurring audit observations.	20, 24, 26-31, 36-38, 66, 70, 128, 178
MI 4.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.5: Issues or concerns raised by internal control mechanisms (operational and financial risk management, internal audit, safeguards, etc.) are adequately addressed	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**4.00**
Element 1: A clear policy or organisational statement exists on how issues identified through internal control mechanisms/reporting channels (including misconduct such as fraud, sexual misconduct) will be addressed	4
Element 2: Management guidelines or rules provide clear guidance on the procedures for addressing any identified issues and include timelines	4
Element 3: Clear guidelines are available for staff on reporting any issues identified	4
Element 4: A tracking system is available that records responses and actions taken to address any identified issues	4
Element 5: Governing body or management documents indicate that relevant procedures have been followed/action taken in response to identified issues, including recommendations from audits (internal and external) with clear timelines for action	4
MI 4.5 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: The UNDP Code of Ethics and the Accountability Framework contain clear guidance on how issues are supposed to be reported by UNDP personnel. The UN Board of Auditor noted "that UNDP's anti-fraud policy stated that staff members, non-staff personnel, vendors, implementing partners and responsible parties needed to be aware of their responsibility to prevent fraud and corruption. In this regard, UNDP's anti-fraud policy included various provisions related to raising awareness of this policy among internal and external stakeholders." **Element 2: UNDP's strong commitment to address issues is set out as part of its accountability system**: "UNDP will rigorously pursue disciplinary and other actions against perpetrators of fraud, including recovery of financial loss suffered by UNDP, or referring a matter to local or national authorities." With regard to responses on disciplinary matters, UNDP follows the time limits established through the UN system for the Administration of Justice. Interviews with the Office of Audit and Investigations confirmed that there were no outstanding audit recommendations in the prior year, which points to a positive trend.	21, 30, 37, 45, 68-69, 71-72, 128-129

Element 3: Several mechanisms are set up for UNDP personnel and external stakeholders to report issues. In addition to typical channels, such as anonymous reporting to the Office of Audit and Investigation, the Ethics Office, or the Ombudsman Office, UNDP also has a Social and Environmental Compliance Review and Stakeholder Response Mechanism that allows anyone who feels their well-being may be affected to file a complaint. Audits also positively noted the efforts of country offices to train personnel in the use of reporting mechanisms. UNDP's internal control systems are effective, as seen in the recent GEF audit, which was initiated by UNDP once an issue was reported.

Element 4: Cases referred to independent offices, such as the Office of Audit and Investigation, the Ethics Office, and the Office of the Ombudsperson, are tracked and reported on by them in their annual submissions to the Executive Board. Based on the outcome of investigations, UNDP tracks disciplinary actions and reports on the actions and outcomes in aggregated fashion to the Executive Board.

Element 5: The Executive Board regularly reviews UNDP's reporting. Executive Board records demonstrate that audit issues, including the report of the Office of Audit and Investigation and the Board of Auditors, were regularly discussed each year during the joint segment covering UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS. In the MOPAN survey, over 70% of all stakeholders, including 90% of Executive Board members, agree that UNDP identifies and responds to underperforming interventions.

	21, 30, 37, 45, 68-69, 71-72, 128-129
MI 4.5 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.6: Policies and procedures effectively prevent, detect, investigate and sanction cases of fraud, corruption and other financial irregularities	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.67**
Element 1: A clear policy/guidelines on fraud, corruption and any other financial irregularities is available and made public	4
Element 2: The policy/guidelines clearly define/s management and staff roles in implementing/ complying with them	4
Element 3: Staff training/awareness raising has been conducted on policy/guidelines	2
Element 4: There is evidence of policy/guidelines implementation, e.g. through regular monitoring and reporting to the governing body	4
Element 5: There are channels/mechanisms in place for reporting suspicion of misuse of funds (e.g. anonymous reporting channels and "whistle-blower" protection policy)	4
Element 6: Annual reporting on cases of fraud, corruption and other irregularities, including actions taken, and ensures that they are made public	4
MI 4.6 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP public policy clearly states that "Fraud and corruption in any form is unacceptable." Interviews indicate that a new anti-fraud policy, with action plan, was developed based on recommendations of the Board of Auditors. The UN Board of Auditors "reviewed the UNDP policy on fraud and other corrupt practices (UNDP anti-fraud policy) and considered it to be suitable to provide guidance on how UNDP aims to prevent, detect and address fraudulent acts". Interviews indicate that UNDP often chooses to implement projects directly instead of using national entities if there is a significant risk of fraud. Only in very rare cases, where the security situation does not allow for it, will UNDP work through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with field presence.	21, 26-34, 39, 41-42, 45, 71, 178

Element 2: The accountability framework and the internal control framework define clear roles for management and staff and reiterate the "zero tolerance" policy. UNDP's legal framework for addressing non-compliance with UN standards of conduct requires that all incidents of suspected fraud and corruption are to be reported. It further states: "UNDP will rigorously pursue disciplinary and other actions against perpetrators of fraud, including recovery of financial loss suffered by UNDP, or referring a matter to local or national authorities." UNDP's financial disclosure policy states that "All Staff Members and such other individuals have an obligation to avoid or mitigate situations in which their personal interests might conflict, or appear to conflict, with the interests of UNDP." In addition, interviews indicate that UNDP tends to use direct implementation in crisis countries to reduce the risk of corruption. The role of independent offices, such as the Office of Audit and Investigation, is set out in their charter.

Element 3: Staff training takes place through mandatory courses, but during times of significant staff turnover, the completion rate of such training can be low and does not capture all types of personnel consistently. Mandatory courses exist on UNDP's legal framework and ethics training, among others. In 2017 the Board of Auditors noted significant discrepancies in selected country offices in the completion of such mandatory training. The promulgation of disciplinary measures following fraud and corruption serve as a constant reminder to staff of the consequences of non-compliance.

Element 4: UNDP uses a risk approach to monitor issues of fraud and corruption, and regularly reports to the Executive Board. The Office of Audit and Investigation is independent and can pursue any leads it receives. In accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISA 240), the Board plans its audits of the financial statements so that it has a reasonable expectation of identifying material misstatements and irregularities (including those resulting from fraud). Interviews indicate that the enterprise risk management (ERM) system requires the use of a full risk assessment in the case of a fraud or corruption issue being identified. Spot checks reveal that most offices comply with the risk framework.

21, 26-34, 39, 41-42, 45, 71, 178

Element 5: UNDP has several channels for reporting any suspicion of misuse of funds, and has implemented a policy on protection from retaliation. Promoting ethical conduct and addressing allegations of abuse includes the following measures in line with the accountability framework: 1) establishment of a confidential hotline for reporting wrongdoing, including workplace harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority; 2) formalisation of the legal framework for non-compliance with United Nations standard of conduct, clarifying protection, policy and procedures against retaliation; 3) dissemination of information regarding disciplinary cases involving UNDP; 4) established grievance procedures outside formal channels through the Office of the Joint Ombudsperson; and 5) institutionalising a mandatory code of conduct/ ethics training for all staff. The Ethics Office has the responsibility to administer "whistle-blower" protection. The policy covers personnel, including consultants and contractors, but not other types of "non-personnel". The anti-fraud policy also points to an independent telephone service that allows for anonymous reporting of fraud free of charge worldwide.

Element 6: UNDP regularly reports on the aggregate number of cases reported, including actions taken. During 2019, the Office of Audit and Investigation opened 370 new cases and carried over 256 cases from 2018. UNDP also reports on the total financial loss as substantiated by investigation reports.

| **MI 4.6 Evidence confidence** | **High confidence** |

MI 4.7: Prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.75**
Element 1: Organisation-specific dedicated policy statement(s), action plan and/or code of conduct that address SEA are available, aligned to international standards, and applicable to all categories of personnel	3
Element 2: Mechanisms are in place to regularly track the status of implementation of the SEA policy at HQ and at field levels	2
Element 3: Dedicated resources and structures are in place to support implementation of policy and/or action plan at HQ and in programmes (covering safe reporting channels, and procedures for access to sexual and gender-based violence services)	3
Element 4: Quality training of personnel/awareness-raising on SEA policies is conducted with adequate frequency	3
Element 5: The organisation has clear standards and due diligence processes in place to ensure that implementing partners prevent and respond to SEA	2
Element 6: The organisation can demonstrate its contribution to inter-agency efforts to prevent and respond to SEA at field level, and SEA policy/best practice co-ordination fora at HQ	3
Element 7: Actions taken on SEA allegations are timely and their number related to basic information and actions taken/reported publicly	3
Element 8: The MO adopts a victim-centred approach to SEA and has a victim support function in place (stand-alone or part of existing structures) in line with its exposure/risk of SEA	2
MI 4.7 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: Sexual exploitation and abuse is prohibited through the Secretary-General's (SG) Bulletin on sexual exploitation and abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) and applies to all staff of the United Nations. UNDP has developed a Code of Ethics which explicitly proscribes SEA for all personnel, and has submitted a Strategy and Action plan to the SG that covers SEA and SH at the same time. UNDP has not yet developed an organisation-specific policy for addressing SEA and SH. The expected results and related indicators in the Action Plan do not consistently differentiate SEA and SH issues, and this conflation makes tracking of progress on PSEA difficult. According to UNDP's documentation, all staff are also responsible for "abiding by the UN Staff Rules and Regulations", which applies to all "staff members whose employment and contractual relationship are defined by a letter of appointment". The SEA section of the Code of Ethics specifically cites the UN Staff Rules and Regulations, as well as the Regulations Governing the Status, Basic Rights and Duties of Officials other than Secretariat Officials and Experts on Mission (which applies to all non-staff, volunteers, contractors, consultants, etc.). The code of ethics was developed to "promote, strengthen and support" an ethical culture throughout UNDP, setting out the behaviour, culture and standards expected of "all UNDP personnel" (including service contractors and interns). The Secretary-General's Bulletin applies "to all staff of the United Nations", whereas UNDP states that its strategy applies to "all UNDP personnel". UNDP applies the personnel categories used across the UN System, which includes staff, consultants, individual contractors, service contractors and interns. On its external website, UNDP defines SEA in accordance with the SG's Bulletin.	1, 9-10, 13, 21, 33, 37, 40-42, 44-45, 68, 142, 143, 144-156, 205

In 2018, UNDP replaced its Workplace Harassment and Abuse of Authority Guidelines (which did not include SEA) with the Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority, which also provides a definition of SEA.

Given the broad parameters of UNDP's programming, and the scope and arena of the beneficiaries that UNDP is involved with, SEA is a challenging area to tackle; however, this area has recently been strengthened through the 2019 revisions to UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, which now include SEA and GBV risks. The standards are explicit that "UNDP seeks to identify and address any risk of potential exposure of affected people to gender-based violence (GBV) and other abuse that may occur in connection with any of its supported activities.' This includes a zero-tolerance policy for SEA involving UNDP personnel, as well as personnel of UNDP implementing partners and responsible parties. In 2019, UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS jointly underwent an external independent review of their SEA and SH policies and procedures. UNDP's Enterprise Risk Management Framework was also revised in 2019 to include SEA as a risk sub-category (see also MI 5.4, Element 5).

Element 2: Mechanisms to track the status of implementation of progress on PSEA at HQ and field levels are emerging. UNDP's 2019-20 action plan sets out its expected results in prevention, reporting and repsonse, victim/survivor support, and accountability on both SEA and SH, and has activity-level indicators against which UNDP states it will report. According to the Action Plan, UNDP plans to further track the "impact" of the Plan through indicators related to SEA, including: the number of reported SEA cases and of retaliation cases related to SEA, average time to investigate a case and to take administrative/legal action, number of personnel placed on Clear Check, and readiness of personnel to report on SEA. It also commits to sharing with staff the results of the SEA survey, and the results of ad hoc surveys among beneficiaries and implementing partners. UNDP's SEA/SH task force is responsible for tracking progress and compliance with the indicators set out in the action plan. However, the action plan does not state how SEA-specific actions will be monitored by the task force to show progress. UNDP states that it reports progress to the Administrator's Executive Group, but the assessment team has not been able to see a report against the Action Plan.

One challenge lies in the fact that several of the "expected results" and related "indicators for success" deal with SEA and SH issues together. For example, the action plan includes: "SH and SEA safeguards built into all aspects of UNDP operations to prevent SH and SEA", "enhanced capacity of managers to effectively respond to SH and SEA" and "increased awareness among key constituencies about SH and SEA". This means that it may not be possible to determine the level of achievement of SEA-specific indicators on the basis of the action plan. UNDP's IRRF includes indicators for response to sexual and gender-based violence, but has yet to include SEA as part of its Organisational Effectiveness and Efficiency Performance scorecard. This is planned for the next IRRF.

Early efforts from country offices to highlight their work on SEA are reported in the ROAR. Offices have begun to submit an SH and SEA action plan, and accountability at the management level is supported through a requirement that all ASG/Directors report against specific SEA indicators as part of their annual performance compact with the administrator. In addition, bureau and office directors are required to submit an "Annual End of Year Certification" to the UNDP Administrator, confirming compliance with responsibilities and obligations related to SEA/SH (its template is publicly available, but not the letters). The Administrator is obliged to then report to the SG and the Executive Board and provide an annual certificate confirming compliance with SH and SEA requirements; those are the only progress reports accessible to the public.

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Element 3: UNDP has a number of resources and structures in place to support the implementation of its strategy and action plan. It has notably a task force, led by UNDP's Deputy Chief of Staff, comprised of HQ and country staff from across UNDP, dedicated to the prevention of both SH and SEA and to supporting the implementation of policies related to SEA/SH (i.e. UN SG Bulletin on SEA, UNDP Legal Framework for Addressing Non-Compliance with UN Standards of Conduct, UNDP's Code of Conduct) and the SH and SEA Strategy and Action Plan.

The task force is led by directors from across the organisation and UNDP's internal justice system. It was created by the Administrator in 2018 to address SH (in the workplace) and was expanded to include SEA (of the local population) in 2019. It meets monthly. According to the task force's TOR, the key tasks for PSEA include: updating relevant policies in line with international best practice and inter-agency agreements; strengthening reporting mechanisms; strengthening support to victims; ensuring capacity for internal justice and investigation; victim support; outreach among affected populations to raise awareness about SEA and provide guidance and support as appropriate; supporting UNDP staff to deal with allegations of SEA in their offices and teams; strengthen accountability for policies; raise awareness of policies related to SEA; and harmonise UNDP's approach to be consistent across the UN.

Other structures include UNDP's internal justice system (in particular the Office of Audit and Evaluations [OAI] and Ethics through reporting, training and advice); the Clear Check Committee that reviews cases of SH and SEA for non-staff personnel; and relevant policy teams, including UNDP's Gender Team and the Effectiveness Team (responsible for compliance/accountability/risks).

UNDP has designated PSEA focal points in the majority of its country offices. In a task force survey from 2019, 95% of country offices who responded confirmed that they had a PSEA Focal Point in place and active (98 of 130 country offices responded). In specific country contexts, UNDP country offices recruit a designated PSEA Coordinator. They are trained to support an effective response to SEA in all aspects of UNDP's work in country offices. According to the SEA/SH Strategy and Action Plan, all activities are attached to "staff time" apart from USD 135 000, which is budgeted for the piloting of the Respectful Workplace Facilitator in country offices; USD 15 000 for Clear Check vetting of staff; and USD 25 000 for a helpline. The Action Plan also provides for at least one full-time PSEA co-ordinator (budget for the co-ordinator(s) is provided by regional bureaux); one additional lawyer recruited in 2019; and two additional SH/SEA investigators, which are under recruitment.

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Element 4: Prevention through outreach, training and communication is the primary focus of UNDP's SEA/SH Strategy and Action Plan. UNDP has established mandatory training and, in 2018, a website on PSEA. According to data compiled by the SEA/SH task force, in 2019, 91% of staff and 87% of service contract holders (i.e. other types of personnel) passed the SEA course; however, at this point UNDP does not have any follow-up courses or additional training modules. The strategy emphasises the need to ensure that SEA training is appropriate and tailored to local contexts to be effective. Though an inter-agency initiative, UNDP participated in a video messaging campaign to raise awareness of and combat SEA. As part of its COVID-19 response, UNDP organised two webinars for its country offices related to SEA and SH: one on ensuring SEA reporting during the pandemic and on working with implementing partners to handle abuse and SEA, and another one on support to victims of SEA as part of UNDP's COVID-19 response. The task force also shared IOM's specialised training on working with implementing partners with all staff, although data on the dissemination and uptake have not yet been reported.

In addition to training, UNDP has established several awareness-raising processes and channels at the HQ and country level. This includes communication of policies and standards by the Ethics Office at the country office level, and face-to-face awareness sessions and training on SEA led by local PSEA focal points. The distinction between SH and SEA (with respect to victim/survivors and level of severity of both types of misconduct) continues to be an area for further reflection and clarification.

Element 5: UNDP has taken steps to ensure that its implementing partners are held to high standards for their ability to prevent and respond to SEA, and routinely screens partners for their capacity to safeguard from SEA. UNDP sets its sights on building partner capacity to prevent and respond to SEA over time. UNDP has taken positive steps to implement the 2018 UN Protocol on Allegations of SEA Involving Implementing Partners. It has included an SEA prohibition in its standard administrative arrangements, and expanded its project document template to make explicit the obligations of all implementing partners to prevent and respond to SEA. UNDP's Partner Capacity Assessment Tool (PCAT), its mandatory due diligence tool used to screen partner capacity to prevent and respond to SEA, includes six questions focused on capacity to safeguard against SEA. The questions cover implementing partners' policy and training on prevention of SEA, screening of personnel for previous involvement in SEA, reporting and monitoring, victim support, and investigative capacity for SEA. To address and take action where SEA is committed by non-implementing partner contractors, the Corporate and Institutional team in the Legal Office is updating relevant corporate contracts and agreements to include enhanced requirements that will facilitate compliance with the applicable legal framework.

At the same time as a "due diligence approach", UNDP also emphasises the "capacity building" approach on PSEA regarding implementing partners. In UNDP's case, it is important to note that nearly 80% of UNDP's implementing partners are either national or sub-national governments (and the UN Protocol on implementing partners includes "government institutions"), whicih typically have different legal norms and treatment of SEA, as raised in the Independent Review. In response to this, the SEA/SH task force has developed a template communication to implementing partners in line with the above-mentioned UN Protocol, and has planned to provide ad hoc advice as needed. According to UNDP stakeholders consulted, UNDP does not see its role as obligating its government partners to adopt UNDP's definition, response or investigation process with respect to preventing and responding to SEA, but as helping to build capacity to prevent and respond to SEA over time.

UNDP is rolling out specialised training developed by IOM on working with implementing partners. It has initiated a series of webinars, which are currently available through the Enterprise Risk Management website, on SEA (and SH) with implementing partners and responsible parties (e.g. private sector). The webinars include information for UNDP personnel on definitions of SEA (and SH), their responsibilities regarding implementing partners and responsible parties, and accountability for implementing partners. The webinar states "When we contract an implementing partner, we will be held accountable for their performance and their behaviour ... don't underestimate donor[s'] increasing scrutiny on this issue. We all need to take this seriously." UNDP works with a large number of implementing entities and is building capacity on SEA over time. Further improvements in the uptake of the UN Protocol on implementing partners by UNDP's implementors, including notably governmental, will be an important metric to track.

The two approaches could lead to tensions that bear risks. The OAI can investigate allegations of SEA involving implementing partners where UNDP personnel are the subject of the allegations. However, according to its Investigation Guidelines, the OAI cannot investigate SEA/SH claims

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against its implementing partners' staff, thus fully relying on their investigative capacity in those cases. It is therefore crucial that country offices ensure, before engaging, that all implementing partners have reliable systems and capacity in place to investigate allegations against their personnel. In addition, implementing partners will have to take mitigating measures and terminate contracts when implementing partners fall short of UNDP standards.

Element 6: UNDP is a member of several inter-agency groups and has taken part in multiple inter-agency initiatives. UNDP is currently a member of the UN High-level Steering Group on SEA, the System-wide UN SEA Working Group, and the Inter-Agency Steering Committee Priority 2 Results Group on Accountability and Inclusion. UNDP has participated in the agreement for collaboration on system-wide efforts to strengthen investigative capacity. This includes a planned joint CEB Task Force/Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) meeting of heads of investigatory bodies of IASC members. As part of this, and as mentioned earlier, UNDP participated in a joint independent review of its SEA/SH policies with UNFPA and UNOPS in 2019, which produced common findings and recommendations for the organisations, as well as UNDP-specific findings.

UNDP also participates in several inter-agency tools. It provides the names of SEA/SH perpetrators whose contracts or letters of appointment with UNDP have been terminated (or would have been terminated) to the inter-agency database Clear Check, a system adopted across the UN system to record SEA/SH abuse to ensure that individuals with a record of SEA or SH are not engaged by a UN entity. With the UNDS Reform, UNDP's SEA focal points have been working in inter-agency UNCT SEA working groups, alongside other agencies, under the guidance of Resident Coordinators.

Element 7: UNDP reports publicly on substantiated cases and, according to its own information, responds to allegations in a timely manner. UNDP provides regular reporting on cases of sexual misconduct through OAI reporting. It is among the 25 UN entities supporting the iReport SEA Tracker, the system-wide effort to centralise real-time reporting of SEA allegations through the UN system Chief Executive Board. In line with an inter-agency agreement, all credible allegations of SEA and updates on cases were reported to the UN Secretariat on time. UNDP reports annually to the Secretary-General on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. OAI has taken steps to strengthen and speed up investigation processes by adding capacity to UNDP's investigation function to meet the benchmarks for finalising investigations of misconduct within six months. As reported by the task force, between 1 January 2019 and 16 December 2020, the average timeline for investigating SEA cases was between 5.2 to 6.3 months. UNDP has developed guidance for personnel to report allegations of SEA to OAI within 36 hours. UNDP's Legal Framework for Addressing Non-Compliance with UN Standards of Conduct sets benchmarks for reporting allegations and conducting investigations. For example, the timeframe from receipt of the final investigation report to the finalisation of the case should not normally exceed 180 working days.

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The Administrator annually reports all disciplinary measures and actions taken in cases of misconduct, including on SH and SEA, in the UNDP Annual Report of the Administrator on Disciplinary Measures and other Actions Taken in Response to Fraud, Corruption and other Wrongdoing. From 2018-20, UNDP submitted 15 allegations of SEA through the system-wide reporting mechanism. Of these cases, three investigations are ongoing. It is worth mentioning that not only cases of SEA are reported, but also cases where senior staff were negligent in sharing allegations of SEA with the subject of the allegations. In addition to imposing disciplinary measures to staff members against whom SEA allegations are substantiated, based upon OAI guidance, UNDP commits to promptly report to the UN Office of Legal Affairs all credible allegations of SEA for referral to national authorities for possible criminal accountability. In 2020, this resulted in a

former staff member being criminally charged by national authorities. The 2019 Annual OAI report states that complaints related to sexual misconduct (including both SH and SEA) comprised 8.4% of the cases received by the office in 2019, a 2.5% decrease on the 10.9% received in 2018. Of these, 3% (11 cases) related to SEA, two of which were substantiated.

Element 8: UNDP's commitment and efforts in place to ensure a victim-centred approach has begun to lead to progress in its programme offices, as 2020 survey evidence indicates. However, coverage and consistency have yet to be improved. In its draft strategy, UNDP notes its intention to ensure that its response to SEA is victim/survivor centred, providing multiple channels for reporting, ensuring confidentiality, and providing services to those who have experienced GBV. In practice, the uptake, effectiveness and sustainability of these efforts, particularly at the local level, will need to be observed over time as systems and resourcing becomes more fully embedded.

UNDP's SEA/SH strategy states that the organisation is "committed to ensuring that its response to SH and SEA is victim-centred and, hence, the interests of the victim/survivor will always be considered in dealing with both allegations and the substantiated cases of SH or SEA".

In its SEA/SH Strategy and Action Plan, UNDP commits to mapping available local/national SEA victim/survivor support services and developing recommendations for providing restorative support to teams affected by SEA/SH. The Action Plan does not explicitly indicate what counselling services are available for victims/survivors of SEA. While UNDP's action plan includes efforts to identify practitioners in the field for non-personnel, as UNDP personnel are served by UNDP's in-house counselling service.

In UNDP's recent country office survey (98 countries responded), 71% confirm that local victim/survivor support service providers (e.g. national or local GBV centres) have been identified to assist victims/survivors of SEA, reflecting that while there have been significant gains, there is much to be done (in nearly 30% of country offices). According to UNDP's own statements, community-based complaints mechanisms (CBCM) are used in multiple settings, and support to victims/survivors is supported through partnerships with other UN agencies and NGOs at the country level. However, a progress report on the implementation of these aspects of the Action Plan was not available to the assessment team.

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According to the SEA/SH task force, UNDP's specialist SEA investigators make particular effort to ensure that they keep the alleged victims/survivors informed during the investigation stage, while maintaining strict confidentiality in accordance with due process. Specific guidance was issued to all UNDP country offices on the importance of CBCM for victims of SEA. According to the UN Protocol on Allegations of SEA involving implementing partners, UNDP is obligated to refer victims/survivors to safe and confidential assistance, "where available, based upon their needs and consent". Reporting through the inter-agency reporting mechanism indicates that various services are available to victim/survivors, which are provided as requested by the victim/survivors. In 2018-20, victims/survivors were supported through counselling services in five cases (out of a total of 20 cases recorded 2017-20). With the other allegations, the victim/survivor either declined assistance (five cases) or information was unavailable about the type of services rendered (nine cases). It is relevant to note that the inter-agency tracking mechanism does not record what assistance is rendered to victims/survivors of SEA who are not UNDP personnel.

The Independent Review of SEA/SH found that in general there is a high level of confidentiality surrounding the investigation of cases of SEA and SH, but recommended that there should be a possibility for all parties involved to be informed throughout the investigation process. UNDP's policies require the organisation to update victims/survivors at relevant points throughout the

investigation process. The Office of Legal Services informs victims/survivors at the end of their legal review where the perpetrator is a staff member. Work is underway on a "Model Information Sharing Protocol", which will govern how information is shared on SEA allegations at the country level. UNDP's SEA/SH action plan commits UNDP to following the key principles of the UN Victim Assistance Protocol through which UN agencies communicate measures around victim/survivor safety and protection where there is a risk of further harm or retaliation. UNDP is committed to co-ordinating as relevant with the UN Victims' Rights Advocate (VRA). However, according to the 2019 independent review, there is no consistent well-embedded system-level response for victim/survivor support. UNDP operates on a case-by-case basis in supporting victims/survivors of SEA, which depends upon the availability of CBRM and counselling practitioners. Sources within UNDP report that early pilots of CBRM were unsustainable due to lack of funding. UNDP continues to make efforts to take a stronger approach through a range of efforts, including work to advance the Victim Assistance Protocol. UNDP addressed the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on GBV and specifically SEA, noting that it has been more challenging to work in communities, and that outreach has continued through country office SEA focal points providing support through implementing partners.	1, 9-10, 13, 21, 33, 37, 40-42, 44-45, 68, 142, 143, 144-156, 205
MI 4.7 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 4.8: Prevention of and response to sexual harassment (SH)	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.86**
Element 1: Organisation-specific dedicated policy statements and/or codes of conduct that address SH available, aligned to international standards and applicable to all categories of personnel	3
Element 2: Mechanisms are in place to regularly track the status of implementation of the policy on SH at HQ and at field levels	2
Element 3: The MO has clearly identifiable roles, structures and resources in place for implementing its policy/guidelines on SH at HQ and in the field: a support channel for victims, a body co-ordinating the response and clear responsibilities for following up with victims	3
Element 4: All managers have undergone training on preventing and responding to SH, and all staff have been trained to set behavioural expectations (including with respect to SH)	3
Element 5: Multiple mechanisms can be accessed to seek advice, pursue informal resolution or formally report SH allegations	3
Element 6: The organisation ensures that it acts in a timely manner on formal complaints of SH allegations	3
Element 7: The organisation transparently reports the number and nature of actions taken in response to SH in annual reporting, and feeds into inter-agency HR mechanisms	3

MI 4.8 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: UNDP has a designated policy on sexual harassment, which is aligned to UN and CEB standards and extends to all UNDP personnel, and a code of ethics that bans SH of all types. UNDP's Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority, updated in 2018, is aligned with the model policy developed by the inter-agency working group under the High-Level Committee for Management of the UN CEB and UN Staff Rules and Regulations. The policy is explicit that sexual or gender harassment in the workplace is prohibited. The policy extends to all personnel, which includes staff members, independent and service contractors, UN volunteers, and interns. The policy provides a comprehensive definition of the conduct that constitutes SH and is clear that SH applies to misconduct that occurs in the workplace, which the policy defines as any UNDP facility, sponsored event, or any place where UNDP personnel are present during or outside working hours. The policy delineates the expected conduct of UNDP personnel in terms of conduct, participation in training, knowledge of reporting channels and participation in investigation. The policy outlines the "special obligations" of managers and supervisors, which require them to set the tone within their office or division to support a culture of accountability and communication on SH. SH is dealt with in the broader context of workplace misconduct and abuse of power. It is relevant to highlight that information from interviews conducted through reviews of successive strategic plans and the ICPE meta synthesis suggest that personnel and managers are not always empowered to address complaints about behaviour, which may also include complaints of sexual harassment. Interviews with UNDP personnel suggest that not all managers consider ethics and conduct issues as part of their duties, delegating such responsibilities to the Ombudsman's or Ethics offices. The UNDP Global Staff Survey (2018) indicates that 62% of UNDP staff think their management team effectively manages conflicts and grievances in their office while more are neutral. **Element 2: In support of its policy on SH, in 2018, UNDP adopted an SEA/SH Strategy and Action Plan, which sets out activity-level indicators for the SH policy that relate to actions to enhance the response to and prevention of SH across UNDP.** The action plan also states that the task force will track the impact of the Action Plan in terms of the number of reported SH cases, the number of retaliation cases related to SH, and the time taken to investigate and take action on a case. This includes increasing awareness, building capacity, integrating SH safeguards, preventing perpetrators of SH to join the UNDP workforce, continuing to revise the SH policy, improving reporting and investigation of SH allegations, and enhancing response to victims. The action plan, which addresses the key pillars of the SH policy and provides a basis for setting up a policy infrastructure for UNDP, relies on the SEA/SH task force staff to track the implementation of the corporate Action Plan. Progress is tracked and reported through different mechanisms and happens both at the local and corporate level, with accountability for action clearly vested in the Heads of Offices/Bureau Directors and the Administrator. Cases are tracked and reported by OAI. Resident representatives are accountable for reporting on country-specific Action Plans to Bureau Directors, who in turn report to the Administrator. The Administrator reports to the Executive Board. The task force is made up of specialised units within the organisation – e.g. OAI, Ethics, Legal, the Ombudsman's Office – who are individually and separately tasked with managing and tracking reporting and actions taken. The action plan sets out several stand-alone activities to ensure that the key elements of the policy are in place, and relies on staff time to monitor the indicators. While the action plan sets out accountability indicators for managers and resident representatives, which serves to embed the SH policy, many of the indicators are stand-alone or binary indicators that will need to have mechanisms for improvement over time, be embedded in UNDP's broader organisational effectiveness scorecard, and resourced to be meaningfully tracked.	1, 9-10, 13, 21, 33, 37, 40-42, 44-45, 68, 142-156, 205, 214

Element 3: UNDP has a multidisciplinary SEA/SH task force on the prevention of SH (and SEA) in place, with representation from country offices and HQ. The task force was launched by the Administrator in February 2018 and is chaired by his Deputy Chief of Staff. It meets monthly and regularly reports to the Administrator and his Executive Group of Directors. The task force's terms of reference outline its role in co-ordinating the response to SH as an organisation, its support to the SH policy, and its representation from the Ethics office, Ombudsman's Office, Legal Office and other departments. The task force has established mechanisms for reporting. In addition, the Ethics Office, Ombudsman's Office and Legal Office have designated roles for responding to SH. Support for specialist counselling services is provided through the Rome Institute for UNDP personnel-victims/survivors of SH in the workplace, plus four additional in-house counsellors. OAI has dedicated investigators dealing with SH cases. The BMS Office of Human Resources has a focal point on SH. Regular reporting on the number of cases and response to SH is required through multiple channels, and has been implemented since 2018. Reporting on progress in preventing and responding to SH is generated through:

- Executive Group of ASGs and the Organisational Performance group of Deputy Directors (which has had 11 discussions from 2018-2020).
- ASGs/Bureau Directors and Heads of Independent Offices report to the Administrator/Associate Administrator on SH and SEA-related indicators in their Annual Performance Compacts.
- Regular reporting to the Executive Board.
- Annual submission of SH and SEA Action Plans by all offices across the organisation.
- Annual Management Letters to the UNDP Executive Board and the UN Secretary-General outlining UNDP's response to SEA/SH.
- Reporting to Executive Board on 2020 Survey of 130 UNDP country offices on their response to SH and SEA.

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Assistance and guidance to victims are provided through multiple channels: the Ethics Office, the Ombudsman's Office, Office of Human Resources, external helpline, peers and Staff Council, supervisors, staff counsellors, counselling through UN Critical Incident Stress Management counsellors who provide support globally, Respectful Workplace Facilitators, and the Rome Institute, which delivers telehealth counselling services for victims/survivors of SH.

Element 4: UNDP has taken steps to make sure all personnel have an appropriate level of knowledge and awareness of what is required of them to prevent and respond to SH, which places particular onus on managers to foster a respective and accountable working environment. Training on SH is mandatory for all staff, with a particular focus on managers and their role in responding to SH. Online resources, outreach to personnel and regular townhall meetings by the Administrator and senior personnel have been conducted to raise awareness of SH among all UNDP personnel. According to data collected by the SEA/SH task force, around 2 000 UNDP personnel participated in presentations and training in 2019, with 92% of staff and 85% of service contract holders passing the mandatory course on the prevention of harassment, SH and abuse of authority. At present, these courses are designed as a single, mandatory module. In addition, UNDP provides regular communications from senior management, webinars and discussions with individual teams, and various other reference materials available on the SH/SEA website. Annually, the performance of managers, supervisors and directors is assessed against whether they have helped to create a safe and inclusive environment, which extends to the prevention of and response to SH (annual performance reports include a specific indicator on creating a safe and inclusive environment). Directors are required to submit a certificate that indicates that they have taken all appropriate actions related to their specific responsibilities for

preventing and responding to SH. The impact that this will have on creating a trusting, respectful workplace will need to be observed over time.

Element 5: UNDP is attempting a range of formal and informal mechanisms to provide resources and redress to personnel (victims/survivors and witnesses) dealing with SH, which are grounded in a task force to co-ordinate agency efforts, while recognising that underreporting remains a challenge. UNDP offers advice and resolution to SH allegations formally through the OAI, or informally through the Ombudsman's Office, the Ethics Office and through counselling services. UNDP has launched the Respectful Workplace Facilitators programme, through which UNDP personnel trained in conflict management skills provide a confidential resource for anyone experiencing harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination or conflict in the workplace. Currently, as the pilot programme moves into its second year, there are 48 Respectful Workplace Facilitators active in 24 country offices. UNDP personnel experiencing abuse can also access resources or redress through an externally managed independent helpline (Expolink/Navex Global), which handles all forms of harassment and other misconduct in the workplace.

It is also important to note that management has specific responsibilities for preventing and responding to SH. There are multiple channels through which victims/survivors can seek assistance and obtain advice, which are disseminated through the SEA/SH prevention task force. A team of counsellors in the BMS Office of Human Resources, co-ordinated by a focal point mentioned above, provides support to victims. OAI is the office within UNDP mandated to investigate sexual misconduct, and has set up a designated sexual misconduct team with three trained investigators. This team is led by the OAI Sexual Misconduct Focal point, who is also a permanent member of the task force. In response to the realisation that underreporting of SH remains a challenge, UNDP put in place an externally managed, independent helpline. Data on the uptake of the helpline will be useful for determining the effectiveness of UNDP's reporting systems. To support increased reporting on SH, UNDP has extended protection from retaliation to all victims/survivors and whistle-blowers of SH in the workplace through its Policy for Protection against Retaliation. The 2019 Annual OAI report found that complaints related to sexual misconduct (including both SH and SEA) constituted 8.4% of the cases received by the office in 2019, a 2.5% decrease compared with 10.9% in 2018. Of these, 4.3% related to SH (16 cases), among which five cases were substantiated.

Element 6: According to the SEA/SH strategy, UNDP aims to act in a timely manner on formal complaints of SH allegations. UNDP's SEA/SH action plan states that UNDP aims to finalise investigations of SH within six months. Where there is sufficient information, allegations are reported publicly in the i-Report tracker (managed by the UN Secretariat Office of the Special Coordinator on a "near real time" basis, with case information updated regularly by OAI). These cases are also reported publicly on an annual basis, in the UNDP Annual Report of the Administrator on Disciplinary Measures and other Actions Taken in Response to Fraud, Corruption and other Wrongdoing. OAI aims to finalise these investigations within six months. Drawing on OAI data, the SEA/SH task force reports that the average duration of investigations of SH between 1 January 2019 and 16 December 2020 has been between 5.7 to 6.6 months.

Element 7: UNDP makes efforts to report the number and nature of actions taken in response to SH through OAI reporting. UNDP participates in the inter-agency database, ClearCheck, to ensure that perpetrators and alleged perpetrators are not rehired. ClearCheck is used by UN agencies to record perpetrators and vet new hires to ensure that individuals with a record of SEA/SH are not engaged by another UN entity. UNDP also reports data through the SG's compendium on disciplinary measures. Organisations are also expected to share this information with all personnel. The most recent version of the OAI report was published on the UNDP website in 2019

1, 9-10, 13, 21, 33, 37, 40-42, 44-45, 68, 142-156, 205, 214

and notes the number of dismissals due to proven SH allegations. In 2020, UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations received 11 reports of sexual misconduct, a notable decrease compared to 32 reports received in 2018 and 31 in 2019, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	1, 9-10, 13, 21, 33, 37, 40-42, 44-45, 68, 142-156, 205, 214
MI 4.8 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Engaging in inclusive partnerships to support relevance, leverage effective solutions and maximise results

KPI 5: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility in partnerships	**KPI score**
Satisfactory	**3.09**

At the heart of UNDP's work is a commitment to supporting nationally led action driven by strong partnerships with national governments, comprehensive socio-economic needs analyses and a collaborative assessment of national capacity. This commitment is embedded in UNDP's country and regional strategies, and in its approach to programme design and implementation. With the transition from the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, "Cooperation Framework"), UNDP has maintained a clear line of sight to country priorities. While UNDP has an earnest commitment to the LNOB agenda, its analysis of the drivers of marginalisation, and its ability to monitor how its interventions reach the most vulnerable, leaves room for improvement.

UNDP has well embedded guidance for programme planning and management, which requires that comprehensive contextual analysis and capacity assessment is built into the programme lifecycle. UNDP has taken steps to bolster its enterprise risk management policy and enhance the capacity and culture surrounding risk management. This includes the identification and analysis of risks that could affect the achievement of development results, and capacities for risk management.

UNDP has enhanced its attention to cross-cutting issues in programme design supported by clear guidance in the Programme and Project Management (PPM) and Social and Environmental Safeguards, which have been revised to ensure that programmes have a strong assessment of gender and environment, as well as a human rights approach. While there is still a need to enhance the variability across interventions and to provide greater disaggregation of data, the SES presents an opportunity for UNDP to enhance its treatment of cross-cutting issues. At the design stage, UNDP makes strong efforts to incorporate aspects of sustainability and to build national capacity as part of interventions. The challenges of ensuring sustainability are reflected in multiple evaluations (refer to KPI 12).

UNDP has managed to maintain efficient processes and to deliver interventions on time. The challenges presented by the UNDS reform and the COVID-19 response tested UNDP's efficiency, and both provided examples of UNDP delivering a timely and flexible response under particularly challenging circumstances.

MI 5.1: Interventions/strategies aligned with needs of beneficiaries and regional/ country priorities and intended national/regional results	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.50**
Element 1: The organisation's country or regional strategies refer to national/regional body strategies or objectives	4
Element 2: Reviewed interventions/strategies refer to the needs of beneficiaries, including vulnerable populations	3
Element 3: The organisation's country strategies or regional strategies link targeted results to national or regional goals	4
Element 4: Structures and incentives in place for technical staff that allow them to invest time and effort in alignment processes	3

MI 5.1 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: UNDP's engagement with country governments guides everything that UNDP does, and programme priorities are developed through regular discussions with country offices and national government stakeholders. UNDP's national priority focus has been a consistent feature of its Country Programme Documents (CPDs). In some contexts, UNDP's ability to support countries benefits from the perception that UNDP is a neutral and reliable development actor. At the regional level, UNDP can tackle more sensitive political issues such as business and human rights. To support this, UNDP's PPM requires that all programming objectives and results are consistent with national needs and priorities. Guidance for developing CPDs requires articulation of UNDP's contribution to national priorities as part of the UNSDCF. This is assessed through the PPM Programme Quality Assurance Programme assessment by the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS).

UNDP uses the UNSDCF to guide the planning and implementation of development activities at the country level. Guidance for the UNSDCF emphasises the importance of alignment with national priorities and national accountability mechanisms. One of the objectives of the new co-operation frameworks is to articulate the UN's collective response to help countries address national priorities and gaps in their pathway towards meeting the SDGs. UNDP has revised the CPD guidance to include a summary of the country context and national priorities.

Respondents to UNDP's 2020 partnership survey broadly agree (41.9% strongly agree and 34.1% agree) that UNDP plays a relevant role in the development of countries, and that its programmes reflect the development priorities of its partners. A review of 12 independent UNDP ICPEs found that UNDP's country strategies consistently refer to and build upon national strategies and objectives. Among these 12 evaluations, 11 pointed to direct contributions to national strategies and specific sectoral objectives.

Element 2: The needs of beneficiaries and an explicit focus on the most vulnerable is a strategic priority, and UNDP has updated CPD guidance to sharpen the programmatic focus on beneficiaries, particularly the most vulnerable. In its current strategic plan, UNDP has explicitly included LNOB as a core principle guiding its programming, and refers to the need to serve vulnerable groups marginalised by structural barriers and discriminatory norms and practices, which includes the inclusion of women, youth, people with disabilities, and vulnerable racial and ethnic groups.

UNDP's guidance for the CPDs has evolved, moving from considering working with beneficiaries as a "design parameter" in the 2014 CPD guidance, to specifically framing the priorities in terms of "those groups left further behind and why and UNDP's contribution to target specific groups to leave no one behind…specifying how women and other marginalised groups…are affected". UNDP's PPM requires that programming objectives and results must be obtained through engaging with excluded and/or marginalised groups as relevant. The development of the UNSDCF emphasises the importance of extensive multi-stakeholder consultations and situational analyses. The PPM states that programming objectives and results should be consistent with national needs and priorities, as well as with feedback obtained through engaging excluded and/or marginalised groups as relevant. CPDs developed during the latter half of the strategic period take a notably more sophisticated approach to considering the needs of beneficiary groups. As countries update their CPDs, this aspect is expected to continue to improve across country programming.

UNDP introduced a series of project markers (e.g. LNOB marker) in 2018 to allow country offices to identify their beneficiaries. Programme managers can pick up to five groups/categorisations that beneficiaries belong to. UNDP gathered data through its results reporting, which showed | 1-2, 47-49, 75-77, 80, 82, 85, 93, 98, 102-111, 123, 125, 131, 133, 195, 205, 214, 216-225 |

that UNDP was reaching out to rural areas, women, youth, informal sector workers and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular. UNDP stakeholders broadly find that UNDP tailors its programmes to specific contextual situations and needs. In response to the survey question, "UNDP's programme is tailored to the specific situations and needs in the local context", 24% strongly agreed, 49% agreed, 18% somewhat agreed while 4% disagreed. However, in practice, reviewed country programme evaluations found that the needs of beneficiaries are dealt with to varying degrees across country programming and across many of its programmes. In a sample of 12 country programme evaluations, 5 found that UNDP had provided a clear and coherent response to the needs of beneficiaries. In the other 7 country programmes, there was limited mention of vulnerable groups and no specific outputs dedicated to addressing the needs of vulnerable groups.

Element 3: The Cooperation Framework is intended to align its targets and indicators as much as possible to relevant targets and indicators in national development plans, which should in turn be informed by the SDGs. The UN development system has a role in supporting governments to prepare a national SDG indicator framework. The Cooperation Framework serves as a core accountability tool between the UNCT and the host government, as well as between and among UNCT members for collectively owned development results. It is supported by mandatory independent, high-quality evaluation and management responses.

The review of a sample of 10 UNDP country programme documents demonstrates the consistent linking of UNDP's country strategies to national priority goals. Regional programmes vary widely and take on the complex task of rolling out relevant programmes in often heterogenous regional contexts. Increasingly, there is a mutual benefit between expertise at the regional and country level, supported by the GPN.

Element 4: Stakeholder consultation is required by UNDP's SES and CPD guidelines and built into the processes for development of the UNSDCF. The SES emphasises the participation of stakeholders in programme design. The IRRF, using data from the 2020 UNDP partnership survey, denotes that in 2019, 81% of programme governments perceived that UNDP plays a relevant role in the development of countries and reflects the development priorities of its partners, and 76% perceived that UNDP tailors its activities and capacities to national context and needs. The development of the UNSDCF, and the quality assurance process of the CPD, both emphasise the importance of extensive multi-stakeholder consultations and situational analyses. The PPM states that programming objectives and results should be consistent with national needs and priorities, as well as with feedback obtained through engaging excluded and/or marginalised groups as relevant. In response to the survey question, "UNDP's programme is designed and implemented to fit with national programmes and intended results", 28% strongly agreed, 48% agreed and 15% somewhat agreed.

1-2, 47-49, 75-77, 80, 82, 85, 93, 98, 102-111, 123, 125, 131, 133, 195, 205, 214, 216-225

	High confidence

MI 5.2: Contextual/ situational analysis (shared where possible) applied to shape intervention designs and implementation	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: Intervention designs contain a clear statement positioning the intervention within the operating context	3
Element 2: Reflection points with partners take note of any significant changes in context	3

MI 5.2 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: UNDP uses several tools to analyse the socio-economic and political situation in the country contexts where it works in order to design relevant programming. The tools have evolved and the current CPDs endeavour to provide a sophisticated analysis of UNDP's approach to the country context. UNDP participates in the Common Country Assessment (CCA) under leadership of the UN RC, and conducts analysis for developing the UNDP CPDs. The CCA provides an independent, impartial and collective assessment of what is happening in a country context and analysis of why it is happening. The CCA, which provides the basis of the UNSDCF, is intended to be a living document, and is updated on a continuous basis to reflect situational developments and inform the UN's work in the country. UNDP's CPD provides a summary of the country context and national priorities without repeating the Cooperation Framework situation analysis. For each intervention initiated, UNDP prepares an "issues note" and draft work plan that reflect the critical challenges that need to be addressed; key priorities in national, regional or global policy and strategy documents; concerns expressed by senior public and private officials or community members; and the findings of various analyses, such as a national or regional human development report, the CCA, a community needs assessment, or an agency capacity assessment. In 2019, 76% of programme governments reported that UNDP tailors its activities and capacities to national context and needs. The 2020 UNDP partnership survey found that across all partners, 71% of respondents perceived that UNDP tailors its activities to the national context and needs. UNDP does not systematically introduce data from the HDR in assessing the national development context. In response to COVID-19, UNDP has spearheaded UN system efforts to assess and respond to the socio-economic context and impacts of the pandemic. This has included the preparation of 144 socio-economic impact assessments (SEIAs), support for UNCT teams in the development of 131 socio-economic response plans (SERPs), the launch of the data futures platform (compiling socio-economic data for users) and the development of the Integrated Digital Assessments Initiative to assess impact on vulnerable households. **Element 2: Although regular landscape analysis and ongoing dialogue with partners is built into UNDP's intervention designs and CPDs, not all partners feel that UNDP understands their needs.** Current CPD results and resource frameworks include "major partners/partnership frameworks" that are involved in programming and with whom UNDP collaborates to achieve results. This offers built-in mechanisms for sharing progress updates. The programme and operations policies and procedures (POPP) include a partnership and communications strategy with a feedback loop that includes consultation with all relevant national partners, including the government co-ordinating authority, potential implementing partners, civil society organisation (CSOs), targeted community groups, donors, UN agencies, and multilateral and bilateral organisations throughout the programme cycle. CPDs define how partners participate in UNDP's programme design to ensure mutual accountability. Partner reflection points include steering committees co-chaired by the Resident Coordinator and government that oversee the implementation of the Cooperation Framework. UNDP's COVID-19 response has presented a positive appraisal of its capacity to be responsive to partners' changing needs. UNDP has responded quickly to help countries "prepare for, respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic". UNDP has produced country-specific assessments of the economic, social and political impact of the pandemic. In several contexts this has provided the basis for more effective policy and programming for the most vulnerable.	6, 24, 35, 39, 46-49, 66, 68, 75-77, 80-82, 85, 93, 99, 102, 104, 118, 120, 125, 187, 214
MI 5.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 5.3: Capacity analysis informing intervention design and implementation, and strategies to address any weakness found are employed	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.40**
Element 1: Intervention designs contain a clear statement of capacities of key national implementing partners	4
Element 2: Capacity analysis, from the perspective of using and building country systems, considers resourcing, staffing, monitoring and operating structure	4
Element 3: Capacity analysis statement has been jointly developed with country partners and shared with development partners	3
Element 4: Capacity analysis statement includes clear strategies for addressing any weaknesses, with a view to sustainability, where applicable developed jointly with development partners	3
Element 5: Reflection points with partners take note of any significant changes in capacity	3
MI 5.3 Analysis	**Source documents**

Element 1: Capacity assessment to identify gaps and needs of key implementing partners is increasingly part of the POPP responding to an identified need for UNDP to support national capacities more strategically. Through its POPP, UNDP uses a Partner Capacity Assessment Tool (PCAT) to streamline its approach to capacity assessments of project implementing partners and responsible parties, and the Capacity Assessment Checklist (CACHE) for CSO/NGO capacity assessment. The Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) framework is also part of UNDP's capacity assessment, and aims to strengthen national capacities for management and accountability using a risk-based approach. The HACT is reviewed regularly. Partner capacity assessment tools have been revised to include corporate guidance on COVID 2.0, thematic guidance on specific issue areas, and the Partnerships Review Group, which has allowed for streamlined vetting input from across the organisation. The IRRF reports that in 2019, the national and sub-national governments of 32 additional countries have improved capacities to plan, budget, manage and monitor basic services. The IRRF tracks capacity gains across several indicators including national capacity for conducting gender and risk assessments, progressive expansion of inclusive social protection system, improved rule-of-law, governance, and oversight. These indicators show small but steady gains. Responses to UNDP's 2020 partner survey report that its second most important added value is through its provision of capacity development support (65% of respondents). In response to the survey question, "UNDP's work takes into account national capacity, including that of government, civil society and other actors", 25% of respondents strongly agreed and 46% agreed. However, UN entities were more critical, with a higher proportion (18%) disagreeing with this statement.

Element 2: UNDP's capacity analysis tools have been revised to take a forward-looking risk-based approach to working with partners, which assesses and manages risks and capacity weaknesses of its implementing partners. The capacity assessment of implementing partners includes a risk assessment of political will, programmatic context, communications capacity, technical capacities, capacity of personnel and ethical standards. The Programme and Project Management capacity assessment is required by the UNDP staff member charged with developing a project. Capacity analysis considers the resources available for project delivery, monitoring, evaluation, reporting of implementing partners and integrated financing framework, which also considers government efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Partners that will receive more than USD 300 000 are assessed against the PCAT and the HACT. The HACT framework represents a common operational framework for transferring cash to government and non-governmental

6, 36, 40, 46-49, 60, 73, 75-77, 79-82, 85-86, 93, 97, 108, 112, 125, 132, 188, 214

implementing partners. It considers the overall financial management systems and implementing partners' financial management and integral control capacity for improved accountability, which is then linked to support to address weaknesses in financial management. Use of the HACT has been revised to provide better controls, oversight and the more effective identification of the capacity needs of implementing partners. The revised HACT is designed to be forward looking and anticipatory to inform design, revisions and risk management of programming capacity needs.

Element 3: UNDP considers that stakeholder engagement is critical to successful capacity development. UNDP employs processes to stimulate dialogue about the needs for capacity development. The CCA includes capacity assessments and analysis of key government agencies and professionals that can inform the identification of priorities for institutional strengthening and opportunities for multi-stakeholder collaboration based on UN comparative strengths. UNDP's PPM quality assurance assesses the extent to which national partners have "proactively engaged in the design of the programme". CPDs cannot go to the Executive Board unless they have demonstrated sufficient engagement. Nevertheless, several evaluations point to mixed experiences in terms of the extent to which non-state partners are engaged.

Element 4: UNDP is responsible for monitoring changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions, which must be monitored through indicators. UNDP's Capacity Assessment Methodology states that engaging stakeholders on capacity analysis is the first step. The Capacity Analysis statement emphasises the importance of assessing capacity at different stages of the programme cycle, and engaging stakeholders, assessing the situation, evaluating and refining. The Capacity Assessment Methodology states that "Active stakeholder engagement throughout a capacity assessment process is the key to success … it is assumed that Step 1 – Engage Stakeholders on Capacity Development – has already occurred and that stakeholder engagement and consensus building will be an integral part of each subsequent step of the capacity development process. Audits from 2019 report that HACT compliance has improved as offices start new programme cycles wherein they can fully embed HACT activities during project planning. In 2019, UNDP took several steps to improve oversight and management of implementing partners, including improvements in the HACT monitoring platform, which is expected to strengthen UNDP's ability to monitor changes in the capacity of implementing partners.

Element 5: Mid-term and final evaluations of interventions, assessment of development results, and regular spot-checks provide opportunities for UNDP and partners to reflect on partner capacity. Monitoring of capacity, with its partners, and scanning the context for change is built into UNDP's programme lifecycle, although there does not appear to be a standardised oversight mechanism for joint reflection to guide capacity assessment once the CPD is established. Once implementation of an intervention has started, spot checks are required to monitor project risks. The capacity development of national partners is included in UNDP's ERM Risk Categorisation under Operational Risk, while execution capacity is categorised under Organisational Risk. The number and implementor of spot checks (internal or external) depends on the project's risk category. The Cooperation Framework provides a mechanism to support the external coherence of UNDP's activities, whereby country activities and changes in capacity are monitored jointly by country partners. IEO's Reflections on UNDP's Governance Support to Countries in Crisis provides an example of reflection with partners post-crisis to determine changes in capacity. In light of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP has worked closely with partners to offer policy and institutional support in response to changing capacities within countries. UNDP is taking steps to offer substantive support to national partners, collaborating closely with Resident Coordinators and UNCTs.

6, 36, 40, 46-49, 60, 73, 75-77, 79-82, 85-86, 93, 97, 108, 112, 125, 132, 188, 214

| **MI 5.3 Evidence confidence** | **High confidence** |

MI 5.4: Detailed risk (strategic, political, reputational, operational) management strategies ensure the identification, mitigation, monitoring and reporting of risks	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.20**
Element 1: Intervention designs include detailed analysis of and mitigation strategies for operational risk	3
Element 2: Intervention designs include detailed analysis of and mitigation strategies for strategic risk	4
Element 3: Intervention designs include detailed analysis of and mitigation strategies for political risk	3
Element 4: Intervention designs include detailed analysis of and mitigation strategies for reputational risk	3
Element 5: Intervention design is based on contextual analysis including of potential risks of sexual abuse and other misconduct with respect to host populations	3
MI 5.4 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: Risk is considered at corporate and project level in the intervention design, but is less evident in country programme documents, given their format. UNDP's approach to risk management is defined in its Enterprise Risk Management policy and its programming guidance, which requires the "identification and analysis of risks that could affect achievement of development results, as well as capacities for risk management". This has been strengthened over time, as audits had previously had found that UNDP lacked project risk identification subsequent to initial identification and infrequent review and updating of risks, which raised the concern that this would result in delays in taking appropriate measures to mitigate those risks. Several tools for risk management have been introduced in the last few years, such as risk management dashboards and programme assessment tools. Interviews indicate that the new concept of risk is more integrated, bringing programmatic and operational risk considerations together as part of project design. UNDP bolstered its approach to risk management in 2019 with the Bureau of Management Support working with BPPS to revise policy and develop an action plan to reinforce UNDP's risk management, supported by investment in tools and training to reinforce the risk culture and ensure better governance of ERM. UNDP is currently developing a risk appetite statement. In relation to UNDP's COVID-19 response, out of a sample of ten 2021-2025 Country Programme Documents, all made use of UNDP's socio-economic analysis to identify issues in relation to development progress. Seven out of ten went on to identify specific risks in relation to COVID-19. The Country Programme Documents do not provide details on mitigation strategies in relation to these risks. **Element 2: Strategic risk is managed through an escalation process, either at country, regional or corporate level, depending on the nature and severity.** The enterprise risk management policy differentiates between 1) institutional risk; 2) programmatic risk; and 3) contextual risk. UNDP applies the ISO 31000 enterprise risk management standard at corporate, country programme and project level. Risk management is built into planning processes, particularly during project design, but also covers monitoring, reporting and communicating risks. At the corporate level, the Executive Group is accountable for ERM and ensuring corporate decisions are risk informed. UNDP regularly scans for emerging risks across its programmes to ensure they can continue to deliver results, prevent unintended harm because of activities, and adapt quickly to the rapidly changing	6, 26, 40, 73, 75, 80, 82, 204-205, 214, 216-234

context. Of the ten 2021-2025 Country Programme Documents reviewed, three identified the possibility of reductions in funding due to COVID-19 as a risk.

Elements 3 & 4: Political and reputational risks for UNDP are closely connected and addressed as part of intervention design. The Programming, Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook contains guidance on risk assessment and management at the project level, including "political, economic and social stability". The working relationship between UNDP and a wide spectrum of national government partners can be the source of political and reputational risks, as identified in project risk logs. Particularly projects dealing with sensitive issues tend to identify government implementing partners both as the rationale of the intervention and the greatest source of risk in terms of reputation. In the MOPAN survey, over 60% of partners feel that risk management in programmes is adequate, although donors show slightly more concern. Several policies are designed to safeguard UNDP against political and reputational risks, including the anti-fraud policy, the partner capacity assessment policy, the private sector due diligence policy, and the social and environmental standards screening procedure.

6, 26, 40, 73, 75, 80, 82, 204-205, 214, 216-234

Element 5: Based on its business model, UNDP primarily interacts with government counterparts and rarely interacts with host populations. Intervention designs are required to consider the impact on local populations in line with project quality standards. The Programming, Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook considers "vulnerable or marginalized groups that are normally left out of planning processes". UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards were revised in 2019 to include SEA and GBV risks. On this front, the SES is explicit that "UNDP seeks to identify and address any risk of potential exposure of affected people to GBV and other abuse that may occur in connection with any of its supported activities." This includes a zero-tolerance policy for SEA involving UNDP personnel, as well as personnel of the UNDP implementing partner and responsible parties. In 2019, UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS jointly underwent an external independent review of their SEA and SH policies and procedures. UNDP's ERM Framework was revised in 2019 to include SEA as a risk sub-category.

MI 5.4 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 5.5: Intervention designs include the analysis of cross-cutting issues (as defined in KPI 2)	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: Approval procedures require an assessment of the extent to which cross-cutting issues have been integrated in the design	3
Element 2: Plans for intervention monitoring and evaluation include attention to cross-cutting issues	3
MI 5.5 Analysis	**Source documents**

Element 1: The requirement that all UNDP programming applies the core principles of human rights, gender equality, resilience, sustainability and leaving no one behind is a positive development. Through the SES, social and environmental sustainability are systematically integrated into intervention designs. Potential harm to people and the environment is avoided wherever possible, and otherwise minimised, mitigated and managed. SES and programme quality assurance processes assess the extent to which cross-cutting issues have been integrated in intervention design. Since 2019, all UNDP programmes must be screened through the SES procedures, which assess projects against key cross-cutting issues including gender equality and women's empowerment, environment and energy, and a human-rights approach. The Programme

48-49, 204, 214

Quality Assurance programme assesses whether the programme considers potential risks and opportunities related to gender equality and women's empowerment, applies a human rights-based approach adequately and evenly across the programme, and supports the resilience and sustainability of societies and/or ecosystems. **Element 2: Plans for monitoring and evaluating cross-cutting issues are required to include cross-cutting issues. However, in practice data are collected variably across interventions**. There is a lack of data on how programming affects different target groups to understand and analyse differentiated impacts and data available on different beneficiary groups and attainment of development outcomes across development priorities is variable between countries and individual interventions.	48-49, 204, 214

MI 5.5 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 5.6: Intervention designs include detailed, realistic measures to ensure sustainability (as defined in KPI 12)	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.75**
Element 1: Intervention designs include statement of critical aspects of sustainability, including institutional framework, resources and human capacity, social behaviour, technical developments and trade, as appropriate	2
Element 2: Intervention design defines key elements of the enabling policy and legal environment required to sustain the expected benefits of successful implementation	3
Element 3: The critical assumptions that underpin sustainability form part of the approved monitoring and evaluation plan	3
Element 4: Where shifts in policy and legislation will be required for sustainability, the intervention plan directly addresses these reforms and processes in a time-sensitive manner	3
MI 5.6 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: As a capacity development organisation, UNDP strategies aim to trigger lasting changes, and its intervention designs target institutions, systems and behaviours. However, evaluations point to mixed results. UNDP's programming guidance states that "all intervention designs should incorporate aspects of sustainability". The updated SES Screening Procedure requires project managers to identify how projects mainstream sustainability and resilience. The selection of implementing partners explicitly considers the availability, role and commitment of government entities to sustain project results. Reviews of individual work plans demonstrate attempts to embed new approaches into larger national sustainability strategies, as in the case of the global Anti-Corruption for Peaceful and Inclusive Societies project. UNDP stresses that to achieve sustainability in conflict-affected countries "requires simultaneously pursuing medium- to long-term development efforts alongside humanitarian action". Notwithstanding these pertinent requirements, evaluations point to mixed results regarding the extent to which sustainability was successfully planned for in project designs, partly because ongoing funding is a challenge. **Element 2: UNDP's programmes consider the policy and legal environment as key factors in their design, particularly in response to LNOB.** The strengthening of institutions is an essential aspect of sustainability in programmes and projects. The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook "promotes stronger focus on sustainability through measures that enhance national ownership and capacity development". UNDP's Global Programme on Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human Rights for Sustaining Peace and Fostering Development includes seven"	52, 77, 82, 112-123, 136, 180, 204, 214

key interlinked areas to strengthen the rule of law and human rights: 1) political engagement; 2) institution building; 3) community security; 4) human rights systems; 5) access to justice; 6) transitional justice; and 7) gender justice. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found that, "Along with assistance on income-generation opportunities, UNDP aided governments in implementing strategies and action plans and developing guidelines and legal review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Element 3: To achieve greater sustainability, programming standards require each project to develop transition and phase-out arrangements that are annually reviewed as part of the monitoring policy. In response to monitoring findings, managers are to consider "actions to develop and adjust a sustainability plan". The evaluation policy states that that the focus of evaluations is on "determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP's work". To that end, evaluations question all "contextual factors that may enhance or impede the achievement of results". The Programming, Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook stresses the involvement of all stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation as a measure for increased sustainability. In practice, however, sustainability remains a chronic challenge, with unsatisfactory incorporation of lessons learned in design of new interventions.

Element 4: UNDP's traditional programming approach works well with national institutions, with policy and legislative changes consistently considered as part of intervention design; however, engagement with stakeholders outside government is more variable based on evaluation findings. The Programming, Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook contains guidance on programming for policy change to achieve sustainability, for instance in the case of "draft legislation on rights of women and indigenous populations to participate in elections". The handbook guides programming staff in the design of individual policy changes, as well as in the overhaul of legal and constitutional systems, such as election laws. Evaluations suggest that UNDP's government-centric focus comes at the expense of engagement with non-state actors, especially civil society and, to a lesser degree, the private sector.

52, 77, 82, 112-123, 136, 180, 204, 214

MI 5.6 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 5.7: Institutional procedures (including systems for hiring staff, procuring project inputs, disbursing payment, logistical arrangements, etc.) positively support speed of implementation and adaptability in line with local contexts and needs	Score
Overall MI rating	Satisfactory
Overall MI score	2.75
Element 1: The organisation has internal standards set to track implementation speed	4
Element 2: Institutional procedures are adaptable to local contexts and needs	3
Element 3: The organisation benchmarks (internally and externally) its performance on implementation speed across different operating contexts	2
Element 4: Evidence that procedural delays have not hindered speed of implementation across interventions reviewed	2
MI 5.7 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: UNDP's project management approach, supported through its IT infrastructure, tracks implementation speed. The financial regulation and rules stress the timely delivery and closure of projects in line with UNDP's decentralised operating model. At an organisational level, efficiency is tracked through management results included in the IRRF. UNDP has developed so-called "Fast Track" procedures applicable to countries in crisis that for a short, controlled period	2, 24, 27, 49, 52, 70, 75-77, 80, 85, 95, 97, 127, 136, 180, 214

shift *ex ante* controls to *ex post* reviews to ensure speedy delivery in emergencies. Interviews indicate that streamlined business processes and "Fast Track" procedures have had a positive effect and have made UNDP a more agile and quick to respond organisation. The COVID-19 experience demonstrated that UNDP's internal standards are well suited to track implementation speed, given the short time in which it repurposed USD 982 million during 2020. In response to the MOPAN open-ended survey question, "How has UNDP adapted and responded to the COVID-19 crisis?", 59% of respondents responded positively, with 16.3% of respondents citing UNDP's adaptability and 5.6% referring to the timeliness of UNDP's response. The evaluation of Strategic Plan 2018-21 points out that the "clustering" of operational support holds the promise of increased responsiveness.

Element 2: In line with its decentralised operating model, UNDP policies contain quality expectations for accountability, the division of labour and effective internal controls, with their specific application delegated to individual offices. The accountability framework and the internal control framework provide the minimum standards for UNDP to be compliant when performing transaction services. In the MOPAN survey, UNDP was rated very high on its understanding of local context, particularly by its implementing partners that directly interact with UNDP in line with standard operating procedures. In addition, in response to the survey question, "How has UNDP adapted and responded to the COVID-19 crisis?", 16% of respondents replied that UNDP had shown adaptability in its response. The evaluation of Strategic Plan 2018-21 found that the accelerator labs had demonstrated a strong ability to provide innovative and timely responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, the evaluation also found that "UNDP's organisational culture still lacks the flexibility the organisation needs to deliver more timely and innovative results and to partner with non-traditional partners, especially the private sector."

2, 24, 27, 49, 52, 70, 75-77, 80, 85, 95, 97, 127, 136, 180, 214

Element 3: UNDP collects progress data at various levels, including corporate, country and project level; however, its performance across different operating contexts is highly variable. For standardised services, global shared service centres have developed internal benchmarks that are applied to services performed at the regional or global level. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 states that "UNDP only recently started improving means to collect and address customer feedback". In addition to receiving survey feedback on performance, the Global Shared Services Unit (GSSU) has established a new strategic performance and client management service unit approved by the Executive Group, as part of the new GSSU operating model. As the UN system's largest service provider, the Evaluation of Inter-agency Operational Services (2018) highlighted the great variability of the level of service across country offices. In response, the "clustering" of operation services is intended to deliver more stable service levels across all operating contexts.

Element 4: Evaluations and reviews found that UNDP's risk-averse culture contributed to delays in implementation. The COVID-19 experience could be an opportunity to stem the tide. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found that "[t]he risk-averse organisational culture of UNDP is a key management issue that affects UNDP's flexibility, effectiveness, innovation, learning and opportunities to improve and accelerate achievement of results". In UNDP's 2020 partnership survey, 65% of partners agreed that UNDP's work is timely. In interviews, respondents point out that the COVID-19 experience served as a "testing ground" for new ways of working with fewer procedural hurdles.

MI 5.7 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

KPI 6: Working in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources	KPI score
Satisfactory	3.20

UNDP is at heart a partnership agency, and over the years it has spearheaded many important initiatives that have become founding blocks for collaboration and partnership within and beyond the UN system. UNDP is fully committed to the aid effectiveness agenda and has fully incorporated its principles into its programming approach. As the host of the Resident Coordinator function, UNDP developed and led UN common country programming processes that UNSDCFs are built on. As the largest service provider in the UN system, it has supported almost all organisations of the UN system in the delivery of their mandates. Information sharing has been a priority for close to two decades, from when UNDP was joined by several other UN entities to implement the UN's first global enterprise resource planning system, which laid the foundation for close to real-time reporting on programmes and projects. UNDP has been recognised as the most transparent UN entity.

Although UNDP does not have a clear, uniform concept of partnership, and the understanding of comparative advantage is largely situational, it sees itself primarily as a partner of national governments and understands its role to be in their service. UNDP has a clear sense of what it brings to partnerships, and overall evaluations support that view. Given the broad spectrum of country contexts that UNDP engages in, strategies are clearest on how partners can be leveraged at the country level, or with regards to vertical funds. However, the focus on national government has led to confusion on what its comparative advantage is beyond being an operational platform. Most importantly, UNDP has no clear concept of beneficiaries beyond the government partners its serves, which is partly a legacy of its MDG role as "scorekeeper" and its focus on national policy change. While the concept of "leave no one behind" is prominent in UNDP programming, its definition of beneficiary is so broad that it renders the concept inadequate for the purposes of prioritisation.

Knowledge management, which would be essential to underpin its thought leadership, programmatic and integrator roles, deserves a fresh look. While the Human Development Report is widely recognised as a flagship product by the international development community, the role of country offices in the production of knowledge is underdeveloped. There is limited evidence of vertical and horizontal development and use of knowledge.

MI 6.1: Planning, programming and approval procedures make partnerships more agile when conditions change	Score
Overall MI rating	Highly satisfactory
Overall MI score	4.00
Element 1: Procedures in place to encourage joint planning and programming	4
Element 2: Mechanisms, including budgetary, in place to allow programmatic changes and adjustments when conditions change	4
Element 3: Institutional procedures for revisions permit changes to be made at the appropriate level to ensure efficiency	4

MI 6.1 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: UNDP has well established procedures for planning and programming with government partners, UN entities and other stakeholders. UNDP's country-level programming is characterised by a strong commitment to joint planning and programming, in line with Busan principles and UN common country programming processes. Joint programmes accounted for about 8% of UNDP expenditures in 2019, but UNDP's engagement in joint planning with UN and national partners goes much further, in line with UNSDCF guidelines. An additional 14% of funding was dedicated to joint activities with other UN entities, and UNDP took steps, for instance through issuing guidelines, to prepare its country offices for more multidisciplinary engagement. UNDP's programme manual, as well as the enterprise risk management policy, require joint planning with government partners and other UN entities. In the MOPAN survey, over 60% of UN entities and implementing partners agreed that UNDP participates in joint and inter-agency efforts.	2, 15-16, 24, 36, 40, 46-48, 66, 72, 75-76, 80, 82, 86, 95-96, 128, 181, 187

Element 2: UNDP's programming cycle includes effective mechanisms for programmatic changes; however, implementing changes is largely dependent on agreement with donors and programme countries. UNDP's programming guidance includes elaborate, high-quality guidance on the review and update of country programmes and subsidiary projects. The annual planning process is designed to review progress and to learn lessons that affect the next planning and implementation cycle. Since CPDs are approved by the Executive Board, they typically never get formally changed, as that would require resubmission; instead, adjustments are worked into the ongoing implementation of country programmes. Evaluations attest to UNDP's "adaptive ability", not just in individual instances but also across groups of countries. At the project level it is more common for programmatic interventions to be changed in line with local conditions; however, most changes are less based on performance data and more typically because of shifting goalposts. In some instances, large reprogramming exercises take place, as happened in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, where many country offices repurposed their programmes with the agreement of programme countries. UNDP's newly approved policy for performance-based payments is an attempt to offer incentives to implementing partners to find new ways to deliver with fewer resources while achieving better results.

Element 3: With its strong culture of subsidiarity, all revisions and changes of projects are fully delegated to the responsible unit. UNDP's prescriptive content and delegations of authority anchor approval, review and revision of projects with heads of offices. This includes the reallocation of resources and programmatic changes within the tolerances set out by the project documentation. For all changes that go beyond the tolerances, agreement of a project steering committee is needed, which typically includes the head of office and representatives of the implementing partner, donor and the government co-ordinating ministry.

In relation to COVID-19, UNDP has been at the centre of the integrated UN response. For example, through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, UNDP has been supporting the management of a range of agile joint UN financial instruments for integrated responses, and has provided dedicated capacities at the country level to provide Resident Coordinators, resident representatives and UNCTs with support in the COVID-19 response. | 2, 15-16, 24, 36, 40, 46-48, 66, 72, 75-76, 80, 82, 86, 95-96, 128, 181, 187 |

MI 6.1 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.2: Partnerships are based on an explicit statement of comparative or collaborative advantage, i.e. technical knowledge, convening power/partnerships, policy dialogue/advocacy	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.60**
Element 1: Corporate documentation contains clear and explicit statement on the comparative advantage that the organisation is intending to bring to a given partnership	2
Element 2: Statement of comparative advantage is linked to clear evidence of organisational capacities and competencies as it relates to the partnership	3
Element 3: Resources/competencies needed for intervention area(s) are aligned to the perceived comparative or collaborative advantage	2
Element 4: Comparative or collaborative advantage is reflected in the resources (people, information, knowledge, physical resources, networks) that each partner commits (and is willing) to bring to the partnership	3
Element 5: [UN] Guidance on implementing the Management and Accountability Framework exists and is being applied	3

MI 6.2 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: UNDP does not have a clear, uniform concept of partnership, and the understanding of comparative advantage is largely situational. The term "partnership" is used somewhat inflationary, blurs roles and leaves comparative advantage unclear. Several corporate policies attempt to define "partners", but all do so independently within their own context. The strategic plan contains several references to "partners" that alternatingly refer to programme governments, UN entities, civil society, the private sector, vertical funds and implementing partners. In the case of the private sector, different policies contain competing definitions for private sector partnerships. For instance, while the partnership policy defines them as "voluntary and collaborative commitment between UNDP and one or more parties […] to achieve common objectives in line with overall development goals supported by UNDP", the due diligence policy defines them as arrangements "in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, and benefits". UNDP's programming guidance is clearer, as it describes the expectations and the criteria for the selection of implementing partners, as well as other project partners, in relationship to UNDP.	
Element 2: UNDP has a clear sense of what it brings to partnerships, and overall evaluations support that view. Country programming frameworks first and foremost document a partnership between UNDP and the programme country. They include roles and responsibilities, including those of other stakeholders such as donors, civil society, and other international governmental and non-governmental organisations. UNDP also offers implementation services to programme countries that provide UNDP with government cost-sharing. The nature of these services ranges from mostly operational services, such as large-scale procurement, to programmatic and policy support. UNDP has entered into several formal corporate partnerships with private sector entities that range from funding arrangements to joint activities in pursuit of the SDGs. All partnerships are required to clearly articulate a set of principles: • Integrity • Non-exclusivity and no unfair advantage • Clearly defined roles and responsibilities • Mutual focus on delivering development results • Dedication to agreed outcomes • Cost-effectiveness • Realistic expectations • A medium- to long-term perspective • Underlying institutional interests and organisational values • Alignment to UNDP's priorities and processes • Non-endorsement • Impartiality, transparency and accountability • Risk sharing • Partnership benefit. **Partnerships with UN entities typically involve service provision by UNDP, as in the case of the corporate agreement with UN Women.** As the largest service provider in the UN system, UNDP has a very clear sense of its comparative advantage in operational and administrative matters, as reflected and acknowledged in agreements. In some instances, UNDP also maintains programmatic arrangements, most recently with UNICEF, that speak of the collaborative advantages of both partners. While evaluations point out shortcoming in performance, for instance in operational	1, 7, 16, 48-49, 55, 61, 70, 72, 75, 86-88, 93, 95, 98, 107, 125, 190, 214

services, they reaffirm UNDP's comparative advantage in providing these services to government and UN entities. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 notes a more than 80% favourable rating for governments' perceptions of UNDP as a valued partner; however, the ratings have been declining since 2015.

Element 3: Most of UNDP's systems, resources and policies are aligned with its acknowledged operational backbone role and its implicit project implementation role. It is less clear whether UNDP has the resources and competencies for policy integration. Interviews concede that integration is still the most misunderstood role of UNDP, both internally and externally. Some interviewees even saw UNDP's integration role as limited to its operational role and service provision. Evaluations found that the concepts underlying integration are not sufficiently clear (for example, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 identified three approaches to integration: 1) integrated approaches in programming; 2) integrator role in developing solutions; and 3) SDG integration), and that UNDP still suffers from a lack of focus and programmatic fragmentation to be effective at SDG integration. SDG integration is supported by a comparatively small team in the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, while other areas of comparative advantage, such as operational services and project implementation, are well resourced.

Element 4: UNDP's partnership approach is mostly concerned with adding value to others, and is less concerned with complementing its own gaps through partners' comparative advantage. UNDP has a lot to offer, and looking across the wide variety of partnerships – ranging from project implementation to advocacy to service provision – most arrangements revolve around the value UNDP can add. This is particularly true for arrangements with vertical funds, where UNDP implements projects of common interest, but that in first instance advance the objectives of the funding source. One effect of UNDP's partnership approach is that programme governments "allow UNDP to advise on sensitive areas of national purview, like public sector reform, areas which governments would not readily 'outsource' to 3rd parties or other international agencies". The MOPAN survey found that the articulation of its comparative advantage is one of UNDP's top three areas for improvement. Particularly, UN entities and donors each rated this as the second-highest issue, after improvements in UN system co-ordination.

Element 5: UNDP is fully committed to the implementation of the Management Accountability Framework (MAF), even though clarifications are still being provided and understanding built regarding its application at the country level. The MAF was created as a tool to clarify the relationship between the Resident Coordinator and fellow heads of agencies in the field. Country-level evaluations speak to the ongoing implementation of the MAF at the country level, and UNDP updated its Executive Board as part of its repositioning. The MOPAN survey indicates that partners, particularly UN entities and donors, still see UN system co-ordination as the top area for improvement for UNDP, and the Administrator informed the Executive Board that "MAF does not yet appear to be fully or evenly understood at country level."

1, 7, 16, 48-49, 55, 61, 70, 72, 75, 86-88, 93, 95, 98, 107, 125, 190, 214

| MI 6.2 Evidence confidence | High confidence |

MI 6.3 Demonstrated commitment to furthering development partnerships for countries (i.e. support for South-South collaboration, triangular arrangements and use of country systems)	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.25**
Element 1: Clear statement on how the organisation will support principles of collaboration with countries on their development agenda (Nairobi Principles, 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda)	4
Element 2: Clear statement/guidelines for how the organisation will support development partnerships between countries	4
Element 3: Clear statement/guidelines for how the organisation will use country systems	3
Element 4: Internal structures and incentives supportive of collaboration/co-operation with countries, and use of country systems where appropriate	2
MI 6.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP is fully committed to the aid effectiveness agenda and has fully incorporated its principles into its programming approach. UNDP is an original signatory of the Paris Declaration and the Busan Partnership, and serves as co-host of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, together with the OECD. The Strategic Plan 2018-21 states that "UNDP will always respect national ownership in the analysis, design and implementation of solutions". Its programming guidance makes extensive reference to the principles of aid effectiveness, financing for development and mutual accountability. UNDP has also been an active supporter of the Sendai Framework and the SAMOA Pathways. UNDP hosted the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (SSC) for many years and actively supports and leverages its work. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 attests that "The SSC function has been institutionalized through the creation of an SSC-Triangular Cooperation team at headquarters, complemented by staff in the regional hubs. This is a significant step forward and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to SSC." The evaluation of Strategic Plan 2018-21 highlights UNDP's analysis of 1 296 projects that advance South-South co-operation. A meta-analysis of country-level evaluations confirms that South-South co-operation and triangular co-operation are frequently listed as UNDP's key value proposition, but at the same time attests that "there is still space for a more proactive and systematic approach". **Element 2: The Strategic Plan 2018-21 explicitly references co-operation among developing countries in line with global frameworks, with a particular emphasis on multi-stakeholder partnerships that support the people-centred nature of the 2030 Development Agenda.** UNDP has encouraged partnerships among developing countries in many ways. One of its longest-running efforts is the "Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Networks (TOKTEN)" programme, which started in 1977 and aims to achieve transfer of technology and reverse brain drain through the (temporary) return of experts to their native countries. The programme has been particularly significant in regions with large diasporas, such as the Middle East and North Africa. Since then, UNDP has worked to bridge the knowledge gap between developed and developing countries, but also among developing countries. A lot of work UNDP engages in is not explicitly labelled as South-South or triangular co-operation, as fundamentally this is about networking which permeates most of UNDP's efforts. An illustration of UNDP's approach is the joint UNDP-World Bank Group Pathways for Peace publication in 2018, which analyses regional and cross-boundary causes of conflict and instability and includes proposals to overcome barriers to co-operation among affected countries.	1-2, 5-6, 16, 37-38, 49, 68-70, 75, 82, 86, 95-97, 171, 181, 201, 214

Element 3: UNDP fully aligns its country programmes with national planning cycles; however, its concept of "support services to national implementation" appears to be at odds with the use of national systems, even when requested by government to do so. UNDP understands its programme to be in service of programme countries. Hence, strategies and policies explicitly reference national systems, among them its guidance on UNSDCF and its Financial Regulations and Rules. As a capacity development organisation, many programmes target the establishment and refinement of national systems, including national statistical capacities and national aid co-ordination mechanisms. Member states have stressed that national ownership was a key driver of the strategic plan, and noted UNDP's efforts in South-South, North-South and triangular co-operation. In some sense, national ownership of UNDP's programme might be too strong, as the evaluation of UNDP development co-operation in MICs found that it can "limit UNDP programme coherence and flexibility". The concept of offering support services to national implementation also walks a fine line. While notionally in the service of capacity building, when providing support to national implementation, UNDP effectively uses its own systems instead of government systems for procurement, recruitment and financial services for a service fee. These types of service are a significant source of income for country offices, particularly in middle-income countries. **Element 4: While programming guidance affirms collaborative arrangements and the use of national systems, personal incentives largely point in the other direction.** UNDP's role as operational backbone is based on a cost recovery model. Given that country offices are in effect self-financing, the provision of operational services is a major source of revenue. As most UNDP personnel are paid from non-core (other) resources, their overriding incentive is to ensure sufficient income to maintain their contract. UNDP was originally barred from implementing programmes directly and was expected to use "executing agencies" to avoid any conflict of interest, except for very limited circumstances: "The Administrator may select UNDP as executing entity only when it can be demonstrated that such a step is essential to safeguard the full responsibility and accountability of the Administrator for the effective delivery of UNDP programme activities." Over time these provisions were weakened and as a result, today UNDP is in effect executing most of its programmes, either directly or through support to national implementation – as is evident through the large volume of procurement, recruitment and financial transactions executed directly in UNDP's systems. Service provision to other UN entities is also based on cost recovery, and the evaluation of inter-agency operational services (2018) found an "absence of incentives" to provide quality services.	1-2, 5-6, 16, 37-38, 49, 68-70, 75, 82, 86, 95-97, 171, 181, 201, 214
MI 6.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.4: Strategies or designs identify and address synergies with development partners to encourage leverage/catalytic use of resources and avoid fragmentation in relation to 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda implementation	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.75**
Element 1: Strategies or designs clearly identify possible synergies with development partners and leverage of resources/catalytic use of resources and results	3
Element 2: Strategies or designs clearly articulate responsibilities and scope of the partnership	3
Element 3: Strategies or designs are based on a clear assessment of external coherence	2
Element 4: Strategies or designs contain a clear statement of how leverage will be ensured	3

MI 6.4 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: Strategies frequently and explicitly reference synergies with development partners; however, their concrete role is less apparent in the pursuit of results. UNDP agreed with UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women on a common chapter that precedes the strategic plans of each agency. Its purpose is to serve as a high-level explicit commitment to collaborate based on synergies. At the country level, country co-operation frameworks at UN and UNDP level explicitly reference possibilities for synergies. Interviews also revealed that concepts of partnership and the leveraging of resources are seen as essential. For instance, in the Joint UNDP-United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention, UNDP leverages the United Nations Capital Development Fund's (UNCDF) ability to issue loans and guarantees to SMEs. UNDP is much more apt at finding synergies with and leveraging the resources of governments than private sector partners, including NGOs. The role of other development partners, such as academia, think tanks and the media, are frequently invoked, for instance in the context of the gender strategy. However, their practical role as part of UNDP activities is less systematic, and they mostly feature in anecdotal evidence. As the evaluation of Strategic Plan 2018-21 noted, to bring diverse stakeholders and partnership together in support of specific SDGs requires a clearer concept of integration as part of the next strategic plan.	
Element 2: UNDP's partners are involved at all stages of the programming cycle. While the roles of implementing partners are clearly articulated, the roles of other partners are less visible and articulated. Interviews indicate that partners "co-create" programmes and are involved in all stages of their design, implementation, and review. The design of country programmes typically involves a large spectrum of stakeholders, but the final document tends to be rather formulaic in its reference to development partners, not least because country programme documents must adhere to a strict Executive Board-imposed page limit. Project documents tend to elaborate more directly on the role and scope of partnerships, particularly with regards to national partners. UNDP's own assessment of CSO engagement found "a high volume of partnerships and strong levels of engagement with civil society. But most lack a long-term strategic focus, and 'downstream' service delivery efforts are greater than 'upstream' policy participation."	1-2, 8-9, 11, 48-49, 70, 93, 96, 98, 128, 214
Element 3: Attempts to ensure external coherence are evident, not least because of UNDP's integrator role, but the level to which it is achieved is largely dependent on context. UNDP is actively engaged in the development of UN common programming processes in almost all countries, and reports success in this area. The MOPAN survey indicates that its relationship with government is seen as a key strength, including by UN entities and donors. UNDP's co-ordinating and convening roles are also regarded as a top strength, including by co-ordinating ministries, even if the exact nature of that role is still somewhat unclear following the delinking of the Resident Coordinator function. At the same time, MOPAN survey respondents also see co-ordination and communication with partners as the single largest area of improvement.	
Element 4: Given the broad spectrum of country contexts that UNDP engages in, strategies are clearest on how partners can be leveraged at the country level, or with regards to vertical funds. As part of UN common country programming processes, UNDP agrees with local partners on shared results. This allows for joint efforts that include partners' local knowledge, sector expertise and access to communities for the benefit of projects. UNDP is implementing significant resources from global funding mechanisms, such as GEF, GFATM and GCF (USD 1 690 million in the 2018-19 biennium). As part of the project design, a certain amount of co-financing is required, and UNDP is overall successful in leveraging partners' resources (including through in-kind contributions). The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated UNDP's ability to leverage partners and resources in support	

of member states' response; however, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found that "there remains space for UNDP to further leverage its thought leadership on human development approaches to help development partners be bold and think differently".	1-2, 8-9, 11, 48-49, 70, 93, 96, 98, 128, 214
MI 6.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.5: Key business practices (planning, design, implementation, monitoring and reporting) co-ordinated with relevant partners	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.33**
Element 1: Active engagement in joint exercises/mechanisms (planning, co-ordination, monitoring, evaluation) to support external coherence	4
Element 2: Participating in joint monitoring and reporting processes with key development partners	4
Element 3: Identifying shared information or efficiency gaps with development partners and developing strategies to address them	2
MI 6.5 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: Country level planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is done with the broad participation of stakeholders. Under joint programming, UN organisations and national partners collectively prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate development activities aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda and other international and regional commitments. UNDP works jointly with UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women to achieve targets set by member states through the 2018 QCPR. At the regional level, the regional directors of the four agencies manage co-ordination of the Common Chapter, and UNDP leads on West and Central Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. In the Strategic Plan 2014-17, UNDP made a commitment that it "[w]ill implement programmes together differently. We will continue to support field offices in developing joint programmes, joint results groups and joint workplans in support of country priorities." In its information note on UN reform (2020), UNDP reported 117 socio-economic impact assessments and 75 response plans conducted with partners. Programmatically, UNDP is an active partner in flagship UN ventures, such as the Spotlight Initiative on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. Interviews attest that since the delinking of the Resident Coordinator function, joint activities have taken a good upward swing, which was further propelled by the COVID-19 pandemic. At an operational level, UNDP actively supports the UN Business Operations Strategy at the country level.	1, 9, 11, 24, 29, 58, 62, 75, 80, 85-86, 128, 181, 187
Element 2: UNDP actively participates in a wide range of multi-stakeholder mechanisms. The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), arguably the most significant joint monitoring and reporting process of the international community, is just one example of UNDP's lead in the joint monitoring and reporting on development commitments with programme countries, donors, civil society, private sector and international financial institutions. At the inter-agency level, UNDP is part of important co-ordinating bodies, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action, and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. At the country level, UNDP is part of joint monitoring and reporting processes, and 75% of respondents to UNDP's 2020 partnership survey have a positive impression of UNDP's contribution to data and evidence collection.	
Element 3: UNDP reports annually to its country stakeholders; however, these reports primarily cover successes and do not report on gaps or lessons learned, although that evidence does exist. In UNDP's 2020 partnership survey, only 31% of respondents saw UNDP's best contribution in the	

sourcing of knowledge. The MOPAN partner survey also found that the sharing of information and lessons is the second most indicated area for improvement.	1, 9, 11, 24, 29, 58, 62, 75, 80, 85-86, 128, 181, 187

MI 6.5 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.6: Key information (analysis, budgeting, management, results, etc.) shared with strategic/implementation partners on an on-going basis	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**4.00**
Element 1: Clear corporate statement on transparency of information is aligned to the International Aid Transparency Initiative	4
Element 2: Information is available on analysis, budgeting, management in line with the guidance provided by the International Aid Transparency Initiative	4
Element 3: Responses to partner queries on analysis, budgeting, management and results are of good quality and responded to in a timely fashion	4

MI 6.6 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP is a recognised world leader on transparency in international development. UNDP has championed the use of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) within the UN development system, and together with UNOPS leads the IATI Secretariat. UNDP's policy posture is that all information is made public by default unless UNDP is required to keep confidentiality (e.g. personal information). For the last five years, UNDP has been recognised as the most transparent UN organisation in the Aid Transparency Index. **Element 2: UNDP publishes all information on projects, budgets, resources and results monthly.** UNDP's information disclosure policy "considers public access to information a key component of effective participation of all stakeholders, including ordinary people, in the human development process". Consequently, the UNDP transparency portal publishes a rich, easy to interact with database of all ongoing UNDP programmes and projects, including project budgets, expenditures and results information. However, personal details, medical records, vendor bids, investigation files and proprietary information are kept confidential. **Element 3: UNDP data are publicly available for analysis almost in real time**. In addition to information available on UNDP websites, UNDP releases information to the public on request if contacted through the office of the resident representative. The UNDP transparency portal publishes details on over 4 000 active projects, including those contributing directly to the COVID-19 response, with links to profile pages for every donor.	19, 21, 25, 128

MI 6.6 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.7: Clear standards and procedures for accountability to beneficiaries implemented	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.40**
Element 1: Explicit statement available on standards and procedures for accountability to beneficiary populations, i.e. Accountability to Affected Populations	2
Element 2: Staff guidance is available on the implementation of the procedures for accountability to beneficiaries	3
Element 3: Training has been conducted on the implementation of procedures for accountability to beneficiaries	3

Element 4: Programming tools explicitly contain the requirement to implement procedures for accountability to beneficiaries	2
Element 5: Approval mechanisms explicitly include the requirement to assess the extent to which procedures for accountability to beneficiaries will be addressed in the intervention	2
MI 6.7 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: While UNDP has fully adopted principles of mutual accountability, it has no clear definition of beneficiaries, and instead tracks groups that potentially benefit from interventions as part of reporting. UNDP has traditionally understood itself to be in the service of national governments. As a capacity development organisation, national institutions benefit most directly from typical UNDP programmes and projects. Interviews with UNDP staff members confirmed that the concept of beneficiaries is often aligned with their individual area of work, ranging from co-ordinating ministries in case of support to national implementation, to a country's population in case of national policy support, and marginalised groups in case of heath and gender work. To better understand its contribution to LNOB, UNDP implemented a tracker for its projects that includes 18 categories of beneficiaries, ranging from "migrants" and "sexual minorities" to "people living in urban areas" and "people living in rural areas". While being able to cater to different contexts, many of the categories are overlapping or ill-defined. UNDP's social and environmental standards, while they refer to stakeholders, include the notion of accountability to beneficiaries and set out procedures for accountability to them. In the MOPAN survey, responses were mixed, with some respondents stating that UNDP engages with beneficiaries and has addressed their needs, whereas others commented that UNDP needed to improve their engagement with beneficiaries and civil society organisations.

Element 2: Given the lack of a clear concept of beneficiary, accountability to beneficiaries is reduced to reporting to governments. Guidance on the implementation of the procedures for accountability to beneficiaries is severely limited. In line with UNDP's programme policies, UNDP reports to governments on the implementation of their programmes. UNDP uses several channels to report to the public at large, for instance through its transparency portal and annual reports, but the primary audience remains donors and programme countries.

Element 3: In addition to providing training for all personnel, UNDP is training experts on social and environmental standards. UNDP's social and environmental standards are underpinned by an accountability mechanism that includes a reporting mechanism. Mandatory training on social and environmental standards was conducted in 2019. In the management response to the evaluation of UNDP's climate change adaptation portfolio, UNDP committed to "building a cadre of experts in the regional hubs to advise on SES standards and on providing training and capacity building on climate-related topics to UNDP staff and implementing partners".

Element 4: Programming guidance implicitly provides for accountability to beneficiaries, but no other corporate tools and mechanisms are in place to ensure that the guidance is effective. UNDP's quality standards for programming explicitly refer to "core principles of human rights, gender equality, resilience and sustainability and leaving no one behind […] Potential harm to people and the environment is avoided wherever possible, and otherwise minimized, mitigated and managed". The strong commitment to these principles is weakened by UNDP's understanding of national ownership, which sees national governments as their primary client, and hence limits its accountability to other beneficiaries. | 1, 21, 36, 63, 75-76, 84, 93, 125, 1, 21, 36, 63, 75-76, 84, 93, 125, 205 205 |

Element 5: UNDP's appraisal process requires that programmes and projects are reviewed by beneficiaries, but does not require any accountability to beneficiaries. The programming prescriptive content states that "The core principle of leaving no one behind is underpinned by three other programming principles: human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment; sustainability and resilience; and accountability. These are the foundation for programming in all contexts." UNDP's programming policy on appraisal and approval states that appraisal must include the review "by stakeholders including all relevant government and civil society entities, UN agencies, donors, and other multilateral and bilateral partners".	1, 21, 36, 63, 75-76, 84, 93, 125, 205
MI 6.7 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.8: Participation with national and other partners in mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.67**
Element 1: Participation in joint performance reviews of interventions e.g. joint assessments	4
Element 2: Participation in multi-stakeholder dialogue around joint sectoral or normative commitments	3
Element 3: Use of surveys or other methods to understand how partners are experiencing working together on implementing mutually agreed commitments.	4
MI 6.8 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP regularly participates in the joint assessment of performance and in joint evaluations. UN Cooperation Framework Internal Guidance states, and UNDP practice shows, that joint monitoring throughout the Cooperation Framework cycle should ensure that the UN development system is 1) delivering on the commitment to leave no one behind, and achieving results that uphold the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles; 2) helping national partners develop capacities; 3) mitigating drivers of conflict, disaster risks, humanitarian crises and complex emergencies, including through greater co-operation and complementarity among activities related to development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace; 4) fostering new and effective partnerships between national stakeholders and international actors, including through South-South and triangular co-operation; and 5) promoting integrated and coherent policy support. The Evaluation Resource Centre lists 305 mid-term reviews and evaluations undertaken jointly at project and country level. The Independent Evaluation Office stressed that joint assessments and evaluations are an essential aspect of their work. **Element 2: In line with its previous role as host of the Resident Coordinator function, as well as in its current role as SDG integrator, UNDP regularly participates and supports multi-stakeholder dialogues.** Evaluations and partners consistently affirm UNDP's role and comparative advantage as convener on a host of issues. For instance, the evaluation of UNDP in MIC development co-operation (2020) states that "One of the strongest UNDP assets is the capacity to convene dialogues, enable conditions and facilitate consensus-building among diverse sets of partners. It is one of the UNDP features most appreciated among stakeholders." UNDP also has served as co-secretariat of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and in that role has produced progress reports on the implementation of internationally agreed principles since 2014. However, several cases of poor inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration were also found. The MOPAN partner survey identifies UNDP's role in UN system co-ordination, transparency/communication with partners and donors, and working in partnership, as the top three areas of improvement.	2, 11, 30, 49, 58, 62, 66, 68, 85-86, 96-97

Element 3: UNDP has served as a role model for the use of surveys. For about two decades, UNDP has been using surveys to understand itself and its position in the development landscape better. The first global staff survey was prepared in response to a restructuring exercise, and included pointed questions that allowed staff members to voice their opinions fully anonymously, including on whether they trust the Administrator. Since then, UNDP has added a partnership survey with more than 3 400 respondents in 2020. UNDP's commitment to the use of surveys and quantitative data is illustrated by statements on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2019: "UNDP has been successfully implementing organisational staff surveys for a number of years. UNDP sees high potential in comparable data analytics focused on organisational capabilities and resources to drive deeper insights in the United Nations common system reform efforts and to partner directly on change initiatives and processes."	2, 11, 30, 49, 58, 62, 66, 68, 85-86, 96-97
MI 6.8 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 6.9: Use of knowledge base to support policy dialogue and/or advocacy	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.83**
Element 1: Statement in corporate documentation explicitly recognises the organisation's role in knowledge production	3
Element 2: Knowledge products produced and utilised by partners to inform action	2
Element 3: Knowledge products generated and applied to inform advocacy, where relevant, at country, regional or global level	3
Element 4: Knowledge products generated are timely/perceived as timely by partners	3
Element 5: Knowledge products are perceived as high quality by partners	3
Element 6: Knowledge products are produced in a format that supports their utility to partners	3
MI 6.9 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: While UNDP sees itself as a development thought leader, not least due to the success of the Human Development Report, that role is not broadly anchored in relevant job descriptions. The Human Development Report, which was first produced in 1990 under the guidance of Indian Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen, and Pakistani economist, Mahbub ul Haq, is widely regarded as one of the leading publications on human development. The production of the Human Development Report is anchored in UNDP's budget through a fixed allocation from core (regular) resources. UNDP frequently describes itself as a "development thought leader", as noted in the UNDP report of the Executive Board, and the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 recognised the role of the Human Development Report in particular. UNDP's role as a thought leader on non-income poverty in the context of "leave no one behind" was also recognised in the Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21. However, evaluations found that knowledge management is only reflected in about one-third of policy advisors' job descriptions. UNDP has invested in knowledge management tools at the corporate level, but in the Global Staff Survey, learning and knowledge is seen as an area of development, with 30% of respondents stating that they do not receive sufficient opportunities. **Element 2: The Human Development Report is seen as the only periodic flagship publication, and country offices are ill equipped to generate knowledge for wider use.** In many regards, the Human Development Report is seen as "the only consistent periodical 'flagship' publication of UNDP" (as stated in the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17), even though UNDP produces a	2, 4-5, 11, 27, 53, 55, 69, 96-98, 128, 133, 159, 175-176, 189-191, 214, 235

wide range of knowledge products, often requested by or in collaboration with governments. In addition to the global Human Development Report, UNDP also produces regional and national human development reports with partners. Evaluations, including the Evaluation of UNDP Development Cooperation in MICs (2020), have found that these targeted, topic-specific reports can have "wide uptake at country level". Knowledge products primarily target policy and decision makers, but their use is not systematic. The fact that the themes of reports change on an annual basis can shine a spotlight on often neglected issues, but rarely provides for sustained attention to trigger change. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 found that "attention to knowledge management at the country level is not adequate, and the country offices are poorly equipped to draw and document programmatic lessons for wider use". However, UNDP's 2020 partnership survey indicates that knowledge on South-South co-operation is seen as a particular strength.

UNDP have also produced several knowledge products in relation to COVID-19. This includes a human development impact paper and vulnerability dashboard developed by the Human Development Report office, and guidance notes on Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption and Responding to COVID-19 Information Pollution developed by the policy bureau.

Element 3: UNDP's knowledge products can be seen to directly impact policy debate. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 mentions the example of the Secretary-General's report, One Humanity: Shared Responsibility, which was influenced by policy analysis UNDP conducted with partners. The 2016 Africa Regional Human Development Report, with its focus on gender equality, is citied as another example of how UNDP has contributed to policy debate, with the report triggering the increased integration of gender in national agendas across Africa. An internal analysis by UNDP found that UNDP is most efficient in attracting users to their analysis. But the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 also found that "[t]here remains space for UNDP to further leverage its thought leadership on human development approaches to help development partners be bold and think differently".

Element 4: UNDP's knowledge products are seen as timely. In UNDP's 2020 partnership survey, 65% of partners agree that UNDP's work is timely, and 74% state that UNDP positively contributed to analysis and collecting evidence. In response to the MOPAN survey question "UNDP's knowledge products are timely", 18% strongly agree, 44% agree and 22% somewhat agree.

Element 5: The quality of the Human Development Report as a knowledge product is widely acknowledged as evident through extensive academic citation, and partners respond positively to the quality of UNDP products. In UNDP's partnership survey, 68% of respondents are satisfied with the quality of programmes and projects, and about an equal share respond positively to the quality of UNDP's reporting. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 found "[t]he multidimensional poverty index has become a flagship initiative in support of UNDP's human development reports and other national uses. It is valued by most stakeholders as a key contribution to improving availability of data for monitoring SDG 1 and leave no one behind, as well as for evidence-informed policymaking." In response to the MOPAN survey question, "UNDP provides high-quality inputs to policy dialogue", 20% of respondents strongly agreed, 43% agreed and 20% somewhat agreed, which suggests that the quality of products is recognised by partners.

Element 6: Knowledge products mainly support programme implementation, and partners regard them as well tailored to the national context. Aside from the Human Development Report, most UNDP knowledge products directly support implementation of programmes and projects, and in UNDP's partnership survey, 44% of government partners highlight technical expertise as the top line item. Some 70% of respondents to UNDP's partnership survey felt that its activities are well tailored to needs and capacities. In response to the MOPAN survey question,

2, 4-5, 11, 27, 53, 55, 69, 96-98, 128, 133, 159, 175-176, 189-191, 214, 235

"UNDP's knowledge products are provided in a format that makes them easy to use", 20% strongly agreed, 47% agreed and 24% somewhat agreed, which suggests partners appreciate the format in which knowledge products are presented.	2, 4-5, 11, 27, 53, 55, 69, 96-98, 128, 133, 159, 175-176, 189-191, 214, 235
MI 6.9 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Systems geared to managing and accounting for development and humanitarian results and the use of performance information, including evaluation and lesson-learning

KPI 7: The focus on results is strong, transparent and explicitly geared towards function	**KPI score**
Satisfactory	**2.57**

UNDP has a strong commitment to RBM set out in successive strategic plans, and has taken steps to track results across development contexts and against the SDGs. However, despite efforts to account for UNDP's heterogenous results across country contexts and incremental improvements to the IRRF, UNDP's RBM systems steer the organisation towards results at the country level and do not yet fully capture intended and planned results at the global level. UNDP benefits from strong guidance for RBM at the country level and has based its IRRF on a bottom-up framework which supports extensive reporting on project and country outcomes. The challenge for UNDP is planning for results rather than reporting on what countries have achieved.

UNDP's IRRF is the main tool for bringing together and aggregating the results of UNDP's programming. While developed through a bottom-up process based upon what country offices aspired to achieve, it has been criticised in successive evaluations for being slightly out of synch with UNDP's strategy and applying metrics that do not meaningfully represent UNDP's performance in the way that it is aggregated. The Executive Board has requested a review of IRRF indicators to ensure that they more clearly reflect performance.

Despite efforts to improve organisational capacity and to increase the corporate investment in RBM, evaluations have pointed to the need for greater efforts to improve UNDP's RBM processes. UNDP has invested in state-of-the-art dashboards to gather results from across interventions, and to use machine learning to identify trends, lessons and improve results reporting.

Although UNDP has made efforts to integrate lessons learned, UNDP's ability to integrate lessons from previous interventions, and particularly learn from failure, has been a chronic challenge for UNDP.

MI 7.1: Leadership ensures application of an organisation-wide RBM approach	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.50**
Element 1: Corporate commitment to a results culture is made clear in strategic planning documents	3
Element 2: Clear requirements/incentives in place for the use of an RBM approach in planning and programming	3
Element 3: Guidance for setting results targets and developing indicators is clear and accessible to all staff	3
Element 4: Tools and methods for measuring and managing results are available	2
Element 5: Adequate resources are allocated to the RBM system	2
Element 6: All relevant staff are trained in RBM approaches and method	2

MI 7.1 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: Through its 2018-21 Strategic Plan, six Signature Solutions and three development outcomes, UNDP has endeavoured to tackle the ongoing challenge of designing and implementing a meaningful and representative results-based management framework. UNDP's RBM system approaches RBM not in terms of what UNDP plans to achieve, but rather by asking retroactively what difference its intervention made. UNDP's 2018-21 Strategic Plan intends to integrate recommendations from the Independent Evaluation of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan, which recommended that UNDP step up its efforts to implement an organisation-wide investment for improved RBM. While efforts have been made, evaluations still point to UNDP's RBM as an area for improvement. Responses to the MOPAN survey question, "UNDP prioritises a results-based approach", did not reflect strong performance on RBM: 10% strongly agreed, 49% agreed, 19% somewhat agreed and 12% disagreed.	
Element 2: The commitment to a results culture is explicit in UNDP's corporate documents and strategic planning processes; however, incentives to use RBM exist predominantly at the country level and are not consistent throughout the organisation. UNDP's 2009 Monitoring and Evaluation handbook was considered a "breakthrough in driving the effective application of the results-based management approach in programming and performance management", and has adopted the UNEG definition of RBM: "a broad management strategy aimed at achieving improved performance and demonstrable results". However, RBM approaches are only required at the country level, while corporate programmes and strategies are less clear on their use of RBM. For UNDP, RBM integrates learning, risk management and accountability to help improve results and enhance the capacity of UNDP to make better decisions in the future. Relevant indicators from the Strategic Plan's IRRF have been adopted in the programme and project results framework. Comprehensive, costed monitoring and evaluation plans are in place and implemented to support evidence-based management, monitoring and evaluation. Risks, in terms of both threats and opportunities, are identified with appropriate plans and actions taken to manage them. Governance of programmes and projects is defined with clear roles and responsibilities, and provides active and regular oversight to inform decision making.	1, 4, 6, 34, 48, 77, 82, 97-98, 214
Element 3: Programming standards are in place to guide the development of results targets and indicators, but the capacity to design and implement and monitor against indicators is variable. UNDP's PPM states that each outcome and indicative output must have at least one results indicator that meets quality standards to measure and track progress. These must be derived from the Cooperation Framework, SDG indicators and the IRRF, when relevant. Projects should adopt relevant programme output indicators to facilitate programme monitoring and clarify how the project contributes to outcome-level results. However, performance monitoring is highlighted as a recurring issue in both audits and evaluations. Reporting under the ROAR has been found to lack consistency, with country offices often focusing on inputs rather than results, and not reporting failures and challenges.	
Element 4: The IRRF is the key tool UNDP uses to measure and manage results achieved through its Strategic Plan 2018-21. While it is extensive, it has been criticised for not being fully aligned with the 2018-21 strategic plan, not being used to plan resource allocation and not capturing the nuances of UNDP's impact. At the country level, results are tracked against outcomes and outputs in the results and resources framework of the CPD. Programme statistics feeding into the IRRF and CPD results frameworks are tracked in the Corporate Planning System. The IRRF has been generalised over successive strategic periods, reducing the number of outcomes and outputs compared to the IRRF for 2014-17 down to 3 development outcomes	

from 7, 27 development outputs from 38; and 56 output indicators from 93. The IRRF provides a basis for tracking and reporting at the global level, but does not fully support management for results. Expected accomplishments and objectives do not provide the insight needed about how interventions are driving outcomes to support resource decisions or planning. In addition, UNDP's documentation does not capture how many people work in a specific area, which would support managing for results. There are also weaknesses in how the IRRF tracks corporate organisational performance and country level performance. The number or percentage of countries meeting their targets is not presented in the IRRF due to the aggregation of results at the global level, and country context in relation to results is not adequately captured.

Element 5: Despite efforts to increase the investment in RBM through the consecutive strategic periods, investment in RBM has been insufficient to generate the level of information needed for effective measurement, management or use of results. The 2017 Evaluation of the Strategic Plan and Global and Regional Programmes found that UNDP investments in RBM training have mostly focused on RBM and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal points, and have consisted primarily of webinars and online courses, which have proven to be of limited effectiveness. Capacity development for RBM needs to be delivered through a broad range of approaches and to include all staff, from leaders and senior managers to programme managers and associates. Capacity development also needs to include implementing partners. Their engagement is essential if national datasets are to improve and contribute to UNDP reporting requirements.

1, 4, 6, 34, 48, 77, 82, 97-98, 214

Element 6: In 2017, less than half of UNDP staff contacted by the Joint Institutional Effectiveness report assessment considered themselves fully up to date with UNDP corporate requirements and directives on how to interpret and apply RBM concepts. In addition to this internal challenge, most external parties involved in UNDP project development are also not up to date with the UNDP RBM quality requirements. The Strategic Plan 2018-21 evaluation does note that RBM capacity development activities have been implemented, but remarks that these, along with other efforts to address RBM issues, have been insufficient.

MI 7.1 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 7.2: Corporate strategies, including country strategies, based on a sound RBM focus and logic	Score
Overall MI rating	Satisfactory
Overall MI score	3.00
Element 1: Organisation-wide plans and strategies include results frameworks	3
Element 2: Clear linkages exist between the different layers of the results framework, from project to country and corporate level	2
Element 3: An annual report on performance is discussed with the governing bodies	4
Element 4: Corporate strategies are updated regularly	4
Element 5: The annual corporate reports show progress over time and notes areas of strong performance, as well as deviations between planned and actual results	2
MI 7.2 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: The IRRF is a reporting framework that brings together multidimensional, integrated results of UNDP's programming, and captures results from the signature solutions, development priorities and country programmes through a mix-and-match report that draws together the complexity of development challenges and the multi-pronged efforts	2, 4-6, 48, 58, 77, 82, 95, 98, 206, 214

by UNDP to deliver results. The IRRF is not used to allocate resources. The strategic plan and IRRF planning processes were developed bottom up, informed by country office aspirations and what they intended to deliver. All programmes are required to be linked to a measurable results and resources framework. To support continuity over the successive strategic plans (2014-17 and 2018-21), the IRRF has maintained the overall thrust of its measurement framework, while adjusting existing and introducing new indicators based upon learning.

Element 2: The linkages between the indicators and different layers of the IRRF are complicated. Country and regional programmes and interventions feed into the IRRF, but the many layers overlap, and individual projects are linked to multiple outcomes. Country and regional programme documents have associated results and resource frameworks which are aligned to the IRRF to link country and corporate-level commitments. A key challenge for setting and linking results is that UNDP's signature solutions work across the three UNDP contexts set out in the Strategic Plan, whereby for example a solution on poverty in an LDC looks different to in a MIC. The Signature Solutions aim to move UNDP towards a more nuanced understanding of what programmes are contributing to and of UNDP's multi-dimensional approach. However, although results achieved by Signature Solutions are reported on, resources are not linked to the Signature Solutions upfront. In addition, the evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan found that there were not "plausible linkages" between UNDP's contributions and progress made at global level or towards the SDGs.

Element 3: Annual reporting against the IRRF and qualitative analysis reported through the ROAR is presented to the Annual Report of the Administrator, which serves a basis for dialogue with the Executive Board at its Annual Sessions. Annually, UNDP conducts a results analysis and reporting exercise, with reporting from all units. Quantitative reporting from the IRRF with qualitative analysis from the ROARs feeds into reporting which has improved but does not fully capture the timing or performance of UNDP. In addition, the mid-term review (MTR) of the Strategic Plan provides an important opportunity to assess progress towards implementation of the Strategic Plan at the midpoint. Corporate reporting identifies areas where UNDP has shown strong performance and notes areas of weakness**.** UNDP's Annual Performance Report is part of oversight and monitoring of projects and a key building block of the annual review. Key elements of the Annual Performance Report are fed into higher levels of reviews. Results from independent country programme evaluations are presented to the Executive Board annually. Some 15 ICPEs were presented in 2018, and 37 presented in 2019.

Element 4: The strategic plan is updated every four years and is reviewed through a mid-term review and an independent evaluation during its lifetime, which provides learning and recommendations for future planning. UNDP's IRRF has been updated and streamlined with the strategic plan. However, interviews with staff highlighted that some indicators are preserved over time to maintain time series data, even while the results the indicators measure have changed.

Element 5: Annual results reports and reports on the progress of the strategic plan are provided to the Board annually. These reports provide information about performance against development outputs and outcomes for which UNDP provided support to countries. The report indicates the extent to which targets were met, exceeded or missed. The IRRF was developed prior to the development of the current strategic plan, which means that although it was developed to provide metrics for the strategic plan, it is not fully in sync. At the end of each year, UNDP conducts a results analysis and reporting exercise, with all units reviewing results achieved against annual milestones. Although reporting has improved over time, it remains somewhat problematic as the global aggregation of data does not fully capture UNDP's performance.

2, 4-6, 48, 58, 77, 82, 95, 98, 206, 214

| **MI 7.2 Evidence confidence** | **High confidence** |

MI 7.3: Results targets set on a foundation of sound evidence base and logic	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.60**
Element 1: Targets and indicators are adequate to capture causal pathways between interventions and the outcomes that contribute to higher order objectives	3
Element 2: Indicators are relevant to expected results to enable the measurement of the degree of goal achievement	2
Element 3: Development of baselines are mandatory for new interventions	2
Element 4: Results targets are regularly reviewed and adjusted when needed	3
Element 5: Results targets are set through a process that includes consultation with beneficiaries	3
MI 7.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP's Theory of Change "articulates strategies, approaches and interventions" that are intended to lead to the achievement of strategic plan results. UNDP has made efforts to make its targets and indicators relevant across development contexts to address the root causes of development issues. In successive strategic plans (2014-17 and 2018-21), the number of outcomes has been consolidated from seven to only three development outcomes. UNDP's global Theory of Change broadly underpins its 2018-21 Strategic Plan and provides the basis for the IRRF; however, it is not fully aligned as much of the analysis conducted for the global Theory of Change predates the development of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan. The Theory of Change was developed through a mostly bottom-up approach, informed by country office aspirations, and an aggregation of results across country programme documents rather than a planned path toward outcomes. Preparing a theory of change is built into the Programming Cycle for developing country and regional programme documents, but this has changed with the introduction of the new UNSDF. In developing CPDs, UN country teams draw on the UNCT Theory of Change development process. UNDP's quality standards require that all CPDs provide a clear linkage to the programme's Theory of Change that articulates the causal chain related to the development challenge and its underlying assumptions, differential effects on target groups, how the project will test the causal chain, the partnerships required to deliver results, and how the project will contribute to the SDGs. **Element 2: Indicators have been on a path of improvement, but there are still gaps in how they meaningfully reflect UNDP's performance. In aggregating data across countries, some high achievements mask complex problems, and some low achievements hide significant gains from countries**. The Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 raises significant concerns about the relevance of UNDP's IRRF indicators to development gains and programmatic achievements, particularly given that the "headline" numbers do not distinguish between countries' achievements. Developing relevant indicators based upon country level aspirations that tell the story of UNDP's performance as a whole has been a tremendous challenge which has seen some improvements across successive strategic periods. This concern is echoed in the Evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan, which suggests that "a country-based approach to reporting on the number or percentage of countries that meet targets could provide a clearer basis for assessing performance. Country performance should be assessed based on each country's target setting but should be used to identify lessons and to focus measures and human resources on improving performance."	2, 4-6, 39, 48-49, 53, 57, 63, 77, 97-98, 103, 107-108, 110-111, 214

Element 3: All units are requested to provide baselines and targets for the IRRF, but baselines are not consistently measured across the organisation and are not wholly aligned to the current strategic period. At the beginning of the 2018-21 strategic period, UNDP set baselines, annual milestones and targets (BMTs) for output indicators in the IRRF following the Executive Board decision (DP/2017/30). Baselines are established for impact, outcome and output indicators. The standard development project guidance for 2020 states that analysing evidence against operational baselines is part of the development of new interventions. A recurrent audit issue is "[i]nadequate project implementation, including weak monitoring and evaluation, delays in preparing annual work plans related to projects, and unclear project baselines, indicators, and targets". Evaluations of projects (e.g. the ICPE for Cuba) have also found that baselines are not consistently measured.	
Element 4: Results targets have been reviewed over time due to the overachievement of indicators and a need to develop meaningful metrics. For this, an additional round of review was introduced in 2019 and 2020 to allow countries to adjust their results indicators and to incorporate key changes in the external context. A review of UNDP's targets through the MTR of the strategic plan, and through a review of results targets by the effectiveness group, has highlighted the need for UNDP to raise the level of ambition across its development results targets. There has been a push for UNDP to introduce "stretch indicators" to measure UNDP's results in reaching populations, and the adjustments made. The 2020 IRRF reflects UNDP's revision and adjustment of indicators, introducing a new and critical output for UNDP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic under Outcome 3, strengthen resilience to shocks and crisis, which is intended to help UNDP plan and implement its responses to the pandemic at global, regional and country levels, as well as monitor and report on progresses and results for future strategy setting. Three indicators related to UNDP hosting the Resident Coordinator function are no longer applicable and were removed.	2, 4-6, 39, 48-49, 53, 57, 63, 77, 97-98, 103, 107-108, 110-111, 214
Element 5: UNDP's PPM states that national ownership requires inclusivity of national stakeholders in all stages of the process, so country programmes are formulated in close consultation with the government and other national stakeholders, including a meaningful cross-section of civil society and private sector actors. National ownership is further expressed through a government development co-ordination authority serving as executing agent for the programme. The projects under a programme are thus nationally owned regardless of implementation modality, and entail the commitment of national human and financial resources along with external resources.	

MI 7.3 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 7.4: Monitoring systems generate high-quality, useful performance data in response to strategic priorities	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.25**
Element 1: The corporate monitoring system is adequately resourced	2
Element 2: Monitoring systems generate data at output and outcome levels of the results chain	3
Element 3: Reporting processes ensure data are available for key corporate reporting and planning, including for internal change processes	2
Element 4: A system for ensuring data quality exists	2

MI 7.4 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: Resourcing for monitoring and programme management is decentralised in UNDP, whereby the level of resourcing for monitoring and evaluation depends upon programme expenditure. Therefore, smaller offices often have limited resourcing for monitoring, leading to recurrent concerns about inadequate or weak project monitoring. Monitoring for UNDP includes 1) tracking performance through the collection of appropriate and credible data and other evidence; 2) analysing evidence to inform management decision making, improve effectiveness and efficiency, and adjust programming as necessary; and 3) reporting on performance and lessons to facilitate learning and support accountability. The POPP establishes a resourcing threshold whereby all units and offices are required to maintain adequate staffing for monitoring and evaluation which has not always been maintained over successive strategic periods. Offices with annual programme expenditures of USD 50 million and above are required to maintain two full-time specialists dedicated to monitoring and evaluation, and offices with programme expenditures between USD 10 million and USD 50 million are required to maintain one full-time specialist. Offices with less than USD 10 million in programme expenditure must maintain staff with appropriate time dedicated to monitoring and evaluation. At the regional level, resourcing is provided in a 1:4 ratio (one full-time equivalent staff person to four countries). The Evaluation of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan notes significant concerns about the level of resourcing for monitoring. A survey conducted for the strategic plan found that 45% of all country offices completed an assessment of the number of staff needed for the monitoring function, and only 25% indicated that the budget for monitoring was sufficient. Only half of those country offices surveyed reported meeting M&E quality requirements.

Element 2: The Enterprise Resource Planning system monitors against UNDP's 27 corporate outputs of the strategic plan for over 5 000 projects. UNDP's corporate results dashboard aggregates results towards specific outcomes, as well as resource investment by output, Signature Solution and actual results achieved. Although output reporting is available, linked to outcomes, inconsistent approaches to reporting at the project and country levels makes it challenging to generate meaningful data at the outcome level of the results chain. MOPAN survey respondents found that UNDP's monitoring function could be improved by ensuring that monitoring systems are applicable to context and by identifying relevant targets and indicators for tracking progress.

Element 3: Enhancing its uptake of learning from reporting has been a focus for UNDP. Its programming cycle explicitly employs the use of data to inform decision making, and UNDP has invested in improvements of its systems; however, multiple corporate evaluations have raised concerns about the UNDP's ability to use data in its programme design. Responding to consistent issues raised about the ability of the ROAR to support performance and the need for a more systematic use of data, since 2019, UNDP has been using machine learning to produce topic modelling to analyse data from the ROAR at the project level. The analysis groups successes and failures to improve understanding of enabling and constraining factors. The potential of UNDP's reporting processes has been exemplified by UNDP'S COVID-19 dashboard, which tracks resources mobilised and reallocated and uses machine learning to identify successes, challenges, demands and lessons learned in the COVID-19 response.

Element 4: UNDP has internal quality assurance processes for the design, appraisal and implementation stages. For country and regional programmes, during the design and appraisal stage, the BPPS Effectiveness Group is the QA Assessor that reviews the country programme document or regional programme document against the corporate quality standards, prior to submission to the Executive Board. The Bureau Director serves as the QA Approver for country programme documents and is accountable for ensuring that the final programme document meets the corporate quality standards. | 28-29, 48, 53, 57, 77, 82, 97-98, 214 |

During implementation, programme quality is assessed through the ROAR. For projects, accountability for the completion of accurate and timely quality assurance assessments lies with the UNDP staff member accountable for project assurance. Each office must designate at least one quality assurance approver who reviews the credibility of the QA assessments. The QA Approver must function at a higher level of accountability than the QA Assessor. The QA Approver is typically the resident representative, deputy resident representative or head of portfolio. | 28-29, 48, 53, 57, 77, 82, 97-98, 214

MI 7.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 7.5: Performance data transparently applied in planning and decision making	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.50**
Element 1: Planning documents are clearly based on performance data	2
Element 2: Proposed adjustments to interventions are clearly informed by performance data	2
Element 3: At corporate level, management regularly reviews corporate performance data and makes adjustments as appropriate	3
Element 4: Performance data support dialogue in partnerships at global, regional and country levels	3
MI 7.5 Analysis	**Source documents**

Element 1: Evaluations have noted recurring issues in UNDP's ability to use performance data in programme design and planning processes. Despite multiple efforts to address this in UNDP's programme management, UNDP has not yet systematised the feedback loop across its interventions. UNDP has made efforts to use performance data more effectively in programme design and planning processes through guidance, enhanced quality assurance, and investment in systems for tracking and analysing results. Investment in innovation and support to pilot projects is intended to bring together new approaches to development challenges and take stock of the experience generated across UNDP's heterogenous operating contexts. While the new data management platforms have great potential for producing good performance data, and while there are examples of effective use of data to design programmes, there has not yet been a comprehensive, institutionalised approach to using performance data across UNDP's programmes, and in practice the approach is variable and not yet embedded across UNDP's work. In response to the survey question, "UNDP learns lessons from previous experience, rather than repeating the same mistakes", 18% of respondents strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 21% somewhat agreed and 10% disagreed. However, both donors and partners responding to the MOPAN survey question, "Additional information on the performance management or use of evidence of UNDP", stated that UNDP could improve on the use of lessons learned in their implementation. | 1-2, 6-7, 47-48, 82, 98, 214

Element 2: UNDP is working to address the reported "fear of failure" which has inhibited UNDP's ability to adjust and learn from interventions that have not been successful, and is more consistently reporting both successes and challenges. The Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 points to an organisational culture in which people do not feel comfortable sharing "failures" openly. Nonetheless, UNDP has made several incremental changes in response to lessons. Since 2019, all business units report challenges with the analysis of root causes in the ROARs, which supports lesson learning across the organisation with the help of artificial intelligence. In addition, UNDP has made efforts to refine and improve the IRRF in response to changing contexts and input from countries.

Element 3: **At the corporate level, the annual report and results dashboards provide information on UNDP's results achieved**. This is intended to feed into the annual review, learning and practitioners' networks, repositories of knowledge, and evaluations, providing specific sections on lessons learned and planning for sustainability (exit strategy). Annual performance reports may address the main lessons learned in terms of best and worst practices, the likelihood of success, and recommendations for follow-up actions where necessary. Annual performance reports may also be used to share results and problems with beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders, and to solicit their feedback. The MTR of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 notes that UNDP has improved the utility of the ROAR by encouraging reporting on constraints and enablers of programming, but that "there is limited evidence of them being used for decision-making, course correction, scaling or improvement of results. There is significant scope for the ROAR to be improved, simplified, streamlined and automated." It remains to be seen how lessons about failures will be brought into decision making. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 confirms that this is still the case: "The quality of the results framework, indicators used, and data collected and reported is problematic. Limited attention is being paid beyond capturing lessons learned. UNDP has yet to ensure the use of the captured lessons to improve results, catalyse and scale up success and innovation, and accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals."	1-2, 6-7, 47-48, 82, 98, 214
Element 4: The annual report is intended to be used to spur dialogue with partners largely at the country level. The project development visual guide indicated that the role of the programme officer is to communicate project results to partners and the public.	
MI 7.5 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

KPI 8: The organisation applies evidence-based planning and programming	**KPI score**
Satisfactory	**3.02**

UNDP is working to close its feedback loop to identify and incorporate lessons from evaluations into new interventions more consistently. There has been a perception, noted in successive evaluations, that UNDP's culture does not foster learning from failure and that there has been limited reflection on what has not worked. Machine learning, dashboards for results reporting, the evaluation resource centre, required management responses, and resourcing from the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) is being used to support the application of lessons and performance data in the development of new CPDs.

UNDP has a structurally and behaviourally Independent Evaluation Office, which is led by a director appointed by the UNDP Administrator who reports to the Executive Board. Evaluation priorities are established by the IEO in consultation with the Executive Board. The evaluation function within UNDP is supported through core funds, which were increased by 0.1% in 2019 (from 0.2 to 0.3% of programme delivery costs). The total expenditure on evaluation has risen from USD 21.6 million in 2017 to USD 25. million in 2019. This includes a rise in the IEO evaluation budget from USD 9 million to USD 10.9 million and a rise in evaluation expenditure at country level from USD 10.5 million to USD 13.2 million. However, expenditure on evaluation in regional bureaux and headquarters has dropped from USD 2.1 million to USD 1.6 million.

UNDP's Evaluation Policy was revised in 2019 to clarify the independence of the office, improve the quality of decentralised evaluations, and to invest broadly in the IEO's ability to manage an increased volume of evaluations without compromising quality. The policy establishes the broad criteria for the IEO to be able to shape its annual workplan.

UNDP has well-established evaluation quality criteria and evaluation methodologies for corporate and decentralised evaluations. However, the capacity to implement evaluations at the country level varies significantly. This is reflected in the quality of decentralised evaluations, which has been a persistent concern. UNDP has invested in processes and resources to address quality concerns.

MI 8.1: A corporate independent evaluation function exists	Score
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.67**
Element 1: The evaluation function is independent from other management functions (operational and financial independence)	4
Element 2: The head of evaluation reports directly to the governing body of the organisation (structural independence)	4
Element 3: The evaluation office has full discretion in deciding the evaluation programme	3
Element 4: The central evaluation programme is fully funded by core funds	4
Element 5: Evaluations are submitted directly for consideration at the appropriate level of decision making for the subject of evaluation	4
Element 6: Evaluators are able to conduct their work during the evaluation without undue interference by those involved in implementing the unit of analysis being evaluated (behavioural independence)	3
MI 8.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: The independence of the IEO is enshrined in the UNDP Evaluation Policy. The IEO is defined as a functionally independent unit within UNDP that supports the oversight and accountability functions of the Executive Board and the management of UNDP, UNCDF and United Nations Volunteers (UNV). IEO's independence is supported through establishing its own structure, budget, and professional and managerial independence. This structural independence underpins and guarantees its freedom to conduct evaluations and report evaluation results to the Executive Board. The structural independence refers to freedom from undue influence in the conduct and substance of the evaluations that the IEO commissions. According to the Evaluation Policy, the IEO is committed to ensure the continued credibility of its work, and the transparency and accountability of UNDP as a whole. The Evaluation Policy Review noted a "structural problem" with respect to independence posed by the existence of an Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC) that reports to the Administrator, which is considered to potentially compromise the independence of the IEO Director. The review found that the AEAC should no longer be part of the UNDP evaluation architecture because it is seen to compromise independence. However, the management response did not accept this recommendation, as IEO and UNDP value the AEAC for providing advisory and oversight support. In practice, the AEAC has an oversight role of the IEO. For example, the AEAC is briefed on the implementation of the IEO workplan and has the discretion to make suggestions on the workplan of the IEO. **Element 2: The IEO reports annually to the Executive Board.** According to the Evaluation Policy, the Independent Evaluation Office is led by a director who is responsible for "ensuring its independence" and upholding the "impartiality and credibility of its work". According to the policy: "The appointment of the Director is the responsibility of the Administrator, in consultation with the Executive Board, taking into account the advice of the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee." The Director is responsible for managing the office and budget, managing recruitment, and after consultation with UNDP management, presenting an evaluation plan to the Executive Board. The IEO presents reports to the Executive Board on a regular basis through the annual report on evaluation, which increasingly endeavours to bring more structural attention to recurrent issues and findings to the Executive Board through the annual evaluation reports.	2, 6, 7, 47, 51-58, 65, 68-69, 82

Element 3: Evaluation priorities are fully determined by the IEO and agreed by the Executive Board. To develop the 2021-25 IEO programme, the IEO undertook a consultative process identifying gaps and needs, speaking with senior management and the Executive Board to calibrate programme choices. The main role of the IEO is to conduct independent evaluations according to the plans and costed programmes of work approved by the Executive Board. UNDP's evaluation system has two branches: the IEO carries out broad thematic, programmatic and country-level evaluations; and programme units (policy and regional bureaux and country offices) commission decentralised evaluations.

Element 4: UNDP evaluations fall into two categories: independent evaluations conducted by the IEO, and decentralised evaluations managed by country offices, regional bureaux and practice and policy bureaux, and conducted by external experts. The 2016 Evaluation Policy established clear budgeting benchmarks to ensure reliable budgets for the IEO's work. In 2019, the Evaluation Policy was revised to increase the resources available for the IEO and decentralised evaluation across UNDP from 0.2% to 0.3% of programme delivery (core and non-core resources). UNDP is on track to achieve this commitment; however, in practice this budget is spent mostly on independent evaluations. The budget for decentralised evaluations is dispersed, whereby 43% belongs to the global vertical funds, for which it is mandatory to conduct MTRs and end-of-programme evaluations.

In 2019, the IEO spent USD 10.9 million on evaluations and other institutional activities (including staffing and rent), which includes a supplementary allocation in the last quarter to finance the extraordinary costs (including security) resulting from the ICPEs conducted in several crisis countries. For 2020, the IEO has had an annual budget of USD 14.7 million and a staff of 34. UNDP has not yet developed a resource mobilisation strategy for the evaluation function, which was recommended by the 2019 Evaluation Policy Review. At the time of this review this was overdue and not initiated.

Element 5: As established by the Evaluation Policy, the IEO submits independent thematic and programmatic evaluations to the Executive Board, which approves or notes the management responses.

Element 6: IEO's Charter and guidance clearly establish behavioural independence, but IEO evaluations are led by IEO evaluators and not commissioned from external parties. The IEO conducts evaluations, which are augmented by external consultants who work with the IEO. The IEO brings in external evaluators to avoid undue influence and bias in the undertaking of an evaluation, ensuring objective and credible evaluation results. The Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook is explicit that UNDP cannot interfere with evaluation team decisions, but may make further suggestions and should facilitate access to documentation, as well as partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

2, 6, 7, 47, 51-58, 65, 68-69, 82

MI 8.1 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 8.2: Consistent, independent evaluation of results (coverage)	Score
Overall MI rating	**Highly satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.60**
Element 1: An evaluation policy describes the principles to ensure the coverage, quality and use of findings, including in decentralised evaluations	4
Element 2: The policy/an evaluation manual guides the implementation of the different categories of evaluations, such as strategic, thematic, corporate level evaluations, as well as decentralised evaluations	4

Element 3: A prioritised and funded evaluation plan covering the organisation's planning and budgeting cycle is available	4
Element 4: The annual evaluation plan presents a systematic and periodic coverage of the MO's interventions, reflecting key priorities	4
Element 5: Evidence demonstrates that the evaluation policy is being implemented at the country level	2
MI 8.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP has an evaluation policy, revised in 2019, which sets out the purpose and basic principles of evaluation (independence, credibility and utility; to drive organisational learning and accountability). The policy covers the independent evaluations conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP; decentralised evaluations commissioned by UNDP programme and policy units, as well as the UNV programme and the UNCDF; and activities of UNDP and its Independent Evaluation Office in support of national evaluation capacity. The policy refers to the role of the evaluation offices in ensuring strategic and representative coverage of UNDP programmes and results at national, regional and global levels, which includes thematic and other corporate evaluations. UNDP's PPM ascribes project benchmarks for project evaluations, which are based upon budget thresholds, duration and projects being extended or scaled up. Evaluation procedures and quality assurance, applicable to both corporate and decentralised evaluations, are described in the evaluation policy. The evaluation policy states that all evaluations should meet the quality standards defined by UNEG and set out in UNDP guidance. All evaluations carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office are informed by its Evaluation Charter. All decentralised evaluations commissioned by UNDP programme and project units are designed and implemented in accordance with the UNDP evaluation guidelines. The Independent Evaluation Office manages a quality assessment system for decentralised evaluations. The evaluation policy states that when evaluations are used effectively, they support programmatic improvements, knowledge generation and accountability. While the guidelines are clear, in practice the mechanisms for uptake and use of evaluations varies across the organisation, despite strong efforts to compile evaluation findings and recommendations. **Element 2: UNDP's Evaluation Guidelines provide a general outline for how UNDP approaches independent country programme evaluations, UNDP-wide thematic evaluations and decentralised evaluations, which are often project and outcome evaluations drawing on UNEG standards**. The workplans for corporate/thematic evaluations are approved by the Executive Board every four years, and additional topics can be included in the IEO workplan upon special request. The forthcoming IEO workplan for 2021-2025 is expected to include at least one thematic evaluation on COVID-19 and finance for recovery, youth employment, and renewable energy. Mid-term and final evaluations are required for all GEF interventions. **Element 3: The IEO submits a prioritised and funded evaluation plan covering the organisation's planning and budgeting cycle, which details budget protections derived from the UNDP integrated resource plan and integrated budget and new budget projections at the beginning of each fiscal year.** The workplan sets out the IEO's planned expenditure based upon budget estimates derived from UNDP's programmatic and core resources. From 2016 to 2019, the allocation increased by 0.1%, which increased the estimated allocation for the IEO, thus enabling an enhanced and expanded work programme. Partners surveyed broadly agree that UNDP follows through to ensure that required evaluations of interventions are indeed carried out.	2, 6, 24, 33, 37, 48, 51-58, 82, 85, 141

Element 4: It is mandatory for UNDP to prepare and present a costed evaluation plan to its Executive Board as an annex to country and regional programme documents submitted for approval. Resources budgeted for decentralised evaluations (i.e. evaluations overseen by the programme unit) are secured during budget preparation. The first multi-year evaluation plan was published in 2018. The IEO workplan covers 2018 to 2021 and includes planned independent country programme evaluations, corporate and thematic evaluations. The workplan also outlines plans for strengthening the decentralised evaluation function in UNDP. IEO's annual report provides detailed insights into evaluation activities, key achievements, challenges, lessons and the forthcoming workplan for the IEO. The report provides information on evaluation coverage, compliance, quality, institutional arrangements and how evaluations are used. New Evaluation Guidelines launched in January 2019 give renewed emphasis to the importance of planning for evaluations and ensuring appropriate evaluative coverage of UNDP's work across programmes. The IEO has significantly increased the number of completed Independent Country Programme Evaluations conducted over the strategic period from 6 in 2016 to 38 in 2019 (17 were planned for 2020, with 5 currently completed). In 2020, the IEO responded to the challenges of evaluating during COVID-19 and developed guidelines for conducting evaluations during the pandemic. In addition, the IEO conducted 15 ICPEs, and 4 thematic evaluations (climate change adaptation, conflict affected countries, Syrian refugee crisis response, development co-operation in MICs). In the first quarter of 2021, the IEO commissioned the Evaluation of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan.	2, 6, 24, 33, 37, 48, 51-58, 82, 85, 141
Element 5: UNDP's evaluation policy is applied at the country level, and resources are budgeted for decentralised evaluations. The technical expertise and staffing of country offices for monitoring and evaluation varies significantly. Evidence from annual evaluation reports and audits highlights recurring challenges with respect to the quality of decentralised evaluations. The IEO has established mechanisms to support country offices to apply the evaluation policy in response to the issue raised in previous audits, recommending that UNDP establish controls to better monitor the application of the evaluation policy (e.g. through establishing controls to ensure that all country offices update information in the Evaluation Resource Centre). The Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee has been set up to advise the IEO and UNDP administrator on the UNDP decentralised evaluation function and national evaluation capacity programming. The Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee's activity since the policy was adopted has included review and discussion of the IEO's draft work plan; and advice to the IEO to set up performance indicators, including adding KPIs on diversity, effectiveness and relevance. The IRRF tracks the proportion of decentralised evaluations that meet UNEG gender-related standards. In 2019, only 20% of decentralised evaluations were of satisfactory quality and 53% were of moderately satisfactory quality, meaning that 27% of decentralised evaluations were inadequate against UN-SWAP standards.	

MI 8.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 8.3: Systems applied to ensure the quality of evaluations	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**3.00**
Element 1: Evaluations are based on design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented	4
Element 2: Evaluations use appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation	3
Element 3: Evaluation reports present the evidence, findings, conclusions and, where relevant, recommendations in a complete and balanced way	3

Element 4: The methodology presented incudes the methodological limitations and concerns	3
Element 5: A process exists to ensure the quality of all evaluations, including decentralised evaluations	2
MI 8.3 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: All independent evaluations are subject to a quality assurance process. IEO evaluations and decentralised evaluations are guided by criteria and guidelines for evaluation design, which are used by UNDP personnel and consultants in commissioning and conducting evaluations. UNDP's evaluation quality standards are aligned to UNEG principles. The implementation of evaluation policy stipulates periodic independent reviews, which are conducted through periodic peer reviews under the auspices of UNEG. Independent evaluations are quality assured through external advisory panels. The quality of decentralised evaluations has been a recurring issue, and approximately one quarter of decentralised evaluations are not satisfactory. The IEO assessed the quality of 201 decentralised evaluations in 2019. The ratings were similar to those in previous years: 73% of the 2019 reports were considered moderately satisfactory and satisfactory; 26.2% were moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory or of a highly unsatisfactory quality.	
Element 2: Evaluation methodologies for corporate and decentralised evaluations broadly adhere to UNDP M&E guidelines and UNEG norms. All evaluations produced from the Independent Evaluation Office are required to consistently use appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation. The MOPAN assessment analysed 12 decentralised evaluations, and found that most evaluations use appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation: • Six decentralised evaluations apply methodologies that adhere to UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines. • Two decentralised evaluations apply UNEG norms and standards. • Four decentralised evaluations do not refer to the methodology applied. The Independent Evaluation Office has established guidance for UNDP's approach to evaluation during COVID-19, and emphasises the importance of rethinking evaluation plans, teams and methodologies. This includes collecting data remotely and reconsidering the methods and key indicators used for evaluation.	5, 24, 48, 52-53, 55-57, 96-98, 102-108, 111-120, 122-123, 212
Element 3: All evaluations produced by the Independent Evaluation Office are required to use appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation. There is broad compliance with evaluation guidelines from decentralised evaluations. An analysis of 12 decentralised evaluations sampled for the MOPAN assessment finds that most evaluations present the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations, although there are some quality issues affecting their credibility and utility: • Data collection: 11 of the decentralised evaluations describe appropriate data collection methods including document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and surveys where applicable. One of the evaluations is a synthesis for which these methods do not apply. • Data analysis: 10 of the decentralised evaluations provide clear data analysis supported by a construction of the theory of change. One of the decentralised evaluations provides sub-standard data analysis. One of the evaluations synthesises evaluations. • Findings: All 12 of the decentralised evaluations provide findings that are aligned to DAC criteria.	

- Conclusions: There is variability in how the decentralised evaluations deal with conclusions. Four of the decentralised evaluations provide clear conclusions based on findings. One of the evaluations provides a short summary of conclusions. One of the evaluations provides key lessons but does not include conclusions. Six of the evaluations do not provide conclusions.
- Recommendations: Nine of the decentralised evaluations provide clear, well-substantiated recommendations. Two of the decentralised evaluations provide incomplete recommendations. One evaluation does not include recommendations.

Element 4: All evaluations produced from the Independent Evaluation Office consistently present methodological limitations and concerns. An analysis of 12 decentralised evaluations finds that most evaluations present the methodological limitations and concerns: six of the decentralised evaluations provide a detailed discussion on the limitations of the evaluation; two decentralised evaluations briefly reference the limitations of the evaluation; and four decentralised evaluations do not refer to the limitations encountered.

Element 5: The Evaluation Policy has taken steps to enhance the oversight and quality assurance for the evaluation function, including decentralised evaluations. The UNDP Audit Advisory Committee has been expanded to include evaluation oversight functions. Renamed the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee, its members advise the UNDP Administrator and Director of the Independent Evaluation Office in fulfilling their responsibilities for the UNDP evaluation function as set out in this policy. The Independent Evaluation Office manages a quality assessment system for decentralised evaluations, providing feedback on performance to UNDP bureaux and country offices, and reporting annually to the Executive Board.

UNDP has published quality standards for its evaluations and a clear feedback loop for assessing the quality of reports. When shortcomings exist and there are questions about the methodological rigour, the guidance states that programme units should ask the evaluators to improve the report.

The Executive Board has repeatedly raised concerns about the quality and credibility of UNDP's decentralised evaluations, in response to quality assessment findings presented in the IEO's Annual Report on Evaluation. In general, the issue raised about decentralised evaluations has been that they have been inadequately resourced, leading to weaker analysis and thus weaker findings and conclusions. The IEO has worked closely with UNDP in recent years to address these concerns and strengthen guidance for and oversight of the decentralised evaluation function. This has included improved oversight of implementation through a more effective quality assessment process and the upgrading of the Evaluation Resource Centre. To improve the quality of decentralised evaluations, the IEO has taken steps to improve evaluation training courses. In 2020, two training courses were revamped including a mandatory training for MEL focal points in every unit and an overall training course on monitoring and evaluation. IEO also issued additional guidance and accompanying webinars on evaluations under COVID-19 conditions. The number of evaluations deposited in the Evaluation Resource Centre has remained the same. The IEO are working to issue quality criteria for the ICPEs and to raise quality criteria of the decentralised evaluations, and have designated focal points for each region (ten staff) based in New York who are following up on the uptake of (decentralised) evaluations. This presents a significant undertaking for the IEO, but is expected to support quality improvements for decentralised evaluations.

5, 24, 48, 52-53, 55-57, 96-98, 102-108, 111-120, 122-123, 212

MI 8.3 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 8.4: Mandatory demonstration of the evidence base to design new interventions	Score
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.40**
Element 1: A formal requirement exists to demonstrate how lessons from past interventions have been taken into account in the design of new interventions	2
Element 2: Clear feedback loops exist to feed lessons into the design of new interventions	2
Element 3: Lessons from past interventions inform new interventions	2
Element 4: Incentives exist to apply lessons learned to new interventions	3
Element 5: The number/share of new operations designs that draw on lessons from evaluative approaches is made public	3
MI 8.4 Analysis	**Source documents**

Element 1: Although UNDP emphasises learning, it is not clear how lessons inform improvements, adjustments or changes in UNDP's work. UNDP's IRRF and PPM explicitly require that programmes are developed based upon lessons learned, UNDP policies and international evidence as a prerequisite for planning country and regional projects and programmes. Lessons are captured through evaluations, guided by the principle that an evaluation should provide credible, useful and evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organisations and stakeholders. Although this is a formal requirement, the uptake or reflection on lessons from evaluations or previous interventions is not formally monitored in the IRRF. The IRRF tracks the implementation rate of agreed actions in evaluation management responses, but does not track how lessons from past interventions are used in programme design.

Element 2: UNDP's programming cycle explicitly includes the incorporation of lessons in the design of new interventions, although this is not systematically documented or tracked. UNDP has seen varying quality of CPDs. To bolster the feedback loop of learning into the design of new interventions, since 2020 the IEO has participated as an observer in regional programme appraisal committee meetings, particularly for CPDs. The IEO focuses on whether recommendations from evaluations of country programmes are followed up in the design, the evaluability of the new CPD, and the appropriateness of the evaluation plan in the CPD. Although the IEO only participated in the second cycle in 2020, this is expected to benefit the quality of the plans and uptake of learning considerably.

Element 3: UNDP has several processes to collect lessons, but has not yet embedded processes or incentives to use the lessons for exchange across countries or for the design of new interventions. The Evaluation Resource Centre provides a repository of lessons, but is not a mechanism for delivering project insights. Recognising the variable use of the Evaluation Resource Centre, the IEO has started to use machine learning/artificial intelligence to capture lessons for future programming. This has yet to become embedded but has significant potential to systematise and increase the use of lessons in the design of interventions. Staff interviewed reflected that across all offices, staff reported that lesson learning is often relationship based or determined by who sits around the table during the evaluation debriefing. According to staff interviews, since 2020 the IEO has participated as an observer in regional programme appraisal committee meetings, particularly for CPDs. The IEO looks at three areas: 1) were recommendations followed up in the design; 2) the evaluability of the new CPD; and 3) the appropriateness of the evaluation plan in the CPD. This has benefited the quality of the plans and uptake of learning considerably, although

6, 37, 46, 48, 55, 57-58, 65, 82, 97

it is only the second cycle that the IEO are currently undertaking. The IEO have developed a new knowledge product called "reflections, which is a simplified version of systematic reviews, called "rapid evidence reviews", through which they have identified topics of importance in relation to COVID-19. The IEO has developed nine thematic notes, extracting evidence from evaluations of UNDP interventions during previous crises (tsunami, HIV, SARS, hurricanes, etc) with relevant lessons that could serve country offices. The papers are available in five languages.

Element 4: The IRRF encourages but does not directly incentivise all business units to report on lessons learned. The programme development cycle relies on integrating learning into the design of new programmes. UNDP's emphasis on results-based budgeting and performance-based payments is intended to support the integration of lessons into the design of new projects for better performance and improved outcomes.

Element 5: Despite the lack of explicit references to evaluation use in programme design documents, it is widely acknowledged by UNDP management and staff that IEO evaluations are used to inform the design of UNDP programmes. The 2019 Evaluation Policy review recommended that after producing evaluations, efforts should be made to elaborate messages derived from the evaluations, including syntheses, showing trends/patterns based on granular data that may be of interest to different audiences.

	6, 37, 46, 48, 55, 57-58, 65, 82, 97

MI 8.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 8.5: Poorly performing interventions proactively identified, tracked and addressed	**Score**
Overall MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.50**
Element 1: A system exists to identify poorly performing interventions	2
Element 2: Regular reporting tracks the status and evolution of poorly performing interventions	3
Element 3: A process for addressing poor performance exists, with evidence of its use	2
Element 4: The process clearly delineates the responsibility to take action	3

MI 8.5 Analysis	**Source documents**
Element 1: UNDP has a complex dashboard for tracking (good and bad) performance at country levels. UNDP's Results Framework and evaluations both establish mechanisms for identifying poorly performing interventions. Despite this, there is a broad perception that UNDP's culture does not foster reporting on failure. Thousands of projects are monitored in UNDP's Enterprise Resource Planning system, including project outputs and resources linked to corporate outputs, which provides the architecture for publishing UNDP results. The new results dashboard allows for a better planning, monitoring, reporting and learning cycle. The "mini-ROAR" highlights successes, challenges and lessons learned, and UNDP staff can drill down into this data to get to qualitative data reported from countries The IRRF tracks organisational performance against a set of indicators aimed at assessing if UNDP is fit for purpose to deliver against the strategic plan. This IRRF tier is structured in three major areas covering: accelerated delivery of top-quality programmatic results for the SDGs; organisational efficiency and effectiveness for programme delivery; and operational service arrangements for UN system-wide results, co-ordination and coherence. Outputs in each area are accompanied by indicators, including those relevant to track progress regarding QCPR mandates. The IRRF guides all business units to monitor progress and analyse and report on performance and lessons learnt. According to the IRRF, at the end of each year UNDP conducts a results analysis and reporting exercise, with all units reviewing results achieved	6, 48, 51-52, 55-57, 65, 96-97, 100-111, 140, 214

against annual milestones. Evaluations provide another way to monitor poorly performing interventions. They are intended to support programmatic improvements, knowledge generation and accountability at the mid-point and/or end point, pre-scale-up, or pre-extension points. The Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 points to a reluctance to address poor performance due to a feeling of "disempowerment to address performance issues" and because of a "disconnect between a results-focus and poor performance/behaviours".

Element 2: Regular reporting through a results framework measures project effectiveness. The IRRF includes an indicator on the percentage of project outputs reported as achieved or on track, the metrics of which are included in the implementation phase of the project quality assurance rating tool. The standard project development guide includes mechanisms to track performance, analyse data, document lessons learned and integrate learning, and incorporate these into decision making. The Evaluation Resource Centre has been strengthened as an oversight tool for UNDP bureaux and country offices.

Element 3: **Although mechanisms are available for reporting poorly performing interventions, and despite UNDP's robust audit system, evaluations of the 2018-21 and the 2014-17 Strategic Plans highlight the prevalence of a culture that discourages failure, suggesting that the processes for addressing poor performance are underused.** UNDP has a "fear of failure", which inhibits staff from sharing potential lessons based upon poorly performing interventions alongside successes. Partners surveyed broadly agree that UNDP consistently identifies which interventions are underperforming and addresses any areas of intervention under-performance. The 2020 performance audit of the GEF portfolio highlights the lack of oversight of activities from 1 January to 31 December 2019. There was a slight gap in the time it took to trigger an investigation and launch a full audit, as a pattern of poor performance was identified at an early stage through a 2018 terminal evaluation.

Element 4: The delivery mechanism and project instrument determine UNDP's responsibility for taking action. For development projects, UNDP has accountability for design, oversight and quality assurance of the entire project. For development services, UNDP is only responsible for the quality of development services provided, not the entire initiative.

6, 48, 51-52, 55-57, 65, 96-97, 100-111, 140, 214

MI 8.5 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 8.6: Clear accountability system ensures responses and follow-up to and use of evaluation recommendations	Score
Overall MI rating	Satisfactory
Overall MI score	3.25
Element 1: Evaluation reports include a management response (or have one attached or associated with it)	3
Element 2: Management responses include an action plan and/or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities	4
Element 3: A timeline for implementation of key recommendations is proposed	3
Element 4: An annual report on the status of use and implementation of evaluation recommendations is made public	3

MI 8.6 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: With the revised evaluation policy in 2019, a timebound management response is now required for all evaluation reports. This has already supported an uptick in the number of management responses produced. The IRRF tracks the implementation rate of agreed actions in evaluation management responses as a proxy for tracking use and uptake of evaluation recommendations. On this front, there is room for improvement. For IEO-led independent evaluations, from 2015-20, 56 out of 75 evaluations have a management response (74.6%). All 13 thematic evaluations have a management response. For decentralised evaluations, of the 1 800 recorded evaluations conducted, 1 661 have a management response (92%). This indicates that there are many evaluations with partially completed or incomplete evaluations. The Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee's 2019 Annual Report notes that "management response to evaluation findings has generally been timely, with appropriate mechanisms to monitor the status of implementation findings".	1-2, 4, 6, 9, 32, 46-47, 50, 52, 54-55, 78, 82, 86, 95-97, 128, 176-177, 236
Element 2: The evaluation policy states that management responses include specific, timebound actions with clearly assigned responsibilities to implement them. All management responses are publicly available on the Evaluation Resource Centre and clearly designate the bureaux responsible for taking action based on the management response.	
Element 3: Actions from management responses include a timeline for implementation. The Evaluation Resource Centre tracks the status of implementation publicly. An analysis of independent evaluations conducted between 2016-20 shows that despite timebound actions, approximately 38% of actions to recommendations are overdue.	
Element 4: The IEO makes the use and implementation of evaluation recommendations public through the Evaluation Resource Centre. The Evaluation Resource Centre tracks the number of actions implemented in response to evaluation recommendations and their timeliness. In addition, the annual report produced by the IEO highlights management responses issued each year, although this does not yet offer a summary on the status of use and implementation of all evaluation recommendations.	
MI 8.6 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 8.7: Uptake of lessons learned and best practices from evaluations	Score
Overall MI rating	**Satisfactory**
Overall MI score	**2.75**
Element 1: A complete and current repository of evaluations and their recommendations is available for use	4
Element 2: A mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons learned internally exists	2
Element 3: A dissemination mechanism to partners, peers and other stakeholders is available and employed	3
Element 4: Evidence is available that lessons learned and best practices are being applied	2
MI 8.7 Analysis	Source documents
Element 1: The Evaluation Resource Centre is an online information management system that facilitates UNDP's efforts to maintain transparency and effectively use evaluations for accountability and knowledge management. The Evaluation Resource Centre stores all UNDP's decentralised and independent evaluations, management responses, and evaluation plans. Management responses are intended to generate lessons that are applicable beyond a particular	6, 50, 52, 55, 57, 97

project. Management responses and key actions are reported on and tracked separately so must be entered individually.

Element 2: UNDP has systems in place to gather and provide access to lessons from evaluations but has not translated these efforts into use. UNDP is taking steps to incentivise and promote more systematic learning from evaluations and critical reviews. Examples include the efforts to develop a database of lessons learned, and the questions introduced in the ROAR to promote reflection on failure. However, this has yet to go beyond reporting on knowledge-sharing towards a knowledge management approach allowing UNDP to document evidence of how lessons from success and failure have influenced change and improvement. The IEO has been active in webinars and in developing knowledge products to support evaluation during COVID-19, and has developed a new product called "Reflections", which is a simplified version of systematic "Rapid Evidence Reviews", through which they have identified topics of importance in relation to COVID-19. The IEO have developed nine thematic notes, extracting evidence from evaluations of UNDP interventions during previous crises (tsunami, HIV, SARS, hurricanes, etc) with relevant lessons that could serve country offices. The papers are available in five languages. Evidence on the uptake of Reflections is not yet tracked in the IRRF. However, nine webinars were hosted on the papers, with an average of 120 staff attendees. UNDP is starting to use artificial intelligence tools to extract lessons from their database more systematically, linking two databases (evaluations and projects) and the Human Development Report indicators to improve analytical capacity. Some 20% of donors surveyed through the MOPAN survey disagree with the statement that "UNDP learns lessons from previous experience, rather than repeating the same mistakes."

Element 3: UNDP's recently revised evaluation guidelines (2019) state that evaluations are required to have dissemination strategies and associated budgets. The IEO has emphasised the importance of sharing evaluations and evaluation practice, as well as lessons regarding evaluation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The IEO has developed knowledge products such as Reflections to support evaluation during COVID-19.

6, 50, 52, 55, 57, 97

Element 4: Organisational learning is an area that UNDP continues to strive to improve. The Evaluation Resource Centre stores all UNDP decentralised and independent evaluations, management responses and evaluation plans. The Independent Review of the UNDP Evaluation Policy (2019) points to the challenge of producing more evaluations without sacrificing quality and timeliness, as well as ensuring that these additional evaluations do not become merely outputs but are also a means to reach development outcomes through the generation and dissemination of evidence-based knowledge, with processes in place that facilitate the use of evaluations as instruments for learning. A good and recent example is the case of the Poverty Reduction of the LDCs Evaluation and the request by UNDP management to be allowed to delay its management response to have time to engage in a meaningful dialogue conducive to learning.

UNDP is currently rated Level 2 on a maturity framework for organisational learning, out of a possible five levels. Continuous learning is a core principle of UNDP's people strategy, and there are multiple initiatives toward this end. UNDP has processes in place to collect lessons, but the process of translating these to use has not yet been embedded. The Independent Review of Evaluation Policy found that with the commitment of 100% coverage of country programmes by ICPEs, as opposed to partial coverage, the IEO Country Programme Evaluation Section moves away from a two-programme cycle consideration to a one-programme cycle, shorter in-country missions, and a narrow focus on capturing lessons based on three key questions to inform new country programme strategies. According to the Annual Report on Evaluation 2020, the IEO will initiate a fresh approach to the ICPEs. In several countries, an Independent Country Programme

Review (ICPR) will complement the standard ICPE. The review process has been developed based on the findings and recommendations of a 2019 assessment of the ICPE methodology, as well as lessons learned from ICPE implementation in 2019.

Evaluations reveal a mixed picture:
The Evaluation of the Strategic Plan and Global and Regional Programmes 2014-17 found that UNDP is slow to welcome and disseminate learning, particularly from failure. Unwillingness to talk openly about failure stymies innovation and prevents staff from taking full advantage of opportunities to use learning to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Lessons are not shared systematically between country offices and regional hubs. The regional hubs have developed internal knowledge-sharing platforms, Knowledge Management Gateways, that serve as a repository of programme information and are designed to put forward good knowledge management practices. However, findings show that there is currently little evidence that interactive learning is happening in a regular, systematic way.

Findings of country programme evaluations have provided significant lessons for UNDP on both the need for and the approaches to evaluations in crises and unstable settings. The process has highlighted that evaluation is even more necessary in these contexts, and importantly, can be done. Planning and partnership are key to success. Evaluators need to be patient and flexible and have access to additional resources given the greater complexity and security concerns in crisis settings. Lessons from these evaluations have further strengthened the office's work and methodological approaches for the future, especially in 2020, when the IEO will evaluate UNDP's work in several additional crisis-affected countries.

Evidence from individual ICPEs shows mixed performance regarding the extent to which ICPEs have integrated learning. Examples of effective use of lessons and uptake of evaluative evidence are cited in the ICPE for Afghanistan and Serbia. The need to strengthen or establish mechanisms for drawing lessons from evaluation are noted in the ICPEs for Cuba, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq and Uruguay.

6, 50, 52, 55, 57, 97

MI 8.7 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

RESULTS

Achievement of relevant, inclusive and sustainable contributions to humanitarian and development results in an efficient manner

KPI 9: Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals	**KPI score**
Satisfactory	**2.67**

Between 2016 and 2020, UNDP had an active portfolio of between 4 700 and 5 000 projects in 170 countries (fragile states, landlocked developing countries [LLDCs], LDCs, MICs, high-income countries [HICs] and SIDS), covering the full range of development interventions.

The evaluation evidence reviewed for this assessment reflects mainly on performance up to early 2020, except for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21, which also covered most of 2020. This is because IEO evaluations tend to take between 10 and 18 months to complete (from approval of terms of reference [TOR] to Executive Board approval) and evaluations are retrospective, it should be noted that an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of development results (KPIs 9-12) on the basis of a sample of corporate (global, thematic), country programme and project-level evaluations will always be incomplete.

For this assessment, a sample of 29 independent external evaluations, conducted during the assessment period 2016-20, and corporate reports (including IEO Annual Reports and UNDP's own mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 and annual reports) were reviewed. The sample of independent, external evaluations includes the evaluations of support to LDCs (2018), MICs (2019), and conflict affected states (2020); the evaluation of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan and the Global and Regional Programmes; the evaluation of Climate Change Adaptation support (2020); and the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 (2021), all of which draw on a meta-analysis of corporate, thematic, and country programme evaluations, audits and corporate reviews. In addition, 11 independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) and 12 decentralised evaluations of UNDP-managed projects, covering a sample of countries to represent the diverse country contexts in which UNDP operates and across several intervention areas, were also assessed. All ICPEs answer the same three questions: What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review? To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives? And what factors contributed to or hindered UNDP's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results? (In Iraq the questions were rephrased to be "To what extent has UNDP effectively positioned itself in a rapidly changing political, social, economic and security environment to address Iraq's critical issues through the delivery of its programme, while leveraging its own comparative advantage?" and "To what extent has UNDP been able to achieve its initial and adjusted programme objectives in contribution to each pillar?") This implies that evaluation criteria effectiveness, relevance and sustainability are more likely to be reflected in ICPEs than others (efficiency, impact).

The sample of independent evaluations focused mostly on the achievement of objectives and delivery of results at the programmatic level, i.e. programmes and projects on the ground. Out of the 29 independent external evaluations, the evaluations of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan and Global and Regional Programmes, and the 2018-21 Strategic Plan, assessed the achievement of overarching strategic objectives. The latter paid particular attention to UNDP's integrator role and related approaches to supporting SDG integration, and to UNDP's operational backbone role. Of the 11 ICPEs, 9 addressed UNDP's integrator role to a limited extent, in large part because they covered a period prior to the 2018-21 Strategic Plan, when the concept was introduced.

At the macro-level, the evaluation of UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-21 concluded that much of what UNDP had planned has taken root, and that UNDP is moving in the right direction, even though it was too early to assess results of some new initiatives, especially those in the realm of innovation and integration. The transformation envisaged in the strategic plan requires more time. Accelerator labs, innovations, digital transformation, the Global Policy Network and country support platforms are viewed positively in terms of their potential, but are yet to be institutionally anchored in UNDP's business processes, generate sufficient stakeholder support in terms of buy-in and adequate resourcing. UNDP's roles and value proposition are not clearly articulated, and its aspirational visions for integration and an innovative business model are not yet fully evident at the country level.

When assessing programmatic results performance, it should be noted that UNDP is involved in a very wide range of interventions in 170 countries (LLDCs, LDCs, MICs, HICs and SIDS) across all regions. Prompted by the growing emphasis on national government-led priorities, country programmes tend to be highly contextualised, leading to a heterogeneous patchwork of interventions. Independent evaluations tend to be more critical than self-reported reviews and progress reports. Overall, the strengths and weaknesses in results performance recorded during this assessment period (2016-20) tend to be similar to those identified in previous MOPAN assessments.

While generally perceived as relevant to the needs of the countries and global commitments, UNDP's performance across evaluations is mixed and continues to suffer from several common structural weaknesses that, when combined, limit UNDP's effectiveness and efficiency. These include "projectisation", fragmented programming and portfolios, isolated, short-term focused interventions, lack of overall strategy towards and (linkages to) upstream policy influence, and weaknesses in terms of multidimensional approaches and intersectoral co-ordination. Evaluations demonstrate that UNDP's portfolio is aimed more at addressing symptoms of poverty and inequality than on tackling structural drivers, including governance challenges and needs. Growing fragmentation of the portfolio across all signature solutions, combined with high levels of earmarked funding based on donor priorities, runs the risk of harming UNDP's programmatic results.

Evaluations consistently point to chronic under-resourcing of projects with gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal objective. Whereas GEWE is making incremental progress and becoming more effectively organised, on balance, and with a significant increase on funding from projects on gender mainstreaming, progress is limited and not commensurate with the status of gender equality as a signature solution. There is a distinct gap between UNDP's aspirations and actual performance of Signature Solution 6, in large part because of inadequate resourcing and weaknesses in evidence gathering.

Seven independent evaluations report on UNDPs achievements regarding environmental sustainability and climate change. Strong performance was demonstrated in a variety of areas, including positive evaluation results of UNDP's environmental project delivery under the GEF. Through its upstream and downstream support, UNDP has helped build capacities of government agencies for actions in cross-sectoral disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. According to evaluations, in MICs, UNDP's natural resource management, environment and energy programme has been mostly effective. In LDCs, UNDP's initiatives in climate change adaptation have been critical for reducing the vulnerability of LDCs to climate change shocks and strengthening their resilience. Integrated livelihood approaches as part of the environment, energy and climate change adaptation initiatives at the community level have been evaluated as having tangible outcomes.

Certain shortcomings were also reported. The same seven evaluations find that UNDP is overly reliant on the GCF and GEF vertical funding streams. Once more, the fragmentation of projects with significant livelihoods components – this time financed through the vertical funds – has been evaluated as undermining UNDP's ability to play a greater policy role.

Overall, there is limited evaluative evidence available (10 out of 29 evaluations) from the sample to assess whether UNDP has helped improve the protection of human rights and minorities. Where evaluative evidence does exist, on balance, the performance is satisfactory. This concerns targeted programming only; no evaluative evidence was found on the mainstreaming of human rights and protection of minorities at large. In MICs, UNDP's role in defending the rights of minorities and indigenous populations is viewed favourably. In country programme evaluations, piecemeal evidence is given of positive (downstream and upstream) contributions, as well as examples of where UNDP did not engage actively in human rights protection either because the government did not encourage it, or because the government and UNDP both gravitated away from a human rights-based approach towards a security-first approach, e.g. in Iraq.

MI 9.1: Interventions assessed as having achieved their objectives and results (analysing differential results across target groups, and changes in national development policies and programmes or system reforms)	Score
MI rating	**Satisfactory**
MI score	**3**
4. Highly satisfactory: The organisation achieves all or almost all intended significant development, normative and/or humanitarian objectives at the output and outcome level. Results are differentiated across target groups	
3. Satisfactory: The organisation either achieves at least a majority of stated output and outcome objectives (more than 50% if stated), or the most important of stated output and outcome objectives is achieved	
2. Unsatisfactory: Half or less than half of stated output and outcome level objectives is achieved	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Less than half of stated output and outcome objectives has been achieved, including one or more very important output and/or outcome level objectives	
MI 9.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
Performance evidence is mixed and tends to be more critical when presented through independent external evaluations, compared with UNDP's self-reporting (e.g. MTRs, annual reports). **The MTR of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan suggested that UNDP's performance was "on track"**, with 20 out of 27 indicators reaching over 90% of the strategic plan's milestones, 7 between 60	2, 4-5, 53, 55, 67, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 115, 117, 119, 120-123, 131, 179, 214

and 90%, and none below 60%. UNDP reported that in 2019, 5 million people, one-third of them women, in 28 crisis-affected countries got a job or a better livelihood with UNDP support, and its support to electoral processes resulted in 28 million newly registered voters in 23 countries. It also stated that UNDP was becoming more effective at managing complexity and moving from a project- to a portfolio-based approach, with a renewed focus on integrated development to deliver whole-of-society solutions.

A more varied performance emerges from the independent evaluations of UNDP's performance in LDCs (2018), MICs (2019) and Conflict Affected States (2020); the evaluation of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan; 11 independent country programme evaluations; and 12 decentralised evaluations, with positive results and challenges in all types of countries (conflict affected states, LDCs, MICs and HICs) and across all recorded intervention areas. Overall, the strengths and weaknesses in results performance recorded during this assessment period (2016-20) tend to be similar to previous assessments, pointing to several structural traits of the organisation.

The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 concludes that UNDP has made relevant contributions to development results within the three broad development settings and Signature Solutions stipulated in the Strategic Plan. The evaluation finds that the lack of appropriate and timely data hinders proper assessment of UNDP's contribution to results. The evaluation concludes that UNDP contributed to all SDGs, though mostly to SDGs 1 and 16, which are its areas of comparative strength. It finds that UNDP is most appreciated for its traditional roles providing programme and project implementation, including procurement, capacity development and technical expertise, and not yet for new offers of integrated and innovative development solutions associated with #nextgenundp in the Strategic Plan. UNDP is highly appreciated for its support to national SDG and related reporting processes, as well as SDG tools and offerings. Furthermore, it finds that UNDP has improved its "operational backbone" management and operations, although shortcomings remain in terms of limited agility and flexibility for adaptive management and funding.

In LDCs, the evaluation of poverty reduction programme approaches and areas prioritised by UNDP were deemed highly relevant and effective. Inclusive growth initiatives combined with environment and climate resilience support were found to provide greater opportunities for demonstrating income generation and sustainable livelihood models.

In MICs, UNDP demonstrated adaptive ability in engaging in new thematic areas to stay relevant, according to the evaluations reviewed. Effectiveness was demonstrated by showing that UNDP's contributions have focused largely on policy and institutional support to integrated economic, social and environmental approaches increasingly linked to the SDGs, and an emphasis on inequality, vulnerability and exclusion. Positive results were also found in natural resource management. Interventions in the governance spheres (elections, justice, and rule of law, strengthening institutional frameworks and government capacity) were seen as successful, while engagement with the private sector had helped to attract private capital for development programmes.

The recent evaluation of UNDP's engagement in conflict-affected states recorded positive performance in crisis-recovery/stabilisation, economic livelihoods and democratic governance. It found that UNDP's integrated approach to reconstruction efforts in post-conflict contexts (including in Iraq) has succeeded in delivering physical infrastructure, enabling the restoration of services, strengthening community and national recovery efforts and government capacities, and helping to reduce tensions. Similarly, it found that in the realm of democratic

2, 4-5, 53, 55, 67, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 115, 117, 119, 120-123, 131, 179, 214

governance, UNDP's support has helped fill critical gaps in countries that face significant systemic challenges in their efforts to improve governance and solidify peaceful and resilient state-society relations. UNDP has helped to strengthen processes for more structured and transparent engagement of parliaments with government and civil society, strengthen anti-corruption, and facilitate local-level access to public information.

The same evaluation also identified several specific shortcomings, including an inability to leverage UNDP's comparative advantage on the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding-nexus at the global level in breaking humanitarian-development-peace silos in country responses, or elevating from micro-level successes to more sustainable solutions, for example on youth. The evaluation points to a lack of adequate attention to addressing the interlinking dimensions of multiple fragilities. It also reveals insufficient attention to the private sector and large gaps between intent and actual resourcing. Furthermore, it finds that some areas are under-represented, especially the rule of law and justice, and private sector engagement, due to UNDP's government-centric demand-driven approaches. Moreover, instead of pursuing comprehensive engagement for local governance, UNDP often gravitated to one-off engagements that are readily funded. Equally, it found that UNDP's technical work on security sector reform needed to better take strategic political considerations into account. UNDP is yet to take stock, learn lessons and see how it can leverage results at the level of institutional reform of police forces in complex environments. Support to inclusive business and markets had not benefited from an integrated programmatic approach, combining downstream activities with upstream policy and fiscal incentives. In Iraq, the ICPE concluded that a coherent and comprehensive programme structure, in line with country priorities, implemented in co-ordination and matched by targeted resource mobilisation efforts, was lacking.

Demonstrations of weaker performance were also recorded in ten ICPEs, some project- or country-specific, others more common across all countries in the ICPE sample. A main and recurrent source of criticism in most country-level evaluations regards UNDP's fragmented portfolios, rendering it difficult to move from short-term, small-scale, one-off stand-alone downstream interventions to scalable, transformative longer-term solutions and/or upstream policies. Evaluations include multiple examples of where UNDP has yet to effectively leverage its community-level programmes to inform national approaches and policies. The project-driven approach reduced opportunities to advocate for recognising and addressing intersecting linkages between drought and poverty, or drought, conflict and poverty.

Except for a limited number of countries with very large programmes, evaluations report that resources are often spread too thinly across projects and themes, thereby limiting results.

To conclude, while generally perceived as relevant to the needs of the countries and global commitments, evaluations report mixed performance. UNDP continues to suffer from several common structural weaknesses that, when combined, limit its effectiveness. These include "projectisation", fragmented programming and portfolios, isolated short-term focused interventions, lack of an overall strategy towards and (linkages to) upstream policy influence, and weaknesses in terms of multidimensional approaches and intersectoral co-ordination. Evaluations reveal that UNDP's portfolio is aimed more at addressing symptoms of poverty and inequality than on tackling structural drivers, including governance challenges and needs. Growing fragmentation of the portfolio across all Signature Solutions, combined with high levels of earmarked funding based on donor priorities, runs the risk of harming UNDP's programmatic results.

2, 4-5, 53, 55, 67, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 115, 117, 119, 120-123, 131, 179, 214

| **MI 9.1 Evidence confidence** | **High confidence** |

MI 9.2: Interventions assessed as having helped improve gender equality and women's empowerment	Score
MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
MI score	**2**
4. Highly satisfactory: Interventions achieve all or nearly all of their stated gender equality objectives	
3. Satisfactory: Interventions achieve a majority (more than 50%) of their stated gender objectives	
2. Unsatisfactory: Interventions either lack gender equality objectives or achieve less than half of their stated gender equality objectives. Note: where a programme or activity is clearly gender-focused (maternal health programming for example), achievement of more than half its stated objectives warrants a rating of satisfactory	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Interventions are unlikely to contribute to gender equality or may in fact lead to increases in gender inequalities	
MI 9.2 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNDP's self-reporting registers strong performance on the implementation of its 2018-21 gender equality strategy. According to UNDP, within its gender programming, its work on governance proved to be the most transformative area of work, along with women's leadership in natural resource management and climate action initiatives. In 2019, 74 countries integrated gender into their environmental and climate policies, plans and frameworks, and 97 countries strengthened women's leadership and decision making in natural resource management. In addition, positive results were recorded in terms of contributions to reductions in gender-based violence, strengthening of institutional capacity, economic empowerment, as well as strengthening of UNDP's own capabilities and mobilisation of resource allocations to gender equality. **IEO (commissioned) independent evaluations of UNDP's performance regarding gender equality and women's empowerment are more critical and demonstrate mixed results at best. On balance, progress is reported to be limited, and not commensurate with the status of gender equality as a Signature Solution**. On the positive side, evaluations recognise that gender equality and women's empowerment is making incremental, albeit modest, progress, and is becoming more effectively organised. They point to growing attention for women's economic empowerment through upstream policy support and downstream micro-credit programmes, and in MICs, programmes to promote inclusive growth have demonstrated improvements in gender mainstreaming. **In its 2018 and 2019 annual reports, the IEO pointed to three key areas in need of improvement regarding the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment**: 1) many country offices are operating without adequate gender (mainstreaming) strategies and are overly dependent on one gender focal point. Offices with dedicated, comprehensive gender equality strategies and plans are better prepared to contribute to equitable development results in any context; 2) gender mainstreaming remains weaker in environment, energy and crisis response programmes; and 3) UNDP should pay further attention to strengthening gender-responsive poverty reduction policy processes. **All evaluations report inadequate resourcing to mainstream gender in programming, and several highlight weaknesses in evidence gathering and overstating successes**. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 praises the inclusion of GEWE as a Signature Solution and its catalytic potential for achievement of multiple SDGs. However, strategically an opportunity was missed to	2, 9, 11, 53, 55, 102-108, 110-111, 115, 117, 119, 120-123, 179, 214

align the Gender Equality Strategy with the Strategic Plan, whereas at the country level, in-depth gender expertise is often lacking to mainstream and operationalise GEWE objectives. In Bangladesh, evaluators reported "a very high level of incongruity between the level of focus on gender equality suggested by the gender marker, and actual focus suggested in project documentation". In UNDP Mali's programme results framework, only 1 out of 4 outcomes, and 1 out of 11 UNDP-specific results, clearly and specifically mentioned targeting women. Other shortcomings reported by evaluations include an under-utilisation of partnerships, e.g. with UN Women; insufficient linkages between downstream interventions and the enabling of upstream policy processes in LDCs; and challenges in priority setting and identifying transformative opportunities in MICs.

The evaluation of UNDP's support in conflict-affected states reports a distinct gap between UNDP corporate-level commitments and operational realities. It notes that although UNDP has prioritised GEWE as a strategic objective and acknowledges the critical importance of support to women, peace and security, this is not reflected in resource allocations for GEWE-related programmes. The evaluation reports that UNDP's approach to GEWE was not commensurate with the severity of challenges for women and gender inequalities perpetuated by multiple crises. The sum of UNDP's efforts in developing institutional approaches, tools and instruments did not culminate in tangible gender-responsive programming, much less gender-transformative results on the ground. It states that UNDP's support to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 has considerably reduced over the years. It concludes by stating that a minimalist approach to GEWE in conflict responses has significantly undermined peace and security efforts.

2, 9, 11, 53, 55, 102-108, 110-111, 115, 117, 119, 120-123, 179, 214

MI 9.2 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

MI 9.3: Interventions assessed as having helped improve environmental sustainability/ tackle the effects of climate change	Score
MI rating	**Satisfactory**
MI score	**3**

4. Highly satisfactory: Interventions include substantial planned activities and project design criteria to achieve environmental sustainability and contribute to tackle the effects of climate change. These plans are implemented successfully, and the results are environmentally sustainable and contribute to tackling the effects of climate change

3. Satisfactory: Interventions include some planned activities and project design criteria to ensure environmental sustainability and help tackle climate change. Activities are implemented successfully, and the results are environmentally sustainable and contribute to tackling the effects of climate change

2. Unsatisfactory: EITHER Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote environmental sustainability and help tackle the effects of climate change. There is, however, no direct indication that project or programme results are not environmentally sustainable. AND/OR the intervention includes planned activities or project

1. Highly unsatisfactory: Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote environmental sustainability and help tackle climate change. In addition, changes resulting from interventions are not environmentally sustainable/do not contribute to tackling climate change

MI 9.3 Analysis	Source documents
UNDP has identified "Environment: nature-based solutions for development" as one of its six Signature Solutions. In its progress reports (annual reports, MTR of Strategic Plan 2018-21), UNDP highlights several achievements in terms of initiatives and activities. Since 2010, UNDP has mobilised over USD 2.8 billion for projects across some 100 high, middle, and low-income countries, including 43 LDCs and 16 SIDS, touching the lives of over 82 million people. In 2019, UNDP launched the Climate Promise to support over 100 countries to enhance their nationally determined contributions by 2020. UNDP enabled countries to access over USD 1 billion from vertical funds in 2018-19. These grants leveraged an additional USD 1.2 billion of private and public finance for 91 countries from IFIs, UN entities, the private sector and governments, expected to benefit 37 million people. Through the Biodiversity Finance Initiative, UNDP supports 35 countries in developing financial plans to safeguard nature and natural capital, including repurposing nature-impacting subsidies. Through the UNDP-Global Fund partnership, 652 health facilities in eight countries are running on solar energy.	
Not all independent evaluations assess UNDPs achievements regarding environmental sustainability and climate change, but those that do are largely positive. They conclude that strong performance was demonstrated in a variety of areas, including positive evaluation results of UNDP's environmental project delivery under the GEF. UNDP's support to national partners in the disaster risk management sector has been a long-term engagement. Through its upstream and downstream support, UNDP has helped build the capacities of government agencies for actions in cross-sectoral disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 reports favourable stakeholder perceptions of UNDP's contributions to environmental protection, natural resource management, and resilience to environmental and climate shocks.	2, 53, 55, 61, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 116, 118, 131, 179, 207, 214
In MICs, evaluations note that UNDP's environment and energy programme has been mostly effective, especially in developing strategies, policies and associated regulations in the different sub-programmes and themes, and in experimenting with and therefore better understanding new partnerships and sustainable financing mechanisms. Also in MICs, UNDP's work related to natural resource management, including forest and other habitat management, have produced actual forest and other habitat improvements.	
In LDCs, UNDP's initiatives in climate change adaptation have been critical for reducing the vulnerability of LDCs to climate change shocks and strengthening their resilience, according to the sample of evaluations reviewed for this assessment. Mainstreaming of sustainable development into national development policies and strategies on diversity conservation has resulted in significant policy and regulatory changes in most regions. Similarly, integrated livelihood approaches as part of the environment, energy and climate change adaptation initiatives at the community level have had tangible outcomes. ICPEs include examples of strengthened national and local capacities.	
Certain shortcomings were also reported in LDCs. UNDP is said to be overly reliant on the GCF and GEF vertical funding streams. Once more, fragmentation of projects with significant livelihoods components – this time financed through the vertical funds – is seen as having undermined UNDP's ability to play a greater policy role. According to the evaluations, while the requirements of the vertical funds lead to a more project-based approach, which is something UNDP itself cannot influence, UNDP did not build on these initiatives to engage in public policy processes on sustainable livelihoods itself. Similarly, opportunities were not used to enable an integrated approach to address intersecting linkages between drought and poverty, or drought, conflict and poverty. A predominantly project-driven approach has limited opportunities to advocate	

for recognising and addressing such linkages in government efforts, as well as in international support. In many LDCs, UNDP's contribution to sustainable livelihoods is often insufficient to make a visible difference due to the small scale of its work in relation to the magnitude of the problem.

By the same token, while individual environment and adaptation projects are part of the sustainable development framework, the interface among various projects was limited. At the country level, ICPEs reported an absence of an overall strategic and programmatic approach to the development of the pillar, and limited co-ordination across the country office. In Iraq, interventions were not yet comprehensive enough nor at the right scale to address pressing environmental needs and progress from output-level delivery to outcome and impact achievement, and to ensure sustainability of results. Another common challenge reported was the lack of synergies between various sustainable livelihood interventions under the GEF and GCF in country programmes.

UNDP is a leading global advocate for improved disaster risk reduction and climate action globally, including through a significant platform of support for SIDS. Evaluations note that it has played an important role as a bridge between global commitments under the climate convention and other international environmental agreements vital to climate action, and has facilitated access to climate finance. However, the 2020 evaluation of UNDP's Climate Change Adaptation support to address the adaptation needs of partner governments highlights several constraints, including a bias among governments and donor countries towards disaster recovery rather than prevention, the prevalence of short-term project cycles, and the fragmentation and unpredictability of funding streams. SIDS vulnerabilities, and the challenges of supporting them through multi-country offices, are not factored into UNDP policies, which constrains its ability to provide tailored support. The evaluation calls on UNDP to accelerate its attention to mainstreaming consideration of climate risks across its entire development portfolio, reduce fragmentation across its climate change adaptation programming, improve the technical underpinnings of its adaptation service offer, and strengthen the gender equality dimensions of its policy and capacity-related support in adaptation-related programming.

2, 53, 55, 61, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 116, 118, 131, 179, 207, 214

MI 9.3 Evidence confidence	High confidence

MI 9.4: Interventions assessed as having helped improve human rights, including the protection of vulnerable people (those at risk of being left behind)	Score
MI rating	Unsatisfactory
MI score	2
4. Highly satisfactory: Interventions include substantial planned activities and project design criteria to promote or ensure human rights and reach those most at risk of being left behind. These plans are implemented successfully, and the results have helped promote or ensure human rights demonstrating results for the most vulnerable groups	
3. Satisfactory: Interventions include some planned activities and project design criteria to promote or ensure human rights. These activities are implemented successfully, and the results have promoted or ensured human rights	
2. Unsatisfactory: EITHER Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote or ensure human rights or demonstrate their reach to vulnerable groups. There is, however, no direct indication that project or programme results will not promote or ensure human rights, AND/OR the intervention includes planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote or ensure human rights, but these have not been implemented and/or have not been successful	

1. Highly unsatisfactory: Interventions do not include planned activities or project design criteria intended to promote or ensure human rights. In addition, changes resulting from interventions do not promote or ensure human rights. Interventions do not focus on reaching vulnerable groups	

MI 9.4 Analysis	Source documents
UNDP's human rights interventions cover a broad spectrum. The majority of these are categorised within the governance portfolio and/or linked to gender equality and vulnerable groups, in particular ethnic minorities and LGBTQI population groups.

Notable examples of UNDP's engagement on human rights based approaches and the protection of vulnerable people include 1) support to the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in 15 countries; 2) ongoing engagement at the Human Rights Council (HRC) (in 2020, 38 statements or references from UNDP to the HRC sessions or member states were made, and UNDP's work was referred to in 58 reports during thematic sessions of the HRC); 3) direct support to 40+ National Human Rights Institutions; 4) over 20 countries supported by UNDP on integrated human rights and development planning solutions; 5) engagement on the human rights dimensions of the work with non-UN security forces; 6) the co-authoring of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy – the first of its kind – with the ILO; and 7) the Guidance on Disability Inclusive Development for UNDP based on the HRBA – Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and SDGs.

The evidence on development results is less robust than in other areas. **Sampled evaluations rarely include explicit reporting of results on human rights.** UNDP's self-reporting is mostly anecdotal and numerical, in terms of the number of countries and institutions that receive support; it does not elaborate on specific results towards the promotion and protection of human rights. This is in part due to the choice of language and terminology (where UNDP tends to refer to more neutral terms such as "governance", "access to justice", "rule of law" rather than "rights").

Where evaluative evidence does exist, on balance, the performance is satisfactory. In most cases, this concerns targeted programming, with limited evaluative evidence found on the mainstreaming of human rights and protection of minorities at large. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 lists several areas of UNDP engagement, including advocacy for minority rights; support for anti-discrimination legislation and institutional strengthening to protect the rights of minorities and expand vulnerable populations' access to justice; the development of national human rights strategies and action plans; and the strengthening of human rights institutions, including government capacity to report international human rights treaty bodies.

The independent evaluation of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan reported that UNDP had contributed to decentralising and localising justice services to provide legal services to most vulnerable groups. Support to legislative reforms for human rights and access to justice was seen as critical in enabling a policy environment. Also highlighted was UNDP's advocacy for LGBTI inclusion. The evaluation of UNDP support to MICs reported that UNDP's work in human rights has led to significant achievements in strengthening institutional frameworks and spaces for the protection of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups. UNDP's role in defending the rights of minorities and indigenous populations is viewed favourably. Equally, UNDP is found to have made significant contributions in several countries, strengthening national capacities and systems for improved rule of law and access to justice, including for vulnerable populations. Citizenship and human rights were supported in 29% of the MICs reviewed, leading to transformative results, introducing laws and policies related to addressing female genital mutilation, discrimination of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, discrimination of religious and sexual minorities, and anti-racism. | 1, 2, 57, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 114-115, 117, 119, 120-121, 123, 131 |

Country level evaluations (ICPEs) demonstrate several examples of positive contributions to human rights outcomes: • Effective approach for addressing the needs of impoverished and disadvantaged rural women; major contribution to the development of the Bangladesh Government's system for resolution of disputes (Bangladesh). • Support to marginalised groups, including LGBTI people and people living with HIV/ AIDS (China). • Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (Cuba). • Improved access to justice and protection of human rights (Ethiopia). • Support to the country's justice sector led to the formulation of the sector's reform, training of police forces on human rights, and rehabilitation efforts in justice sector infrastructure (Mali). • Valuable results have been achieved in support of people with disabilities through a jointly managed Programme on Autonomy, Voice and Participation of Persons with Disabilities (Serbia). • UNDP contributed to the processes of institutional modernisation and political decentralisation (Uruguay). **Half of the ICPEs assessed also identified several weaknesses at the country level related to results in fostering human rights:** • The Ethiopia ICPE evaluation recommended that the next country programme interventions must address the causes of conflict, and seek to strengthen community resilience and respect for human rights. An integrated approach is needed to fully strengthen human security and promote peace in areas where socio-political tensions exist, and to mitigate conflict factors. • The China ICPE found that UNDP's work in broadening access to justice and social services, and in supporting public sector reform and the development of civil society, was limited. • The evaluation of UNDP Iraq's country programme noted that the country office's focus on rule of law had replaced a concern for justice and human rights, with an overriding concern for security and law enforcement. After almost a decade of anti-corruption projects, the incidence of corruption remains largely unchanged. • According to the Serbia ICPE, UNDP engagement in the promotion of human rights has been limited in that country, although the issue features as one of the CPD outputs. The main reason for inaction was seen in the Government's lack of responsiveness. • The Uruguay ICPE found that the decentralisation and human rights portfolio had been the weakest in terms of mainstreaming gender.	1, 2, 57, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 114-115, 117, 119, 120-121, 123, 131
MI 9.4 Evidence confidence	**High confidence**

KPI 10: Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, as the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate	**KPI score**
Satisfactory	**3.00**

While UNDP's self-reported results conclude that UNDP's interventions are highly relevant, external evaluative evidence presents a more nuanced picture. Independent evaluation findings demonstrate varying degrees of relevance and effectiveness, with decentralised evaluations reporting more positively against relevance than IEO's external evaluations.

Drawing on independent evaluative evidence, the IEO concluded in 2019 that UNDP is more successful at the country level, with a stronger programme fit and better results, when it takes a human development approach and focuses its efforts on institutional strengthening, resource mobilisation and UN system integration. There is ample evaluative evidence of weaker relevance and performance once country programmes and interventions are found to be the following:

funding/supply-driven; small in size and scope, fragmented and isolated; purely operational; focused on short-term only; lacking in focus; poorly planned and sequenced; implemented in silos; ad hoc; one-off; poorly resourced; overly ambitious; lacking political will of government partners; not rooted in holistic, systemic analysis and strategy; competing with others; and too submissive regarding governments.

ICPE's point to the risk of declining relevance in middle-income and higher-income countries as their economies continue to grow. Evaluations find that as countries graduate to MICs and HICs, UNDP is increasingly challenged to position itself strategically as a leading provider of development support and services, demonstrate added value, and operate at scale and in close partnership with other stakeholders.

UNDP has been criticised for not always addressing the root causes of national challenges, and for "following the money". The evaluation of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan concludes that programmes have been unable to canvass transformative opportunities in areas that warranted the highest priority from national impact perspectives, nor do interventions add up to systemic change or have links to policy reform. UNDP has also been criticised for selecting areas of work more for their likelihood of receiving funding than for their organisational comparative advantage. In conflict affected states, the evaluation concludes that UNDP interventions around the infrastructure for peace are not always relevant to the wider conflict prevention or peacebuilding context.

Growing fragmentation of the portfolio across all Signature Solutions, combined with high levels of earmarked funding based on donor priorities, runs the risk of harming UNDP's programmatic relevance and effectiveness.

MI 10.1: Intervention objectives and design assessed as responding to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities (inclusiveness, equality and Leave No One Behind), and continuing to do so where circumstances change	Score
MI rating	**Satisfactory**
MI score	**3**
4. Highly satisfactory: Systematic methods are applied in intervention design (including needs assessment for humanitarian relief operations) to identify target group needs and priorities, including consultation with target groups, and intervention design explicitly responds to the identified needs and priorities	
3. Satisfactory: Interventions are designed to take into account the needs of the target group as identified through a situation or problem analysis (including needs assessment for relief operations), and the resulting activities are designed to meet the needs of the target group	
2. Unsatisfactory: No systematic analysis of target group needs and priorities took place during intervention design, or some evident mismatch exists between the intervention's activities and outputs and the needs and priorities of the target groups	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Substantial elements of the intervention's activities and outputs were unsuited to the needs and priorities of the target group	
MI 10.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNDP sees national governments as its main client/beneficiary. UNDP's self-reported results conclude that its interventions are highly relevant. The MTR of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 states that "UNDP is committed to building a future that is just and fair, anchored in SDG 16. But many signs are trending in the wrong direction. Governance failures and a lack of trust are holding back development, undermining freedom, and fuelling conflict. That's why, in 2019, governance was our largest portfolio." Among sampled decentralised evaluations, 7 of the 10 assessed the projects as (highly) relevant to the local context and needs of governments and beneficiaries.	2, 53-55, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 114-117, 119, 120-121, 123, 131, 179, 207, 214
The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 concluded that at the corporate level, UNDP has made relevant contributions to development results within the three broad development	

settings and Signature Solutions stipulated in the Strategic Plan: "Overall, stakeholder perceptions of UNDP relevance remain favourable, especially in the areas of gender, governance and environment, but less so in poverty reduction and energy. UNDP is most appreciated for its traditional roles providing programme and project implementation, capacity development and technical expertise, and not yet for the new offers contained in the Strategic Plan of integrated and innovative development solutions."

Governments rate UNDP's relevance higher than donors, NGOs/civil society organisations and UN partners, who have less favourable perceptions, with a declining trend since 2017. The most significant decline between 2017 and 2020 was the favourable perception from NGO/civil society organisations (91% to 78%) and UN agencies (72% to 58%). The perception of relevance by donors also declined (81% to 68%).

According to evaluative evidence, in LDCs, poverty reduction programme approaches and areas prioritised by UNDP were deemed highly relevant. In MICs, UNDP demonstrated adaptive ability in engaging in new thematic areas to stay relevant.

Overall, evidence from evaluations and reviews demonstrate that, notwithstanding satisfactory compliance with UNDP's own programmatic design requirements, performance itself is more mixed. IEO's 2018 annual evaluation reports that UNDP "is more successful at the country level, with a stronger programme fit and better results, when it takes a human development approach and focuses its efforts on institutional strengthening, resource mobilization and United Nations system integration."

At a corporate level, systemically operationalising LNOB is reported to be a significant challenge. On this matter, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 concludes that "despite the increased effort, UNDP has yet to consistently and effectively integrate into its programmes the five factors key to understanding who is being left behind and why: (a) discrimination; (b) place of residence; (c) socioeconomic status; (d) governance; and (e) vulnerability to shocks. This should include more focus on addressing underlying and root causes of the disadvantages to empower those who are being left behind — or who are at risk of being left behind — and to enact inclusive and integrated strategies and policies that could help to accelerate achievement of the SDGs."

2, 53-55, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 114-117, 119, 120-121, 123, 131, 179, 207, 214

A meta-analysis of the 29 sampled evaluations demonstrates that interventions are more relevant if they are: well-informed, based on proper context analysis; the result of a long and participatory planning process; well-aligned with ongoing government policy and programmes; adequately resourced; have a longer-term time horizon and continuity; responsive to short- as well as long-term needs; larger-scale; focused on establishing an upstream policy partnership; build government policy as well as capacity simultaneously; connect national and regional/local levels; flexible in the face of fluidity; well-sequenced; complementary to other development actors' interventions; well-coordinated; and build on UNDPs neutrality, global thought leadership and best practices.

Examples of demonstrable relevance include increased government cost-sharing to fund programmes in MICs, reflecting strong national ownership. Similarly, UNDP's support for addressing immediate public administration and service delivery needs at country level helped strengthen public administration structures and systems that will eventually form the basis for further reforms. Another example involved extended support in areas such as elections and the justice sector, which proved critical to institution building in countries affected by conflict. In conflict-affected states, UNDP has used post-conflict livelihood recovery and infrastructure rehabilitation to help stabilise communities; create jobs; establish local peace committees, public councils and

community security working groups; support legal aid provision; and train community police. In doing so, UNDP has helped to reduce tensions and lay the foundations for trusted government and inclusive development. Finally, UNDP is also making a significant investment in developing the climate information infrastructure, which will be critical in addressing gaps in the knowledge base.

Conversely, all ICPEs, evaluations and reviews conclude that interventions are less relevant if they are: (funding) supply-driven; small in size and scope, fragmented and isolated; purely operational; focused on short-term only; lacking in focus; poorly planned and sequenced; implemented in silos; ad hoc, one-off; poorly resourced; overly ambitious; lacking political will of government partners; not rooted in holistic, systemic analysis and strategy; competing with others; and too submissive regarding governments. This demonstrates earlier findings (see sections 5.1 and 6.7) regarding UNDP's interpretation of who constitutes its main beneficiaries. Evaluations point to a lack of attention for beneficiaries other than the government, stating that a bias towards the government may limit an intervention's relevance to other categories of beneficiary, and ultimately harm outcome and impact.

ICPE's point to the risk of declining relevance in middle-income countries as their economies continue to grow. In Bangladesh for instance, UNDP's influence is declining because of the increasing scale of the Bangladesh Government's own resources and limited opportunities to mobilise donor funds. In countries such as China, Cuba, Indonesia and Uruguay, UNDP is constantly challenged to position itself strategically as a leading provider of development support and services, demonstrate added value, and operate at scale and in close partnership with other stakeholders.

2, 53-55, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 114-117, 119, 120-121, 123, 131, 179, 207, 214

In evaluations, UNDP has been criticised for not always addressing the root causes of national challenges and for selecting areas of work that are more likely to attract funding than for their organisational comparative advantage. Instead of pursuing comprehensive engagement, UNDP often gravitates towards one-off interventions that are readily funded, according to the evaluation of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan. In conflict affected states, UNDP interventions around the infrastructure for peace are not always relevant to the wider conflict prevention or peacebuilding context, where significant structural challenges of conflict persist. UNDP's work on prevention and peacebuilding has been dominated in recent years by work on physical infrastructure and services, rather than on building governance capacities and dialogue and enabling timely conflict analysis. Moreover, weak synergies between UNDP initiatives, and the lack of a well-conceptualised prevention programme, have undermined efforts to address the interlinking dimensions of conflict and other crises. Corporate level commitment to conflict prevention has not yet translated into concrete prevention programming support. Efforts to strengthen institutional resilience have not been always fit-for-purpose and have not always contributed to conflict prevention. Similarly, opportunities have been missed to bolster private sector engagement in the medium- to longer-term, particularly in countries with localised conflict.

Based on the evaluative evidence, we conclude that growing fragmentation of the portfolio across all Signature Solutions, combined with high levels of earmarked funding based on donor priorities, risks harming UNDP's programmatic relevance and effectiveness.

| **MI 10.1 Evidence confidence** | **High confidence** |

KPI 11: Results are delivered efficiently	KPI score
Satisfactory	**2.50**

UNDP's ICPEs and corporate evaluations do not explicitly tackle efficiency as a stand-alone criterion. Those that do shed light on the cost-efficiency of UNDP's development results and conclude that these are mostly satisfactory. Improvements in management efficiency ratios, administrative support, and improvements in programme management processes and instruments were reported as having contributed to efficiency. At the country level, evaluations identified a correlation between levels of (transaction cost) efficiency and levels of portfolio fragmentation.

Looking at the efficiency of UNDP's performance as "operational backbone", the 2018 evaluation of inter-agency operational services found that while UNDP had improved its administrative efficiency, it had underperformed in terms of cost recovery. On the other hand, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 is positive about the measures put in place to improve UNDP's operational backbone role, which have helped reduce UNDP management costs, balance the budget, streamline processes and procedures, improve client orientation, and reduce the carbon footprint of UNDP global operations.

Nonetheless, evaluations raise concerns with respect to programme and project-level efficiency, as witnessed by the fragmentation of projects (raised in all evaluations) and missed opportunities for joint approaches and working in partnership with other agencies in the UN system (noted in most evaluations).

The sample of evaluations and reviews offers very little evidence of (un-)timely implementation and achievement of results. Thematic and global evaluations ignore the matter completely, whereas country and project level evaluative evidence are inconclusive.

MI 11.1: Interventions/activities assessed as resource-/cost-efficient	Score
MI rating	**Satisfactory**
MI score	**3**
4. Highly satisfactory: Interventions are designed to include activities and inputs that produce outputs in the most cost/resource efficient manner available at the time	
3. Satisfactory: Results delivered when compared to the cost of activities and inputs are appropriate even when the programme design process did not directly consider alternative delivery methods and associated costs	
2. Unsatisfactory: Interventions have no credible, reliable information on the costs of activities and inputs and therefore no data are available on cost/resource efficiency	
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Credible information is provided which indicates that interventions are not cost/resource efficient	
MI 11.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
UNDP Evaluation Guidelines define efficiency as follows: programming budgets are justifiable and valid and programming design and implementation includes measures to ensure efficient use of resources. The size and scope of programmes and projects are consistent with available resources and resource mobilisation efforts. Plans include consideration of scaling up and links with other relevant initiatives to achieve greater impact. Procurement planning is done early and regularly reviewed. Monitoring and management include analysis of and actions to improve efficiency in delivering desired outputs with the required quality and timeliness, such as country office support to national implementation modalities. Costs are fully recovered. **The evaluation of poverty reduction in LDCs did not evaluate efficiency explicitly but suggests that UNDP's work in partnerships should be leveraged further to enhance the value for money and impact at scale.** It states that "UNDP has yet to effectively leverage its community-level programmes to inform national approaches and policies on sustainable livelihoods."	2, 95-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 114-117, 119, 120-121, 123, 179, 207

Fragmentation of projects with significant livelihood components under the vertical funds has undermined the ability of UNDP to play a greater policy role and contribute to government strategies.

The evaluation of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan and global and regional programmes, for instance, did not assess results in terms of efficient delivery at the level of interventions. However, it did conclude that the management efficiency ratio (total UNDP expenditure relative to management activities) had improved and the Small Grants Programme had been managed efficiently, although the complications of non-harmonised procedures, different management approaches and incompatible financial systems had impeded the efficient delivery of results. It also concluded that additional and more effective clustering of operational functions could have further lowered UNDP transaction costs and generated more efficiencies and economies of scale.

The evaluation of UNDP engagement in conflict affected states concluded that UNDP had improved its programme management processes and instruments for greater efficiency of country programmes, with the streamlining of surge deployment, fast-track finance processes and access to advisory services. UNDP's integrated approach to the restoration of basic services had added value by delivering functioning services and connecting reconstruction with recovery, development and peacebuilding. Working in partnership with other UNCT members led to faster and more effective responses and avoided duplication of effort. However, weak synergies between UNDP initiatives, and the lack of a well-conceptualised prevention programme, undermined efforts to address the interlinking dimensions of crises.

The evaluation of poverty reduction in LDCs did not evaluate efficiency explicitly, but suggests that UNDP's work in partnerships should be leveraged further to enhance value for money and impact at scale. It also concluded that "UNDP has yet to effectively leverage its community-level programmes to inform national approaches and policies on sustainable livelihoods. Fragmentation of projects with significant livelihood components under the vertical funds has undermined the ability of UNDP to play a greater policy role. Fragmentation of UNDP initiatives in the environment and adaptation portfolio, implemented individually instead of pursuing a more programmatic approach to sustainable environment and livelihoods, undermined the potential of the UNDP contribution to government strategies."

The evaluation of development co-operation in MICs found that in some countries, a major reason for engaging UNDP was the benefit of its efficient administrative support and "reputational seal", which is valued and in demand by governments as ensuring transparency in development services support.

At the country level, 8 out of 10 ICPEs reported on efficiency, with mixed findings. Country programme evaluations in Cuba and Indonesia were considered efficient. In Iraq, large-scale, self-implemented stabilisation programmes were assessed favourably, whereas the fragmented portfolios in Ethiopia, Mali and Uruguay were seen as cost-inefficient because of high transaction costs.

As regards UNDP's role as "operational backbone", the 2018 evaluation of inter-agency operational services found that:

- While UNDP has the largest geographical footprint of operational services among all UN entities, and currently serves over 80 of these organisations in about 170 countries, it had only been able to partially recover the cost of providing services, which averages about USD 53 million per year.

2, 95-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 114-117, 119, 120-121, 123, 179, 207

- Progress in efficiencies had been made, including reduced duplication of functions and administrative transaction costs. Many agencies came into countries handling their own operational services and then later agreed to have UNDP do their work. However, there was still room for improvement.
- The absence of a clear vision and incentives such as performance assessments had limited corporate buy-in and demotivated UNDP staff. The evaluation found a lack of client orientation, under-investment in information technology, poor appraisal systems and feedback channels, and no consistent use of service level agreements and key performance indicators.

By contrast, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 is positive about the measures put in place since 2018 to improve UNDP's operational backbone role, which have helped reduce UNDP management costs, balance the budget, streamline processes and procedures, improve client orientation, and reduce the carbon footprint of UNDP global operations.

All decentralised evaluations reviewed for this assessment reported on resource/cost-efficiency, rating the performance from moderately satisfactory to highly satisfactory. However, of these only one evaluation (elections support in Haiti) underpinned its findings with evidence, looking at external as well as internal factors affecting planning and cost-efficiency.

MI 11.1 Evidence confidence	Medium confidence

MI 11.2: Implementation and results assessed as having been achieved on time (given the context, in the case of humanitarian programming)	Score
MI rating	Unsatisfactory
MI score	2

4. Highly satisfactory: All or nearly all the objectives of interventions are achieved on time, or, in the case of humanitarian programming, a legitimate explanation exists for delays in achieving some outputs/outcomes

3. Satisfactory: More than half of the intended objectives of interventions are achieved on time, and this level is appropriate to the context that existed during implementation, particularly for humanitarian interventions

2. Unsatisfactory: Less than half of the intended objectives are achieved on time, but interventions have been adjusted to take account of the difficulties encountered and can be expected to improve the pace of achievement in the future. In the case of humanitarian programming, a legitimate explanation exists for delays

1. Highly unsatisfactory: Less than half of stated objectives of interventions are achieved on time, and no credible plan or legitimate explanation is identified that would suggest significant improvement in achieving objectives on time

MI 11.2 Analysis	Source documents
The sample of evaluations and reviews offers very little evidence of timely/untimely implementation and achievement of results. The IRRF includes an indicator for organisational effectiveness and efficiency performance (outcome indicator 1.1.1.: Percentage of projects with outputs reported as achieved or on track) and claimed a 92% success rate in 2019. **Of the nine decentralised evaluations, only three (Haiti, Kenya and Malawi) report on timeliness**. In Kenya, project execution services by UNOPS were found to have been efficient, with timely disbursements to grantees and other project activities. In Haiti, the evaluation found that flexibility of the UNDP country office and the dedication of UNDP management and project staff,	2, 55, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 114-117, 119-121, 123

as well as of its counterparts, had enabled the project to meet most of the challenges and provide timely and useful assistance. In Malawi, timeliness had been negatively impacted by heavy donor rules and regulations. **Of the ICPEs, only five (Cuba, Iraq, Jordan, Mali and Uruguay) mention timeliness**. In Iraq, UNDP had effectively managed the delivery of its largest stabilisation programme to date, innovated operational processes, and improved turnaround time to increase transparency and efficiency. On the other hand, Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP) management changes in the first quarter of 2018 delayed implementation, resulting in a substantial reduction in expenditure against the budget. This demotivated staff and impacted relations with external stakeholders. Despite this reduction in expenditure, and the overall staff situation, the ICRRP exceeded the target outputs for the programme, suggesting that more ambitious planning could have been undertaken. In Cuba, the ICPE concluded that the strict corporate requirements and focus on compliance had worked to the detriment of a more strategic, innovative and programmatic use of staff talent, and in contradiction to UNDP's strategic plan commitment to make the organisation more open, adaptable and agile for innovation and effectiveness. In Mali, weaknesses in programme monitoring and project data collection negatively affected UNDP's capacity to address bottlenecks and implementation risks in time. In Uruguay, at the time of the evaluation, UNDP had not yet mapped out the country and the regions, as well as the various actors and their activities. Had they done so, according to the evaluators that would have helped different stakeholders to "better identify timely complementarities and synergies and to avoid duplication while maximizing resources".	2, 55, 96-97, 99, 102-108, 110-111, 114-117, 119-121, 123
MI 11.2 Evidence confidence	**Medium confidence**

KPI 12: Results are sustainable	KPI score
Unsatisfactory	**2.00**

Sustainability of results very much depends on systemic approaches. No single development agency can ensure the sustainability of complex issues on its own or by tackling only one angle of development issues. To build comprehensive sustainability strategies, partnerships are essential.

Like all multilateral development organisations, sustainability of development results is a persistent challenge for UNDP, as each evaluation included in our sample demonstrates. Despite some successes, evaluations are mostly critical about the prospects for sustainability of UNDP's interventions, whether in LDCs, MICs, HICs or conflict affected states.

The same development and programming challenges that have limited the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of UNDP's work also reduce the sustainability of results.

MI 12.1: Benefits assessed as continuing, or likely to continue after intervention completion (where applicable, reference to building institutional or community capacity and/or strengthening enabling environment for development, in support of 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda)	Score
MI rating	**Unsatisfactory**
MI score	**2**
4. Highly satisfactory: Evaluations assess as likely that the intervention will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion. For humanitarian relief operations, the strategic and operational measures to link relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and, eventually, development are credible. Moreover, they are likely to succeed in securing continuing benefits for the target group. Sustainability may be supported by building institutional capacity and/or strengthening the enabling environment for development	N/A

3. Satisfactory: Evaluations assess as likely that the intervention will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion. For humanitarian relief operations, strategic and operational measures link relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction	N/A
2. Unsatisfactory: Evaluations assess as a low probability that the intervention will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion. For humanitarian relief operations, efforts to link the relief phase to rehabilitation, reconstruction and, eventually, to development are inadequate. (In some circumstances such linkage may not be possible due to the context of the emergency. If this is stated in the evaluation, a rating of satisfactory is appropriate)	N/A
1. Highly unsatisfactory: Evaluations find a very low probability that the programme programme/ project will result in continued intended benefits for the target group after project completion. For humanitarian relief operations, evaluations find no strategic or operational measures to link relief, to rehabilitation, reconstruction and, eventually, to development	N/A
MI 12.1 Analysis	**Source documents**
Sustainability is a chronic challenge for UNDP, as each evaluation included in our sample demonstrates. The sustainability of results depends very much on the extent to which UNDP has successfully leveraged partnerships at the global, regional and national level. The evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 underscores the importance of applying systemic approaches to the complex issues. A systemic approach involves working in partnerships to address the multidimensionality of the challenges involved and, in the case of fragile and conflict-affected states, working across all dimensions of the triple nexus.

At the corporate level, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21 concludes that UNDP has made concerted efforts to promote collaborative partnerships to support and finance the Sustainable Development Goals; to integrate approaches more systemically for more balanced consideration of economic, social and environmental dimensions; and to mainstream the principle of leaving no one behind. It finds that UNDP is well positioned to increase its focus, through leadership and contributions to inclusiveness and sustainability. **However, it concludes that is not clear to what extent UNDP has contributed to the achievement of the SDGs**: "while UNDP has supported integrated approaches to achieving the Goals with a large menu of tools, inadequate corporate reporting makes it unclear which of these effectively helped to accelerate progress towards each Goal, and to what extent".

The previous MOPAN assessment underscored the need to focus on areas where UNDP brings comparative advantage to achieve greater sustainability of results. This point is also highlighted in the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-21, which states that the changes brought about through the reform of the UN development system compel UNDP to reposition itself with a more clearly articulated and focused value-added proposition, based on its comparative strengths.

At the programme and project level, evaluations see sustainability as a main concern. Despite some successes – including a focus on developing structures and systems to manage and co-ordinate policy making and its implementation at national and sub-national levels, which helped to institutionalise change processes, as well as contributions to strengthening institutions and reform processes – on the whole evaluations are mostly critical about the prospects for the sustainability of UNDP's interventions. This is the case not only in conflict affected states and LDCs, but also in MICs and HICs. ICPEs point to a variety of examples. In Iraq, stabilisation programmes tend to be optimistic in terms of their assessments and projections and/or designed to address immediate to short-term needs in particular. In Ethiopia and Serbia, portfolios tend to lack adequate exit strategies and upscaling strategies, and downstream projects are often too small | 2, 5, 55, 96, 97, 99, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 114, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, 123, 131, 179, 207, 214 |

and isolated from upstream policies. In Iraq and Indonesia, ongoing (self-) funding or government cost-sharing is not guaranteed, and in Timor Leste, national capacities are still too weak to ensure sustainability once UNDP's engagement ceases.

Some of the main weaknesses reported in the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 include concerns that UNDP sometimes settles too easily for small-scale livelihood interventions that may not be sustainable. Although UNDP has built sustainability elements into its approach and efforts to strengthen government institutions and service delivery, implementation challenges remain, differing according to the country context. Equally, programme investments in state building have not always corresponded to the level of needs for pursuing long-term institutional capacity-development support. A comprehensive peacebuilding strategy, required to support sustained governance capacities, has often been lacking. Capacity-development programmes have been unable to sustainably transfer skills and knowledge, whereas the small scale and short duration of gender equality-focused projects have been insufficient to bring about change because of deeply rooted barriers to gender equality.

Reflecting on environmental protection programmes, the MIC evaluation reported that slow political acceptance and cumbersome bureaucracies have been perhaps among the largest challenges to UNDP-supported change in natural resource management and conservation initiatives. Although the relatively long duration of some projects, especially the GEF-funded projects, have accommodated the development and testing of partnerships, the sustainability of project partnerships in the eventual uptake of new initiatives (in the absence of ongoing projects) is still fragile.

In LDCs, UNDP has yet to utilise its cross-country experience, community-level insights, and close partnership with government for a more strategic engagement in enabling sustainable income-generation solutions. Moreover, it has yet to play a more structured role in supporting graduating LDCs to transition smoothly and sustainably to middle-income status. The financial sustainability of donor-funded institutions and initiatives is a challenge even in successful interventions. In conflict settings in LDCs, economic recovery and revitalisation initiatives have often been short-term, quick-impact programmes meant to address widespread unemployment, and not designed for long-term sustainable employment creation.

This point was echoed in the evaluation of UNDP support to conflict affected countries, which is critical about the sustainability of results. The evaluation concluded that for short-term progress to be sustained, linkages between stabilisation or early recovery programmes and peacebuilding and institutional strengthening are required, and UNDP has not always been successful in enabling these linkages. Similarly, strengthening governance capacities requires sustained engagement, and there have been missed opportunities to position governance as central to the conflict prevention agenda. The lack of longer-term engagement in core areas of governance has reduced UNDP's contribution to promoting fundamental institutional change processes, and more so in LDCs and lower-capacity policy contexts compared to middle-income or local-level conflict contexts. Although there are pockets of innovation in UNDP work in conflict-affected countries, these are isolated and limited. Moreover, despite the vast scope of UNDP engagement in transitional justice, its impact has at times been undermined by sustainability challenges and the lack of a comprehensive strategy informed by robust political economy and conflict analysis. The sustainability of promising investments in youth-related activities remains to be addressed. Similarly, UNDP country and regional programmes deprioritised systematic support to institutionalised conflict prevention mechanisms, thereby harming the prospects for sustainable development. The evaluation stresses that, with some exceptions, UNDP has struggled to ensure

2, 5, 55, 96, 97, 99, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 114, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, 123, 131, 179, 207, 214

that the breadth of its support is equalled by the depth, quality and longevity of engagement necessary to maximise policy and system impacts. Its resources – technical and financial – are spread too thinly across its extensive office network.

A synthesis of the conclusions of the sampled global, thematic and country-level evaluations and reviews shows that **interventions are likely to be less sustainable if they** lack political acceptance; are not aligned with national policies and legal frameworks; are not properly informed by local context; face funding constraints and/or are dependent on donor funding; lack a systemic approach; apply too short timeframes; are too small; lack an exit strategy; are run in parallel to national structures; are insufficiently co-ordinated with other development actors; skew market forces; have insufficiently built/lack national capacity; and occur in conditions of political instability.

By contrast, interventions are likely to be more sustainable if they connect upstream (national level) policy making with downstream (local) implementation partnerships; involve the creation of structures and systems to better manage and co-ordinate interventions; apply an integrated, longer-term perspective, with a clear and well-designed exit strategy; are backed up by strong political commitment of the government and viable financial models for future funding; and are aligned with national policies and embedded within legal frameworks.

2, 5, 55, 96, 97, 99, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 114, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, 123, 131, 179, 207, 214

| **MI 12.1 Evidence confidence** | **High confidence** |

Annex B. List of documents

No.	Document title
1	UNDP (2021), *UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-21,* United Nations Development Programme.
2	UNDP (2021), *MTR of UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-21,* United Nations Development Programme.
3	UNDP (2019), *UNDP Organisational Chart Global,* United Nations Development Programme.
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5	UNDP (2019), *Results Report 2018 and Strategic Plan Progress,* United Nations Development Programme.
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10	UNDP (2019), *Annual Report Implementation Gender Equality Strategy,* United Nations Development Programme.
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13	UNDP (2018), *UN Staff Rules and Regulations,* United Nations Development Programme.
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177	UNDP (2020), *UNDP Accelerator Labs OurStorySoFar,* United Nations Development Programme.
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Annex C. Results of the 2020 MOPAN external partner survey

The online survey was administered by MOPAN and was conducted over a period of 5 weeks, starting on 4 February 2021 and closing on 15 March 2021. The survey was designed to gather both perception data and an understanding of practice from a diverse set of well-informed partners of UNDP. Out of 1 727 participants, 501 responses were received, a response rate of 29%. Responses were received from 10 partner categories in 10 sampled countries: Bangladesh, Cuba, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Mali, Serbia, Timor Leste and Uruguay. The assessment analysed both quantitative and qualitative data from the UNDP partner survey. These were used for triangulation purposes to corroborate or challenge other sources of evidence.

RESPONDENT'S PROFILE
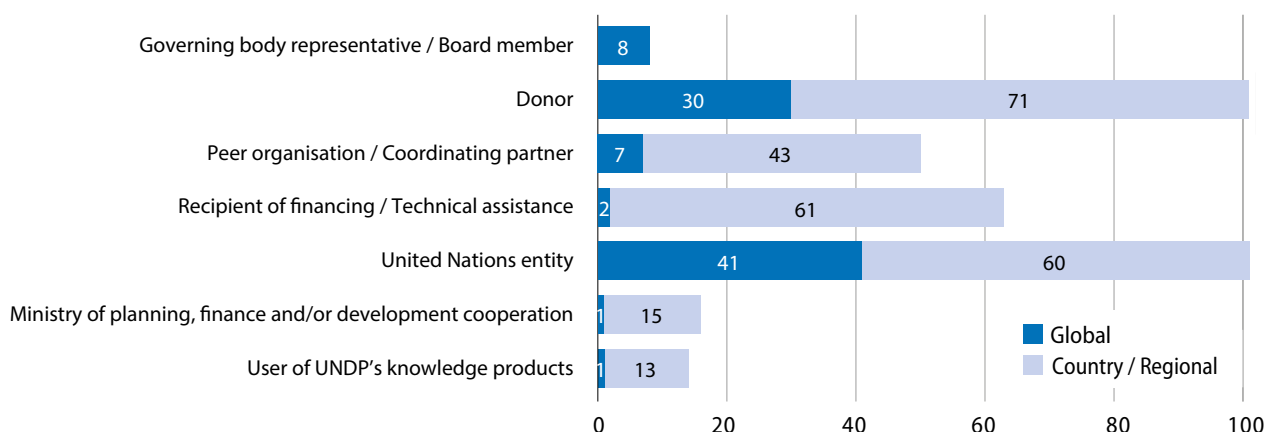
PARTNER GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE
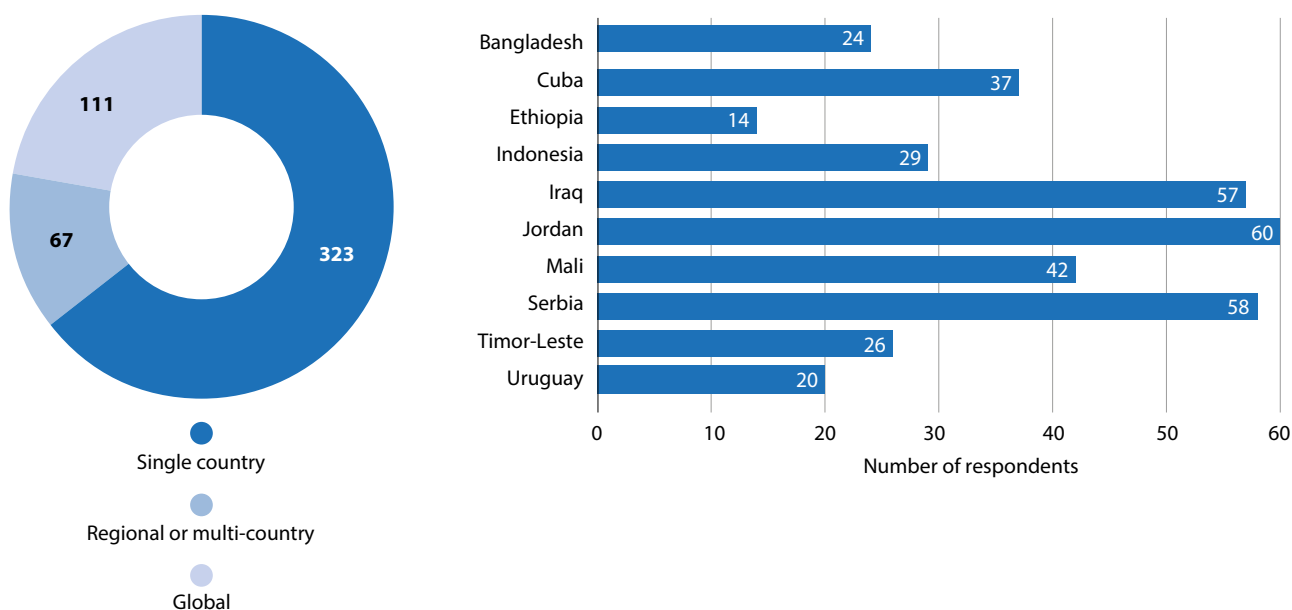
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

Note: Results displayed only reflect responses to questions that are relevant to specific partner categories. Where partner categories have not been asked a particular question, their category is not listed.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

The strategies (and policies) of UNDP demonstrate clarity of vision
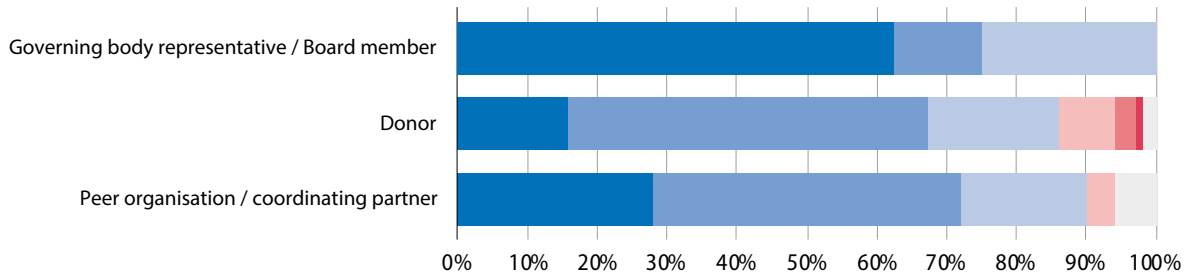
The strategies (and policies) of UNDP demonstrate good understanding of comparative advantage
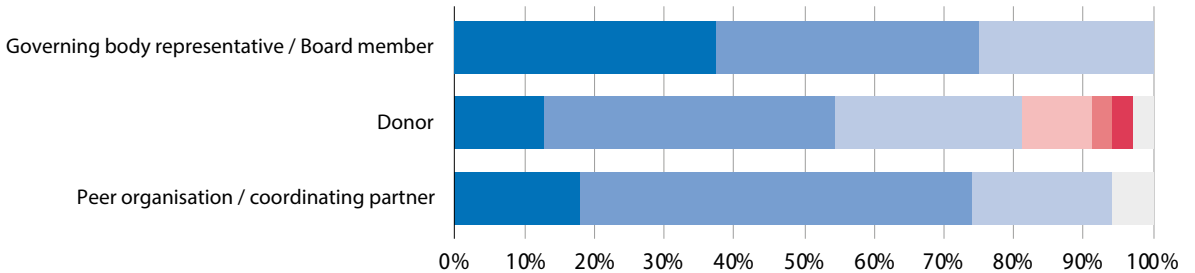
UNDP organises and runs itself in a way that fully supports its vision
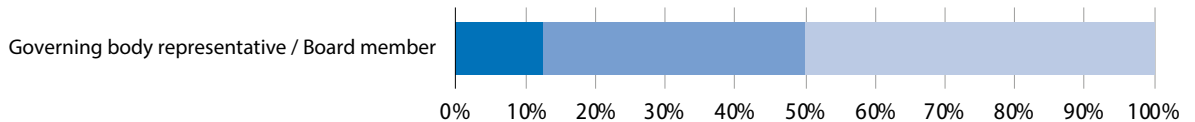
UNDP's financial framework supports the effective implementation of the mandate and strategy
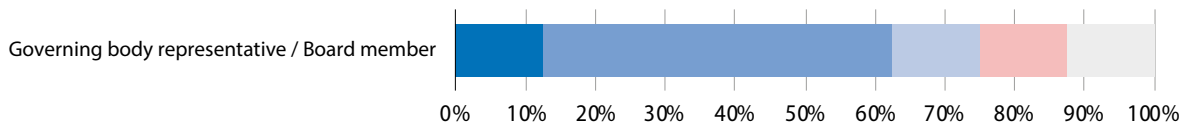
UNDP's strategic allocation of resources is transparent and coherent with agreed strategic priorities

Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion
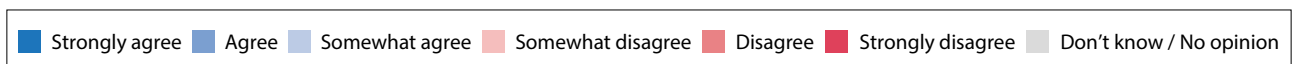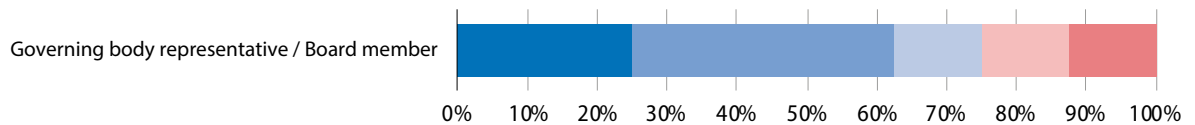
UNDP applies principles of results-based budgeting, and reports expenditure according to results

Governing body representative / Board member

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
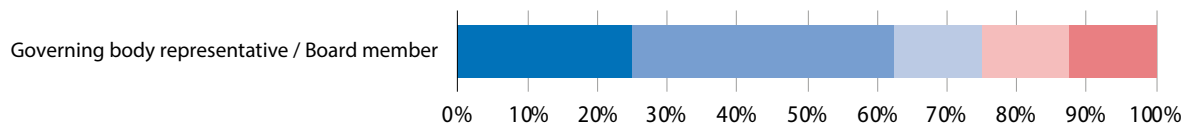
UNDP adequately addresses issues and concerns raised by internal control mechanisms

Governing body representative / Board member

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
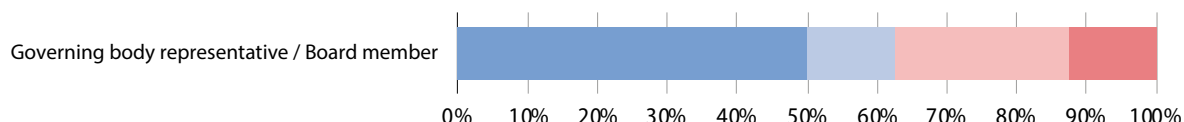
UNDP is promoting and using pooled funding, including multi-partner trust funds

Governing body representative / Board member

Donor

Ministry of planning, finance and/or development corporation

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
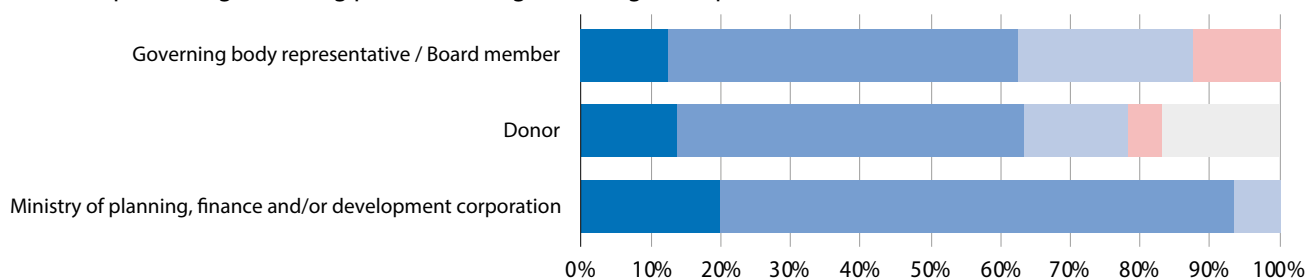
STAFFING

UNDP has the right and sufficient number of staff, either in or accessible to countries where it operates to deliver intended results
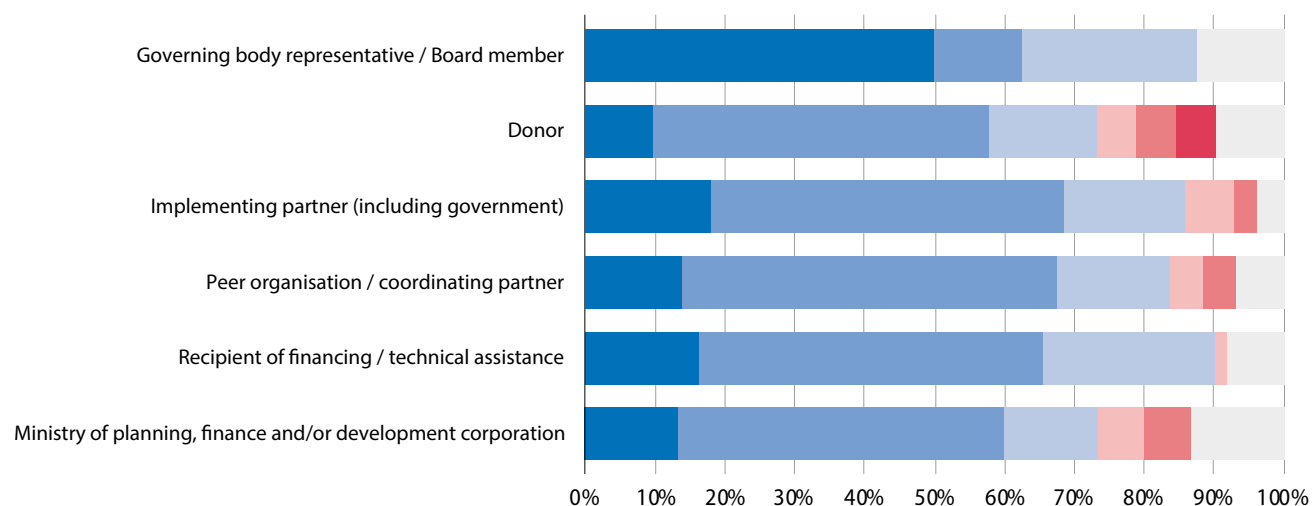
Governing body representative / Board member

Donor

Implementing partner (including government)

Peer organisation / coordinating partner

Recipient of financing / technical assistance

Ministry of planning, finance and/or development corporation

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion

UNDP staff are sufficiently experienced and skilled to work successfully in the different contexts of operation
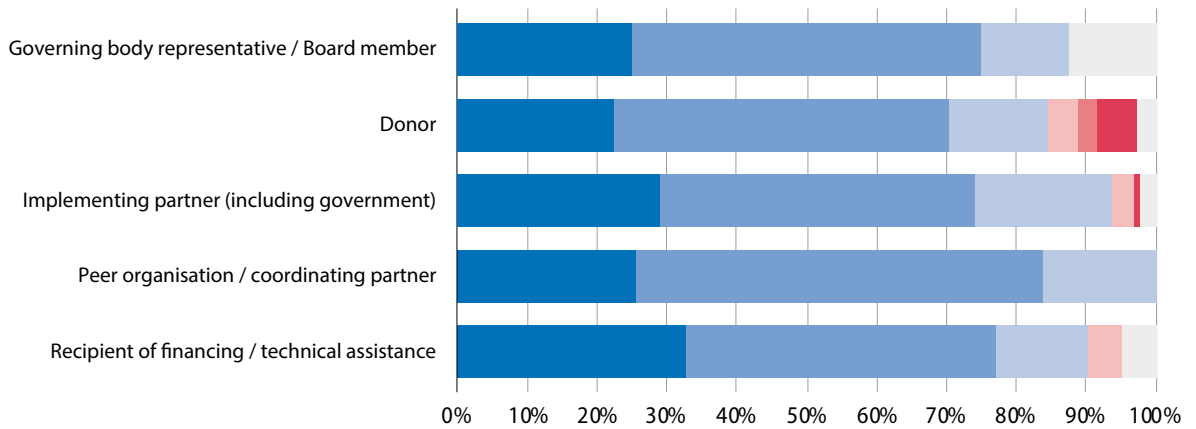
UNDP staff are present in a country for long enough to build the relationships needed
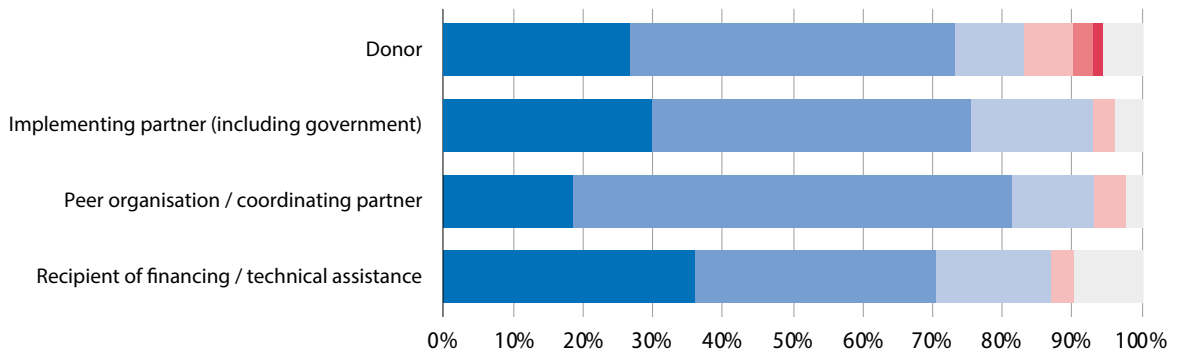
UNDP can make critical strategic or programming decisions locally
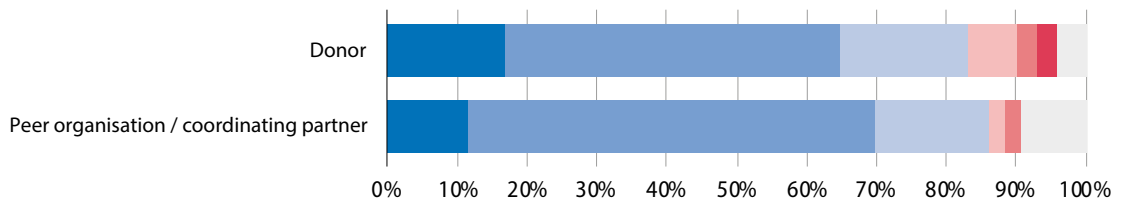
### UNDP has appointed a new resident representative following the split of the Resident Coordinator function in a timely fashion
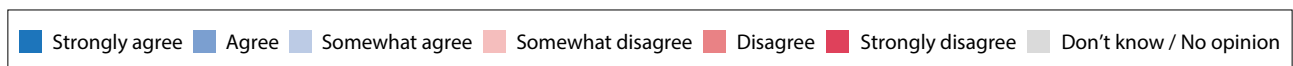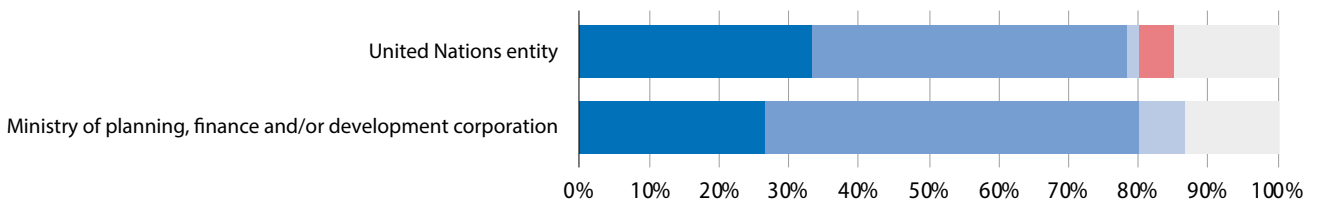
Strongly agree · Agree · Somewhat agree · Somewhat disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree · Don't know / No opinion

UNDP provides high-quality operational services in a timely and cost-efficient fashion

United Nations entity

Ministry of planning, finance and/or development corporation

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
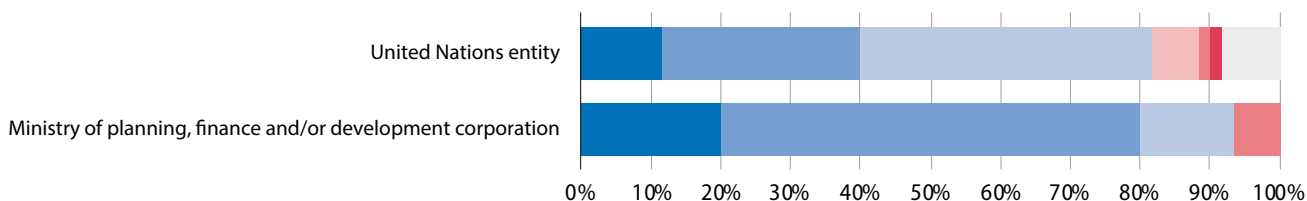
UNDP and its resident representative fully adhere to the principles of the Management and Accountability Framework

United Nations entity

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
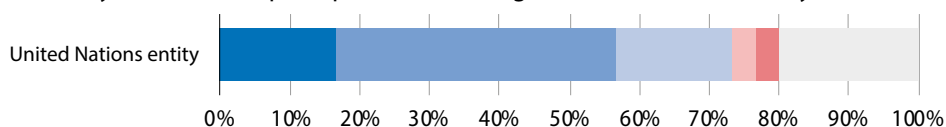
MANAGING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

UNDP openly communicates the criteria for allocating financial resources

Implementing partner (including government)

Recipient of financing / technical assistance

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
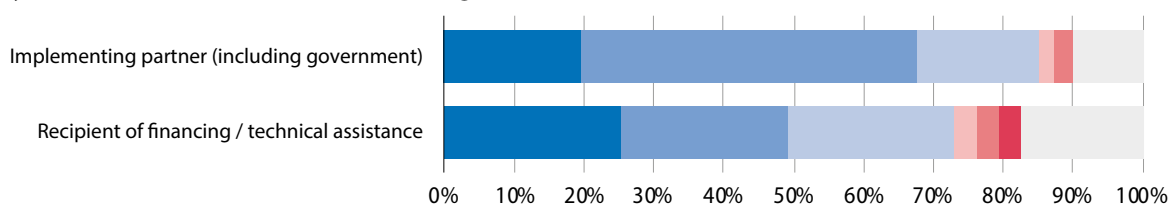
UNDP provides reliable information on when financial allocations and disbursement will happen, and the respective amounts

Implementing partner (including government)

Recipient of financing / technical assistance

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
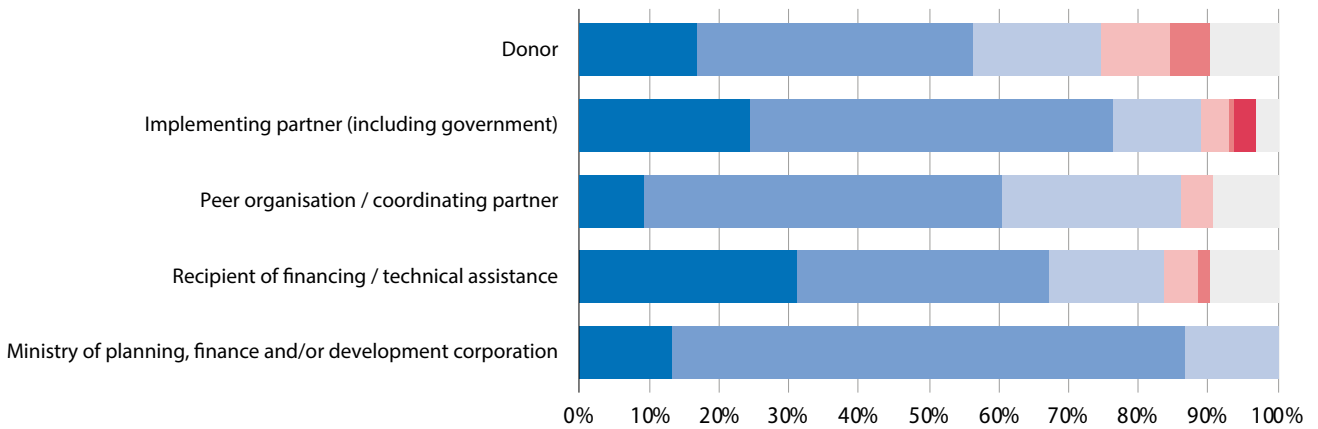
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion
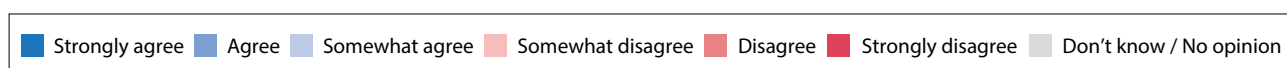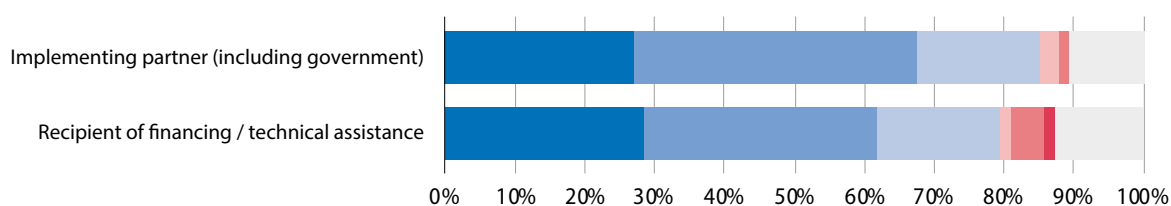
UNDP co-ordinates its financial contributions with partners to ensure coherence and avoid fragmentation/duplication
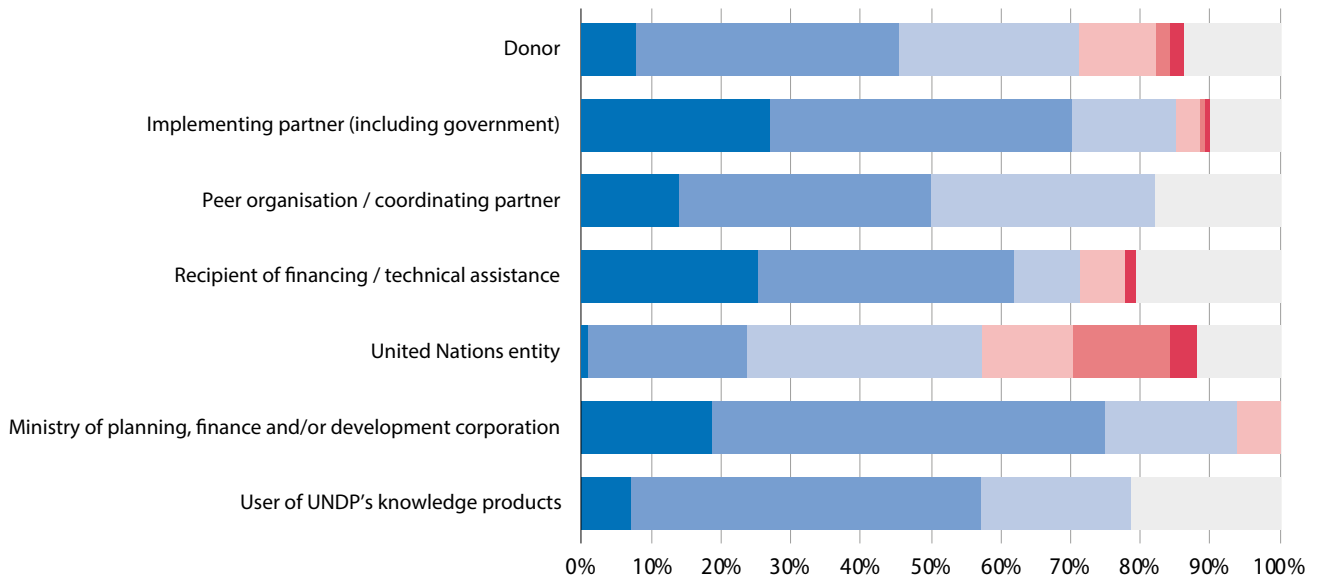
UNDP has agreed with us an arrangement on how the 1% levy on extrabudgetary funding is passed on to the UN Secretariat

Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion
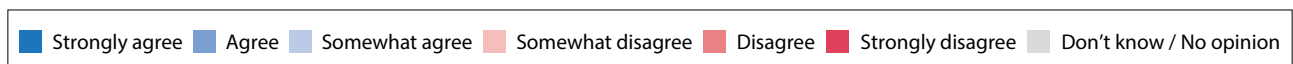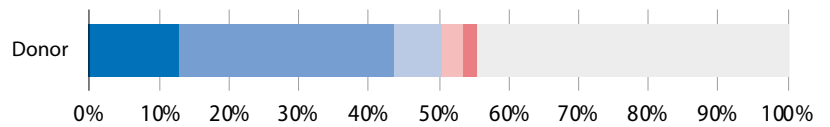
INTERVENTIONS

UNDP's programmes respond to the needs of beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable children
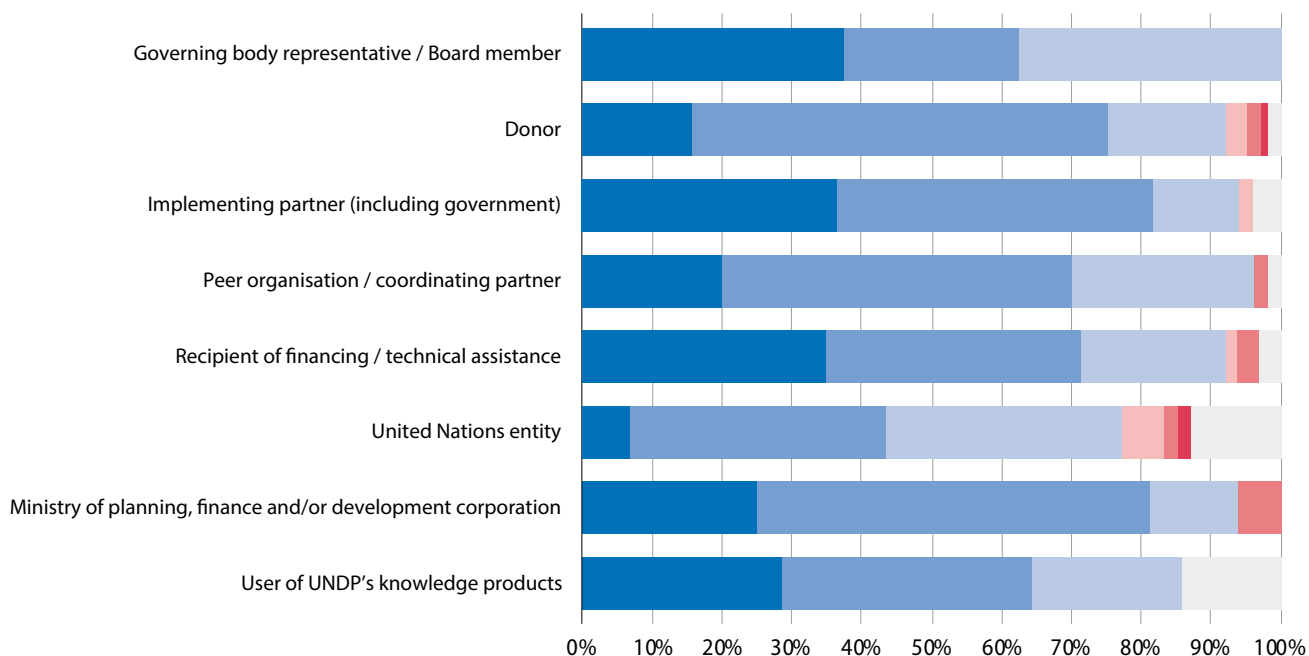
UNDP adapts its work as the context changes
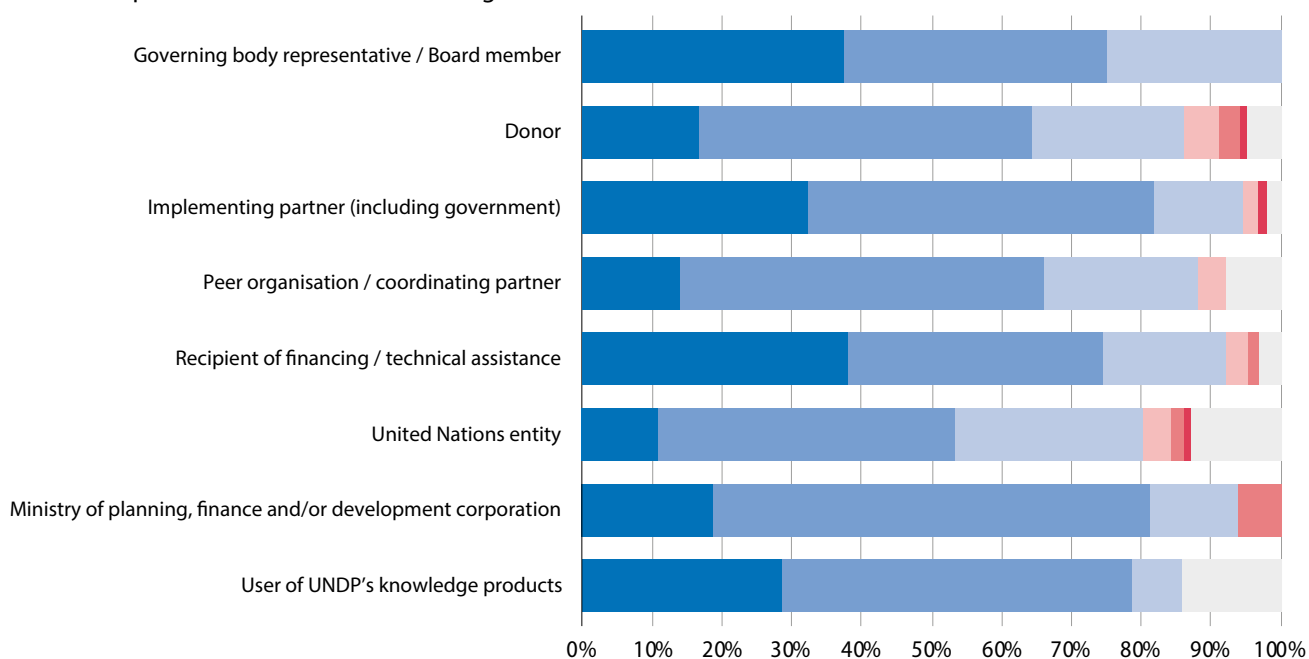
Legend: Strongly agree · Agree · Somewhat agree · Somewhat disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree · Don't know / No opinion

UNDP's programme is designed and implemented to fit with national programmes and intended results

UNDP's programme is tailored to the specific situations and needs in the local context

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion
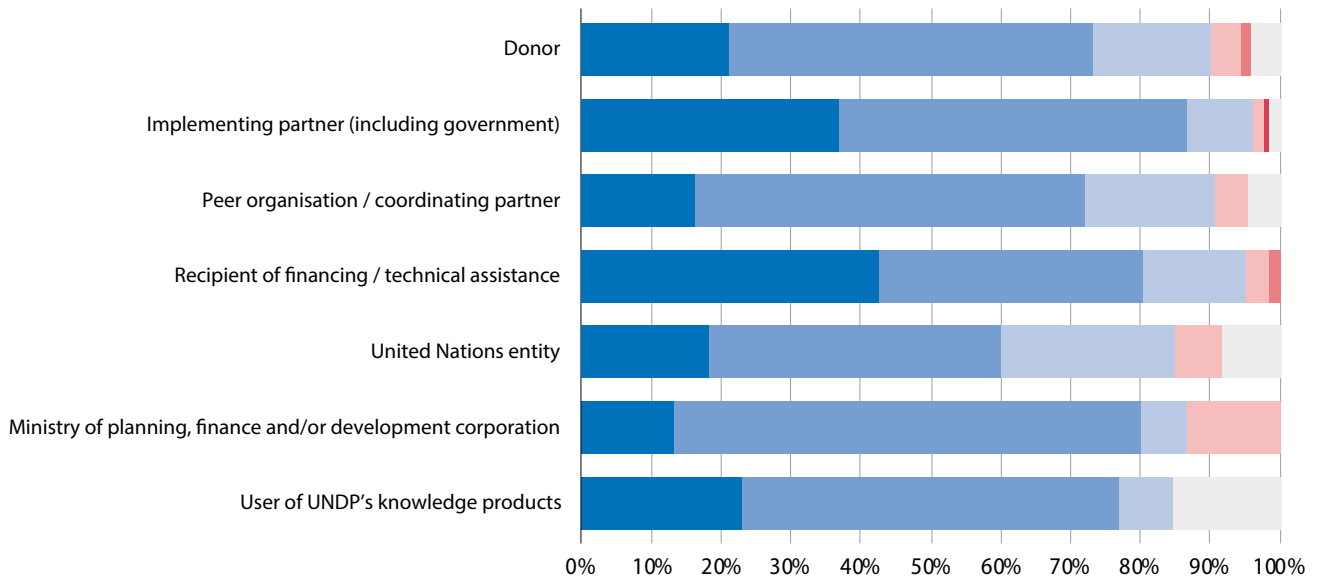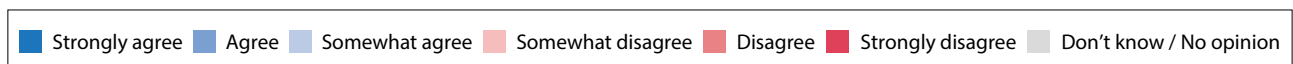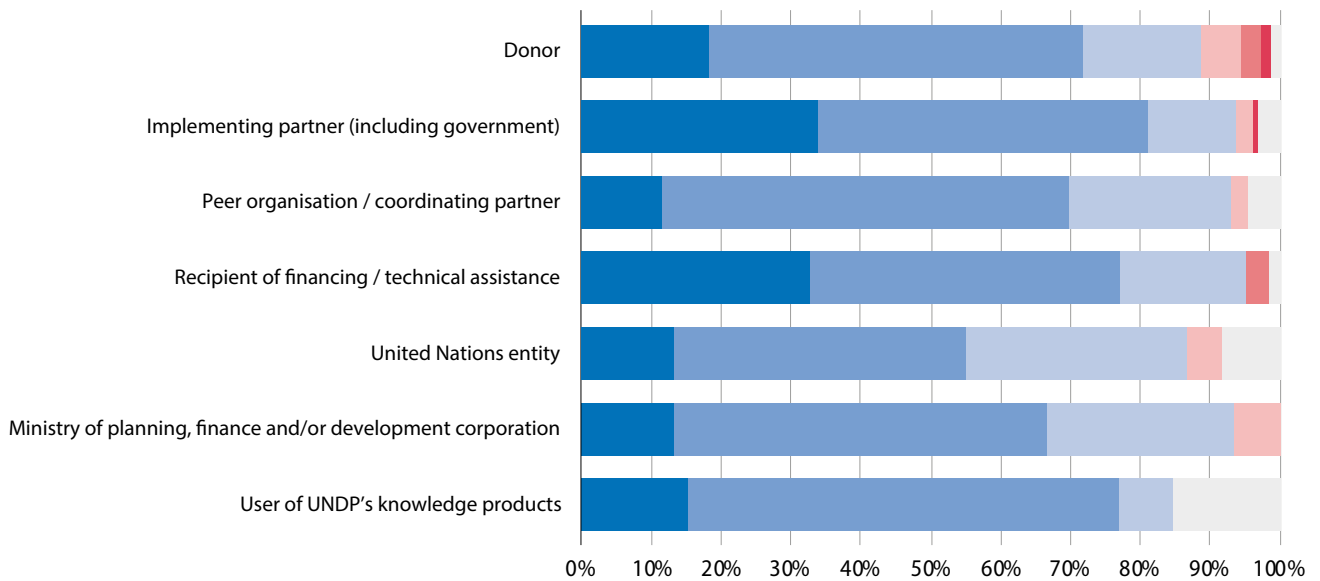
## UNDP's work with partners is based on a clear understanding of why it is best placed to target specific sectoral and/or thematic areas
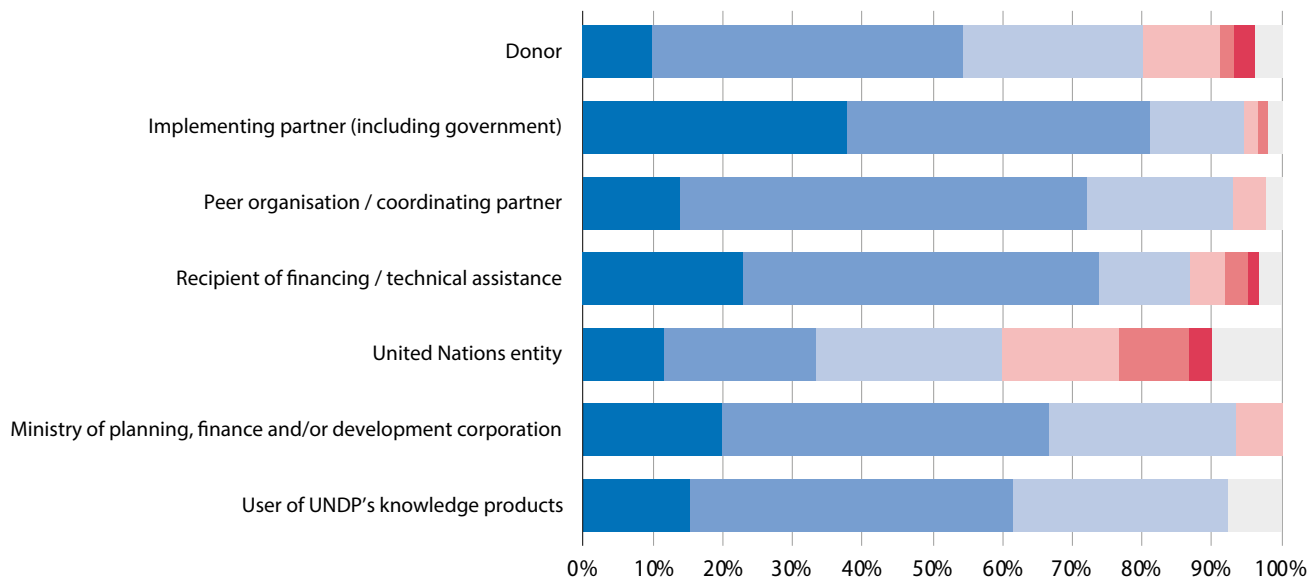
UNDP's work takes into account national capacity, including that of government, civil society and other actors
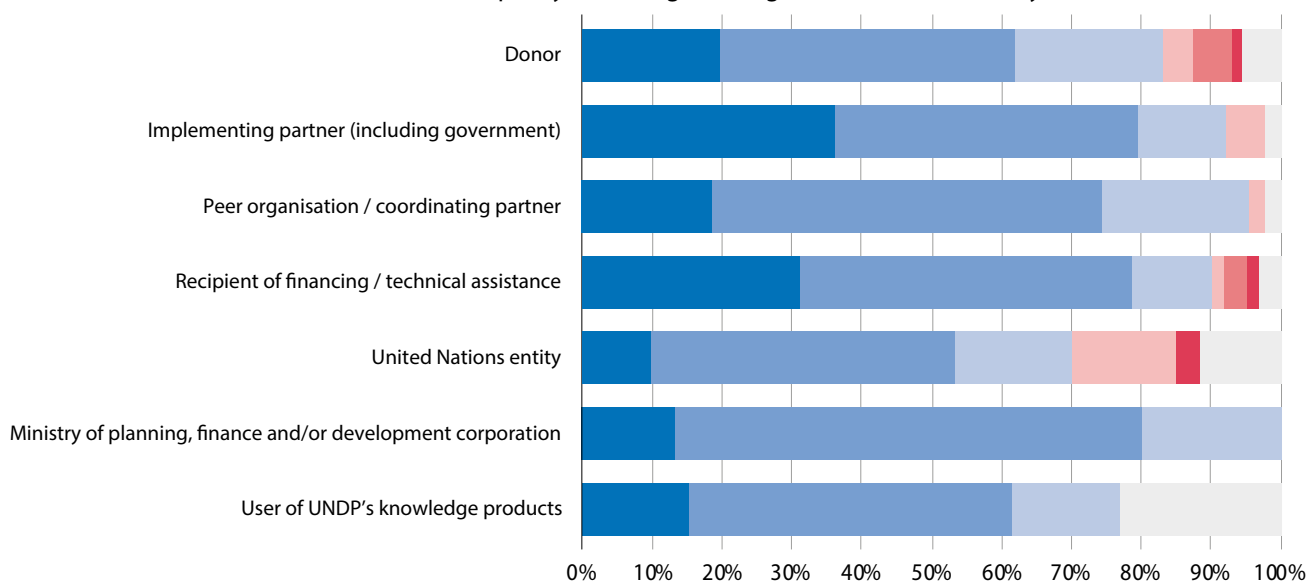
Strongly agree · Agree · Somewhat agree · Somewhat disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree · Don't know / No opinion

UNDP designs and implements its work so that effects and impact can be sustained over time
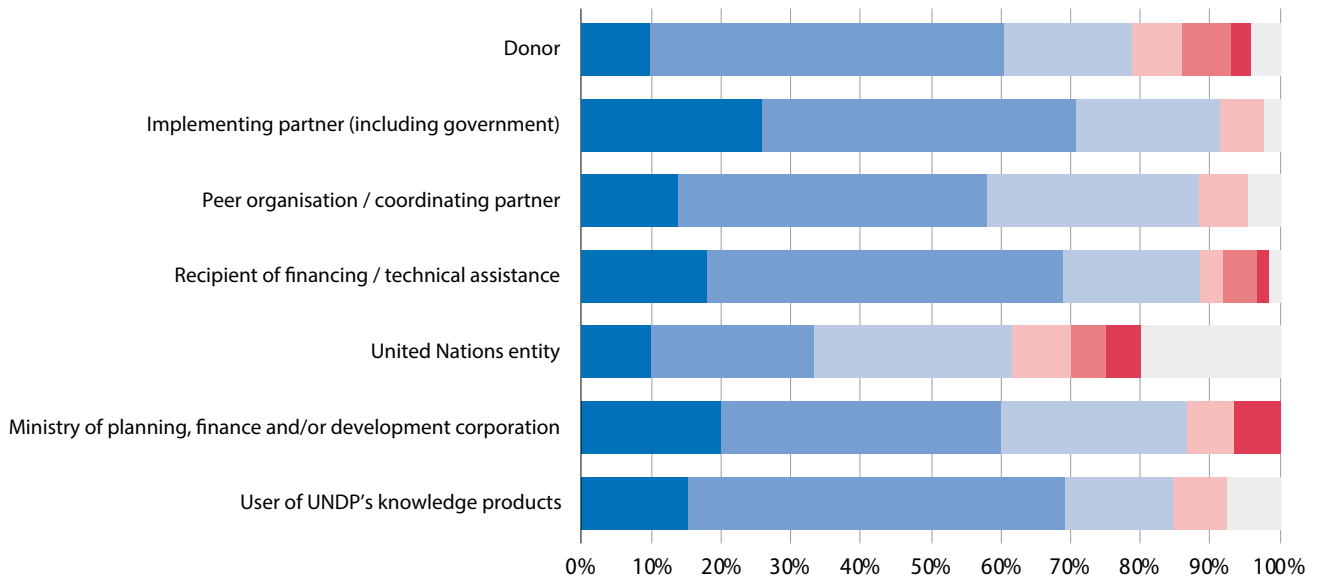
UNDP appropriately manages risk relating to its programme

Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know / No opinion
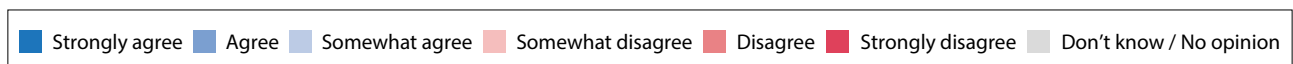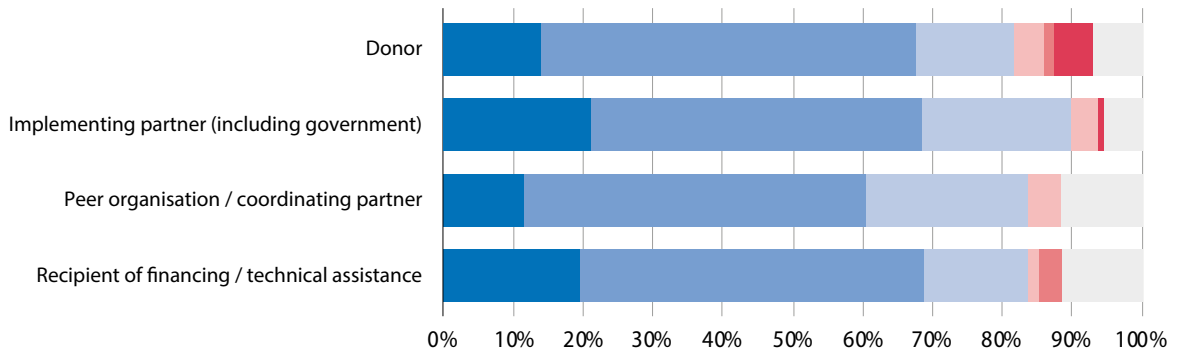
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

UNDP promotes gender equality
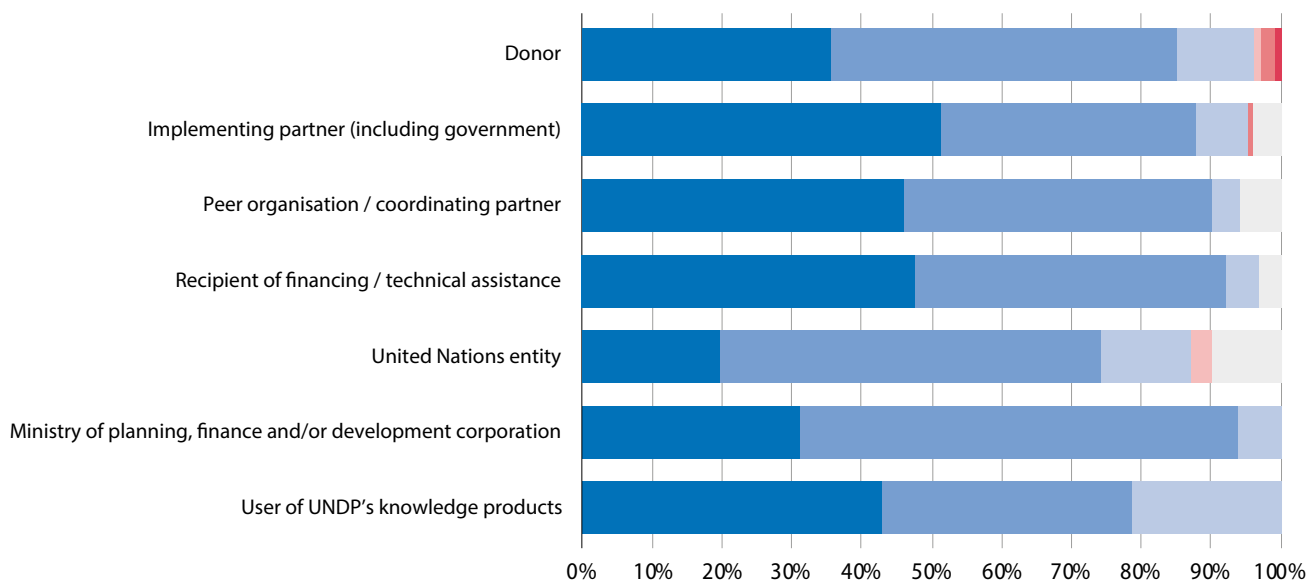
UNDP promotes environmental sustainability and addresses climate change
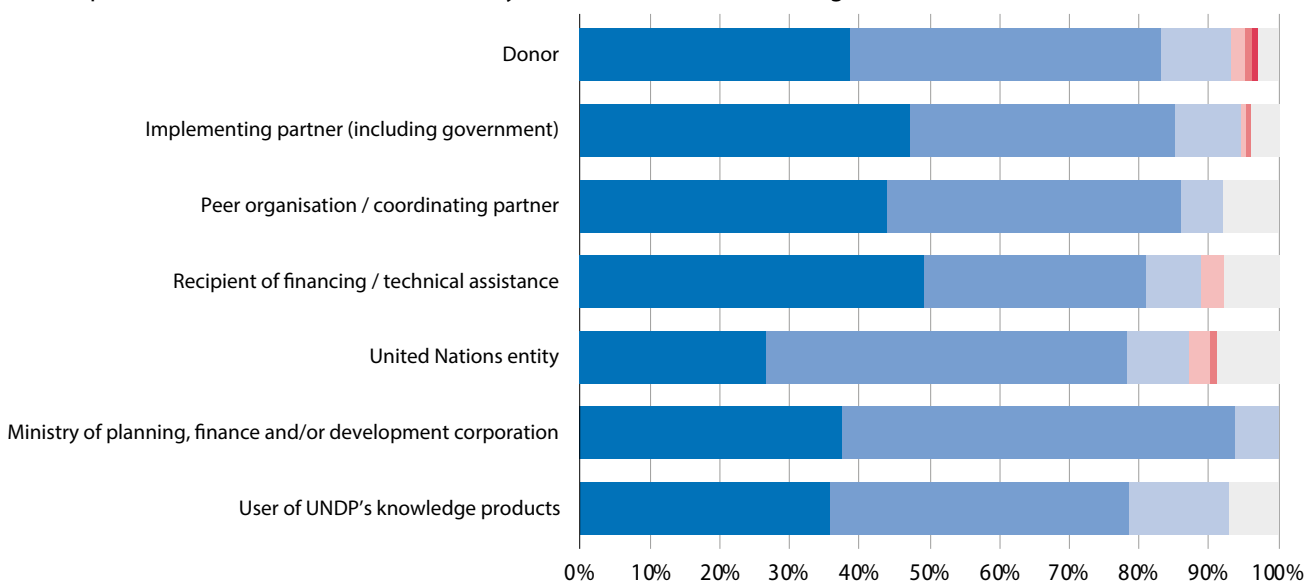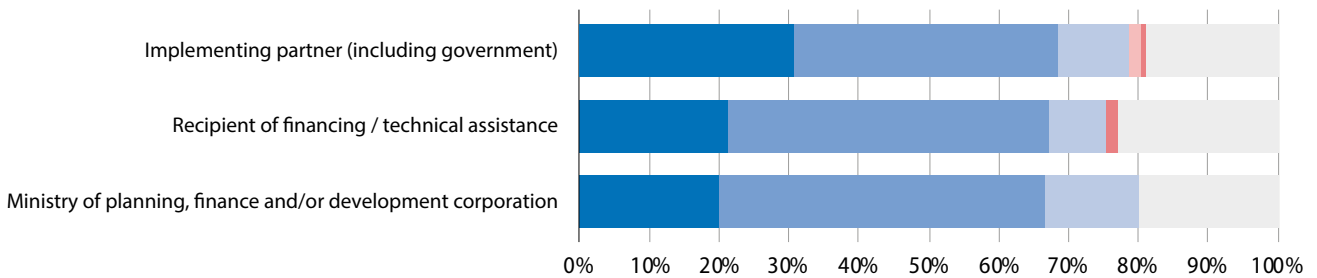

Strongly agree ▪ Agree ▪ Somewhat agree ▪ Somewhat disagree ▪ Disagree ▪ Strongly disagree ▪ Don't know / No opinion

UNDP promotes human rights
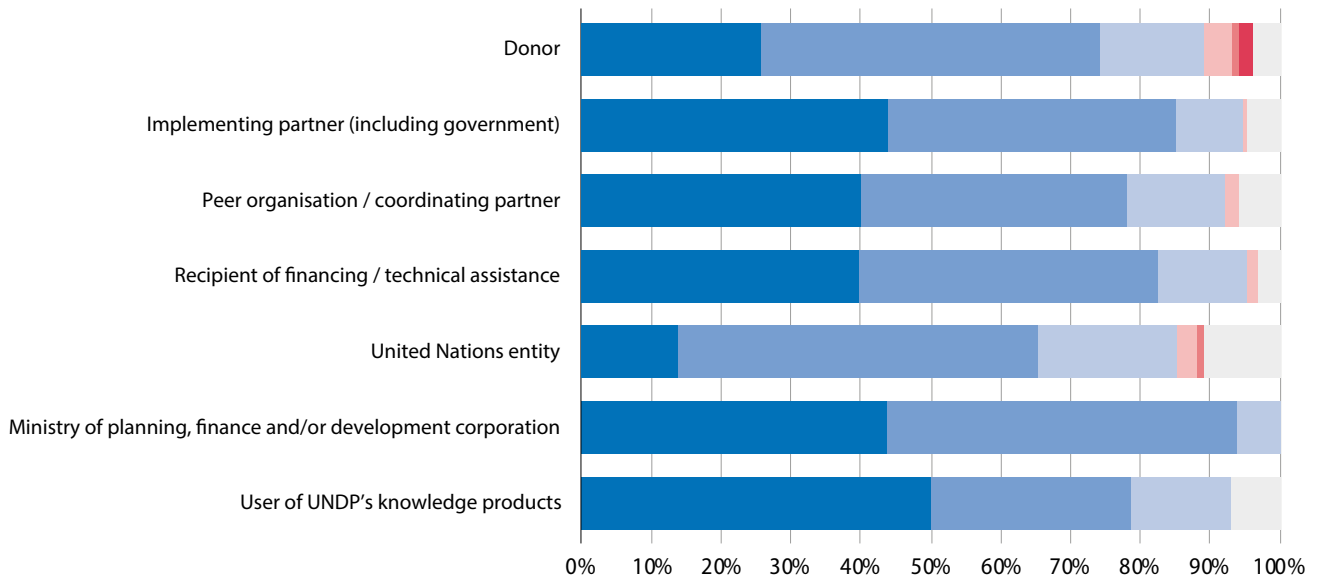
MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

UNDP's knowledge products are useful for my work
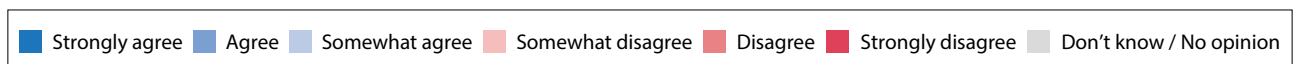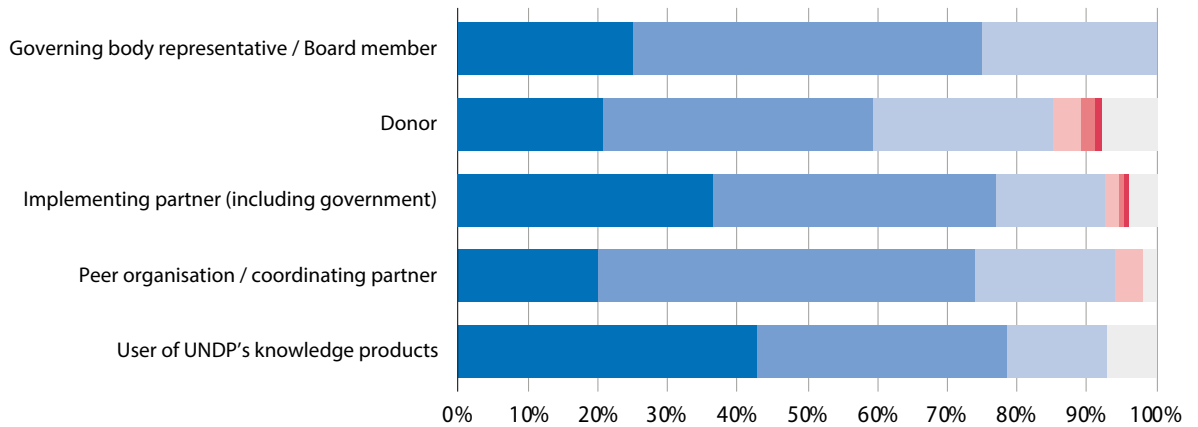
Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion

UNDP's knowledge products are provided in a format that makes them easy to use
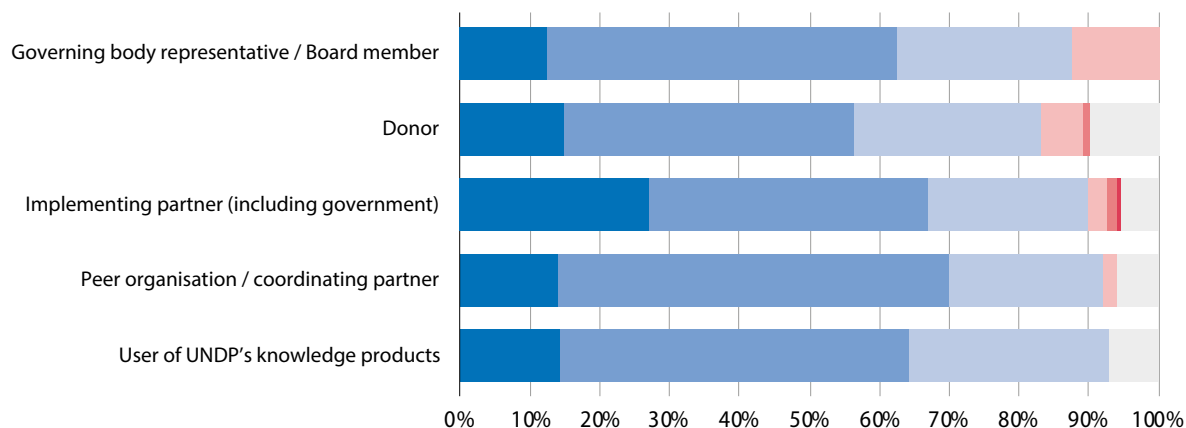
UNDP's knowledge products are timely
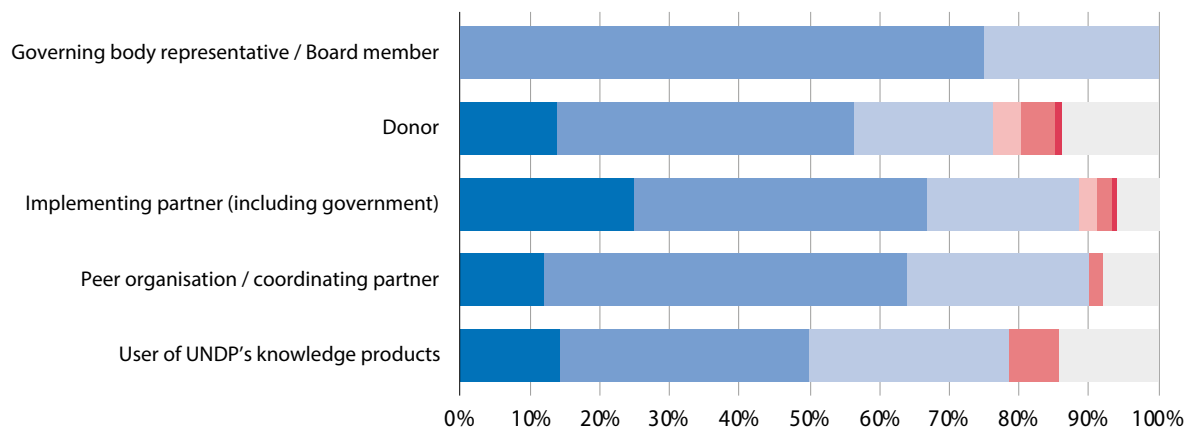
UNDP provides high-quality inputs to policy dialogue
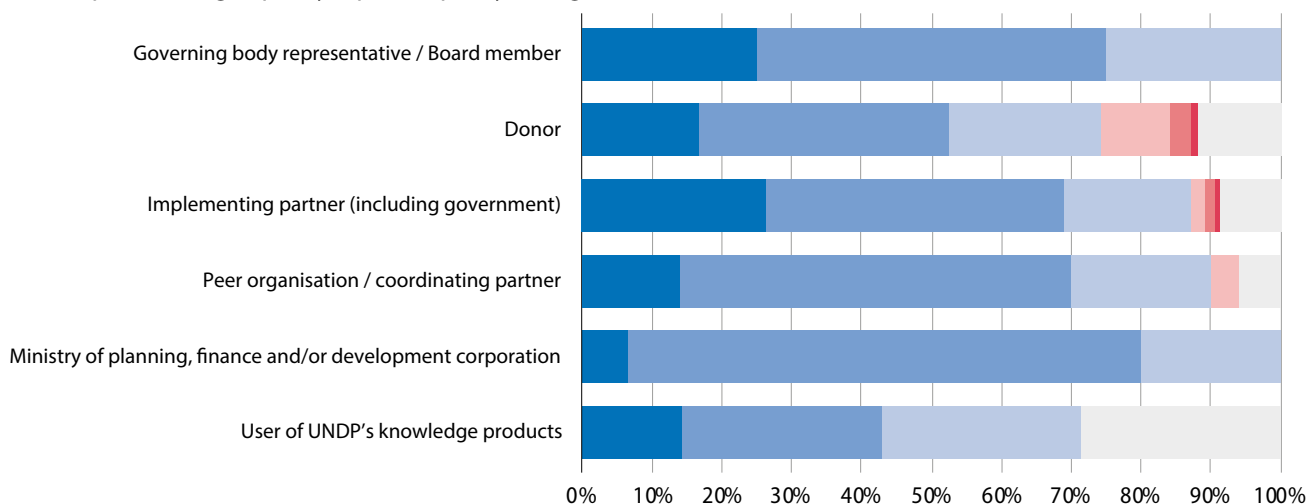
Strongly agree · Agree · Somewhat agree · Somewhat disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree · Don't know / No opinion

UNDP shares key information with partners on an ongoing basis
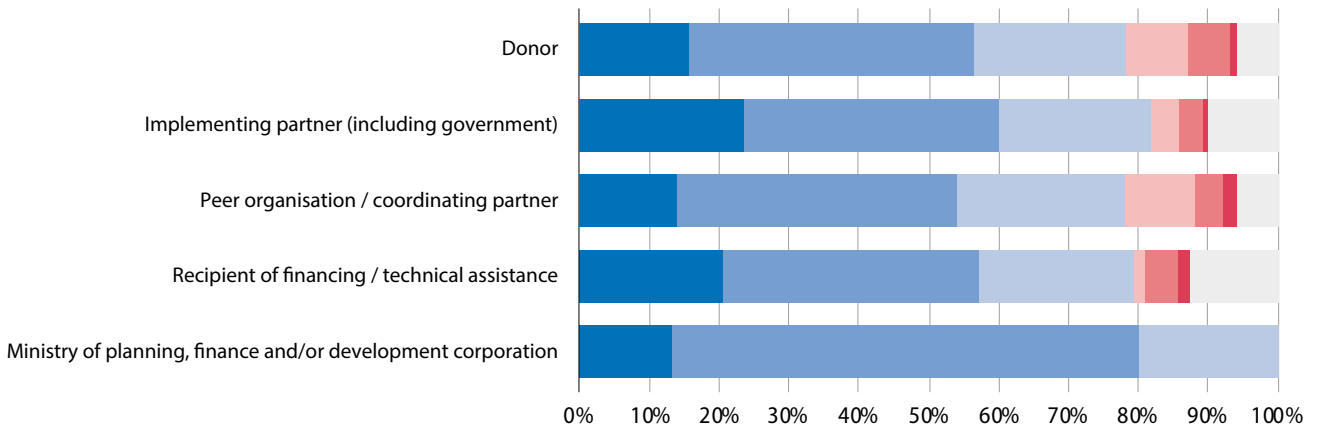
UNDP adapts to changing conditions as jointly agreed with partners

UNDP helps develop the capacity of country systems
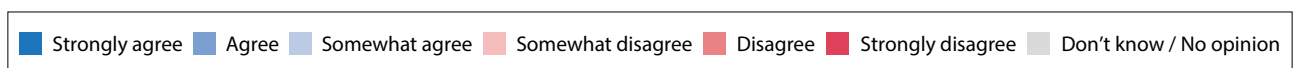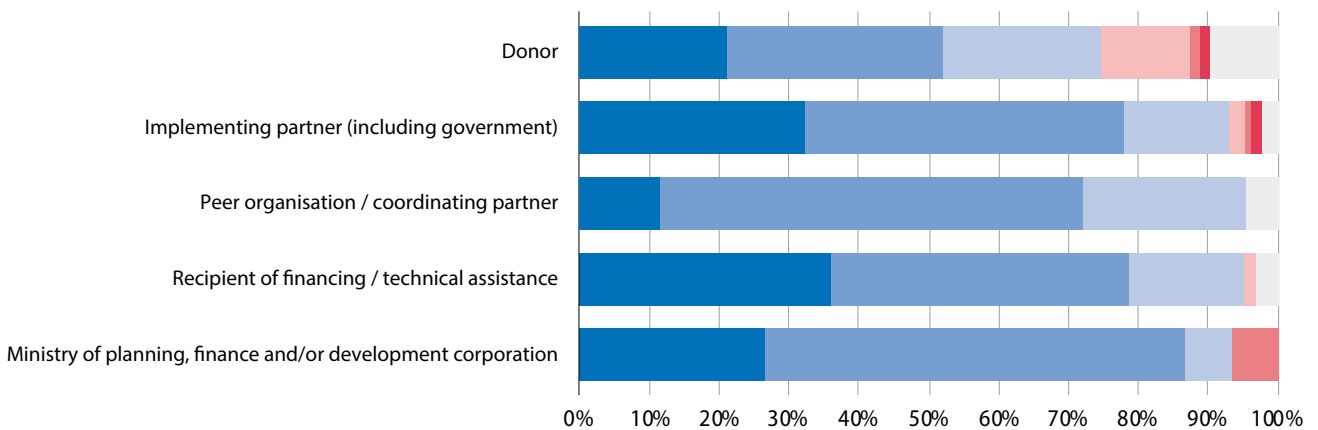
Strongly agree ◼ Agree ◼ Somewhat agree ◼ Somewhat disagree ◼ Disagree ◼ Strongly disagree ◼ Don't know / No opinion

UNDP management processes do not cause unnecessary delays for partners in implementing operations
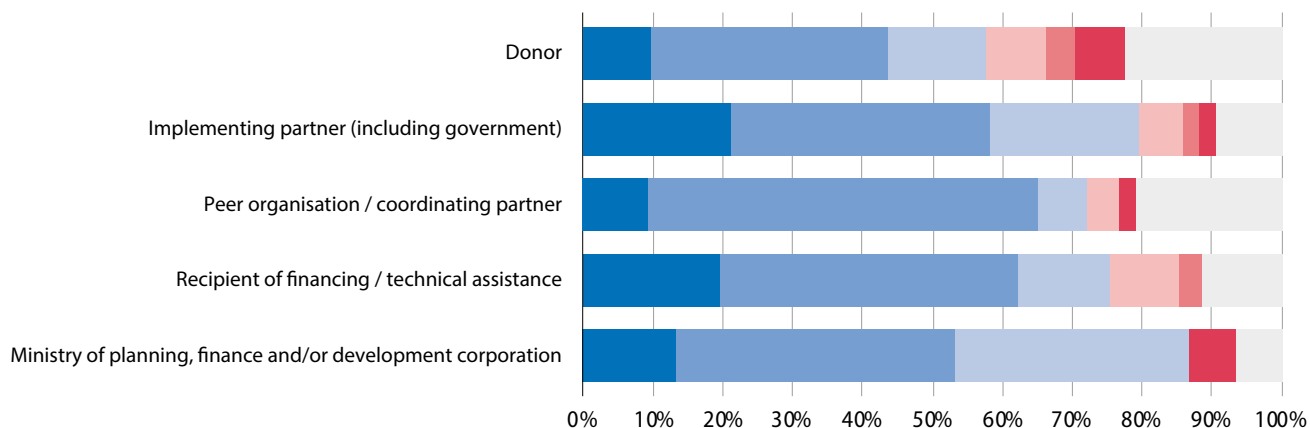
UNDP supports countries to build development partnerships
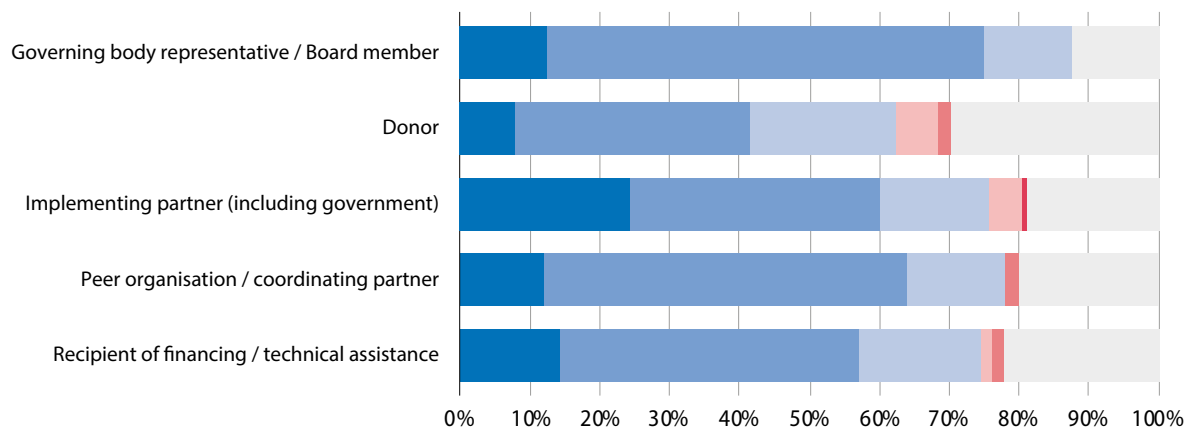
UNDP is actively engaged, appropriate to its role, in inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms
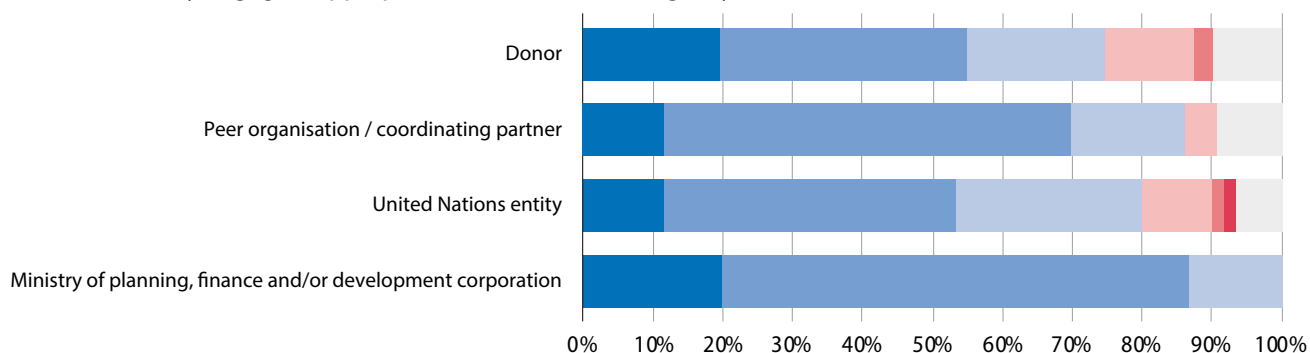
Strongly agree   **Agree**   **Somewhat agree**   **Somewhat disagree**   **Disagree**   **Strongly disagree**   **Don't know / No opinion**

UNDP jointly monitors progress on shared goals with local and regional partners
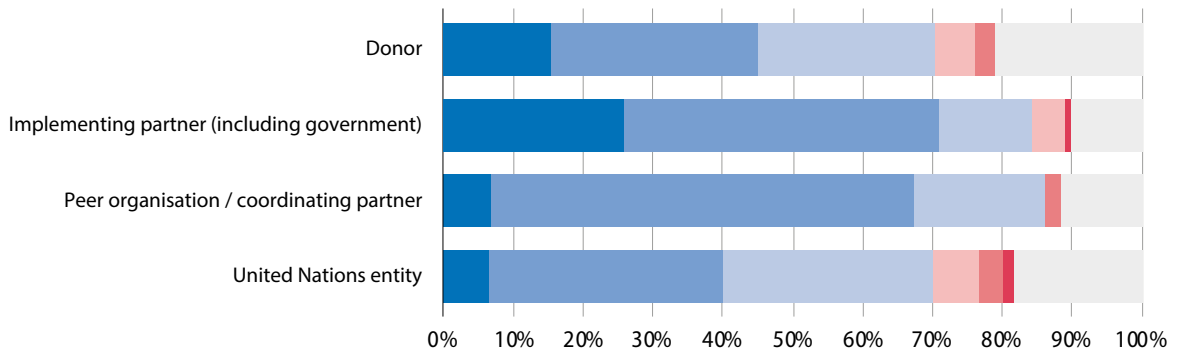
UNDP requires its partners to apply clear standards for preventing and responding to sexual misconduct in relation to host populations
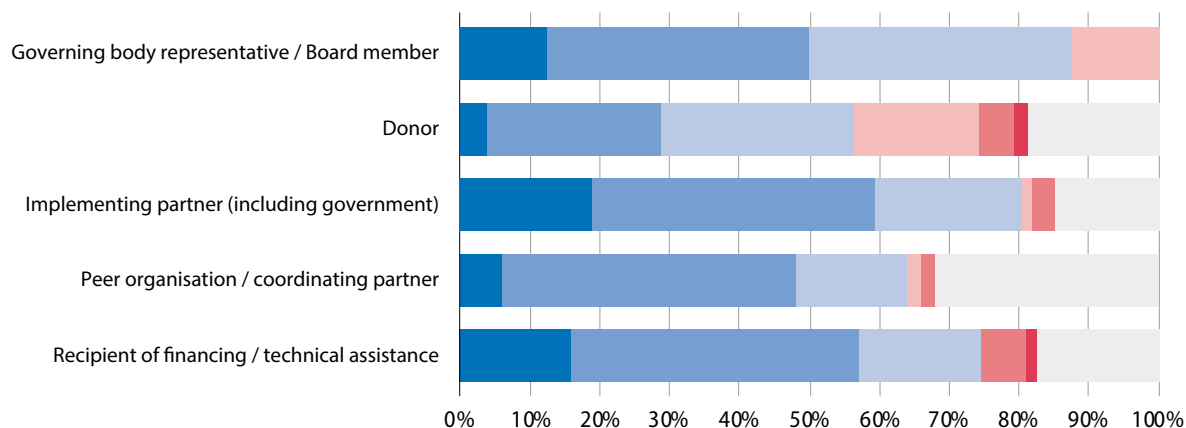

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

UNDP prioritises a results-based approach
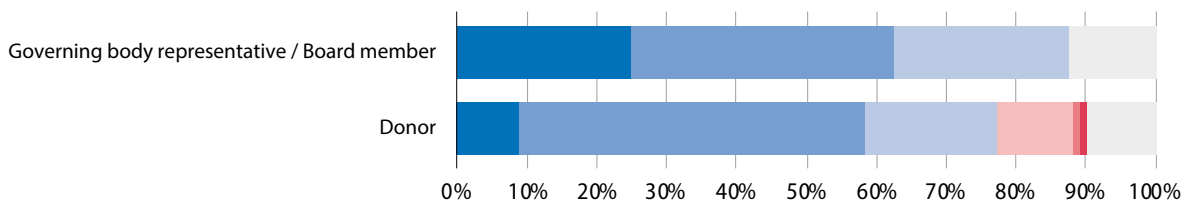
UNDP consults with stakeholders on the setting of results targets at a country level

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know / No opinion
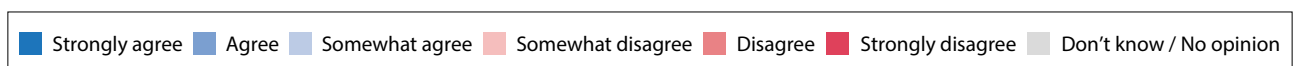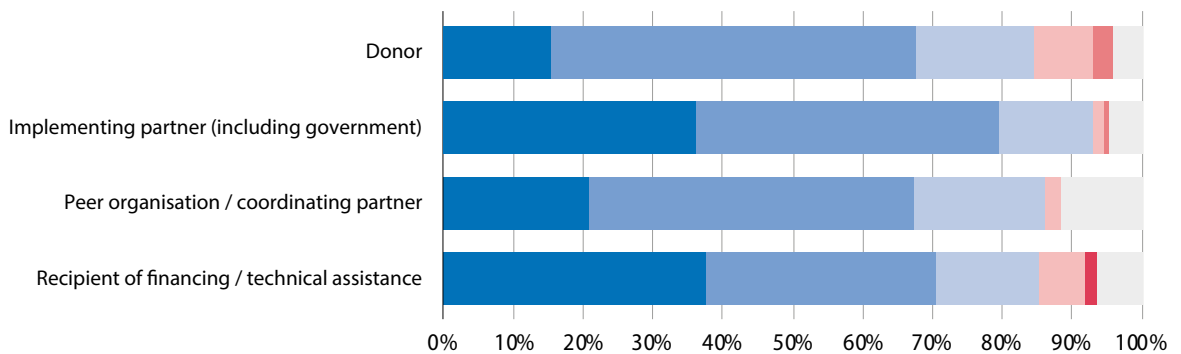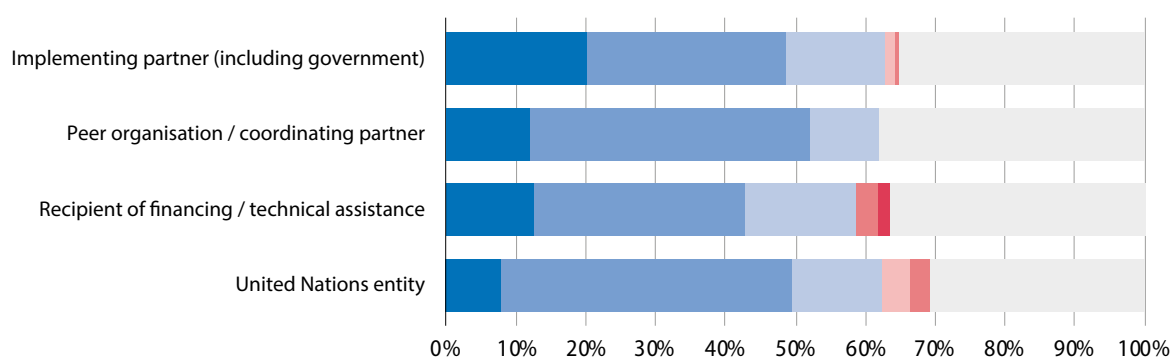
UNDP consistently identifies which interventions are under-performing

UNDP addresses any areas of intervention under-performance
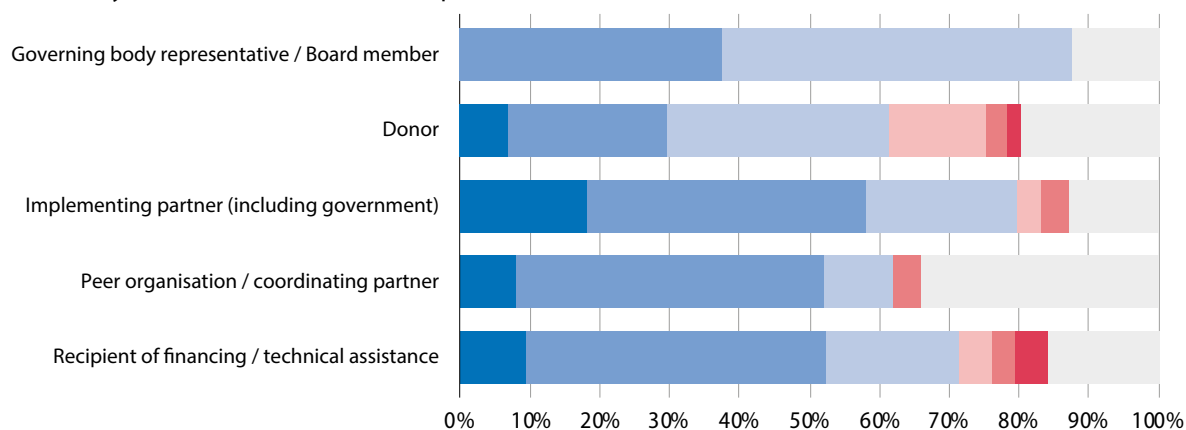

UNDP participates in joint/inter-agency efforts to prevent, investigate and report on any sexual misconduct by personnel in relation to the host population
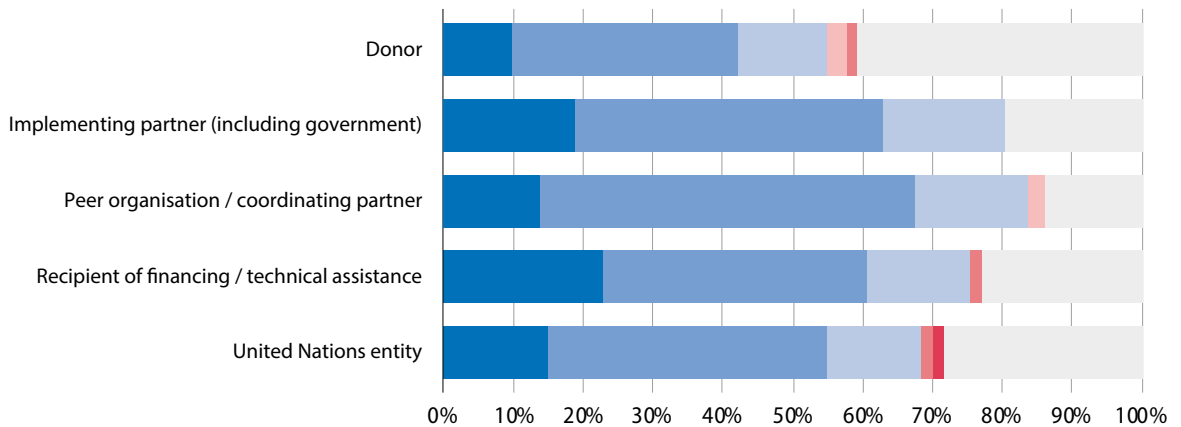

Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know / No opinion
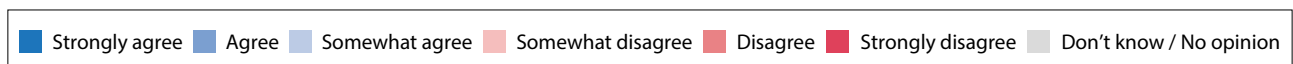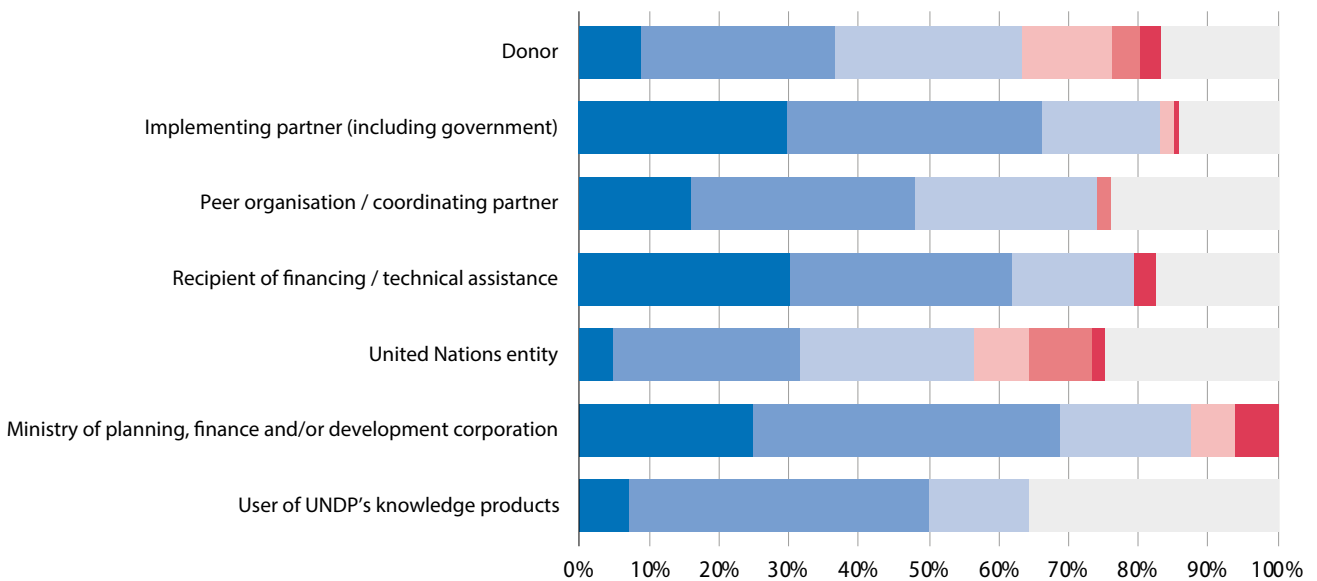
Where interventions are required to be evaluated, UNDP follows through to ensure evaluations are carried out
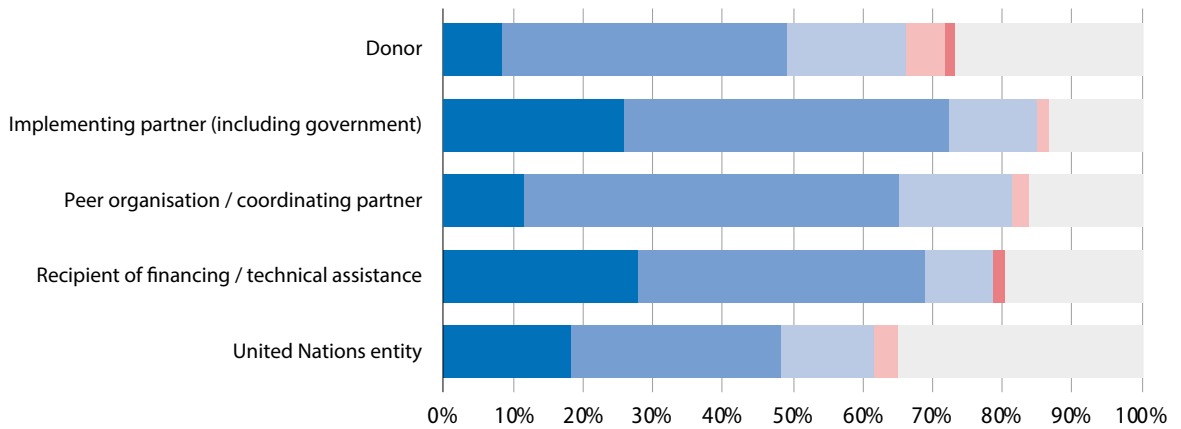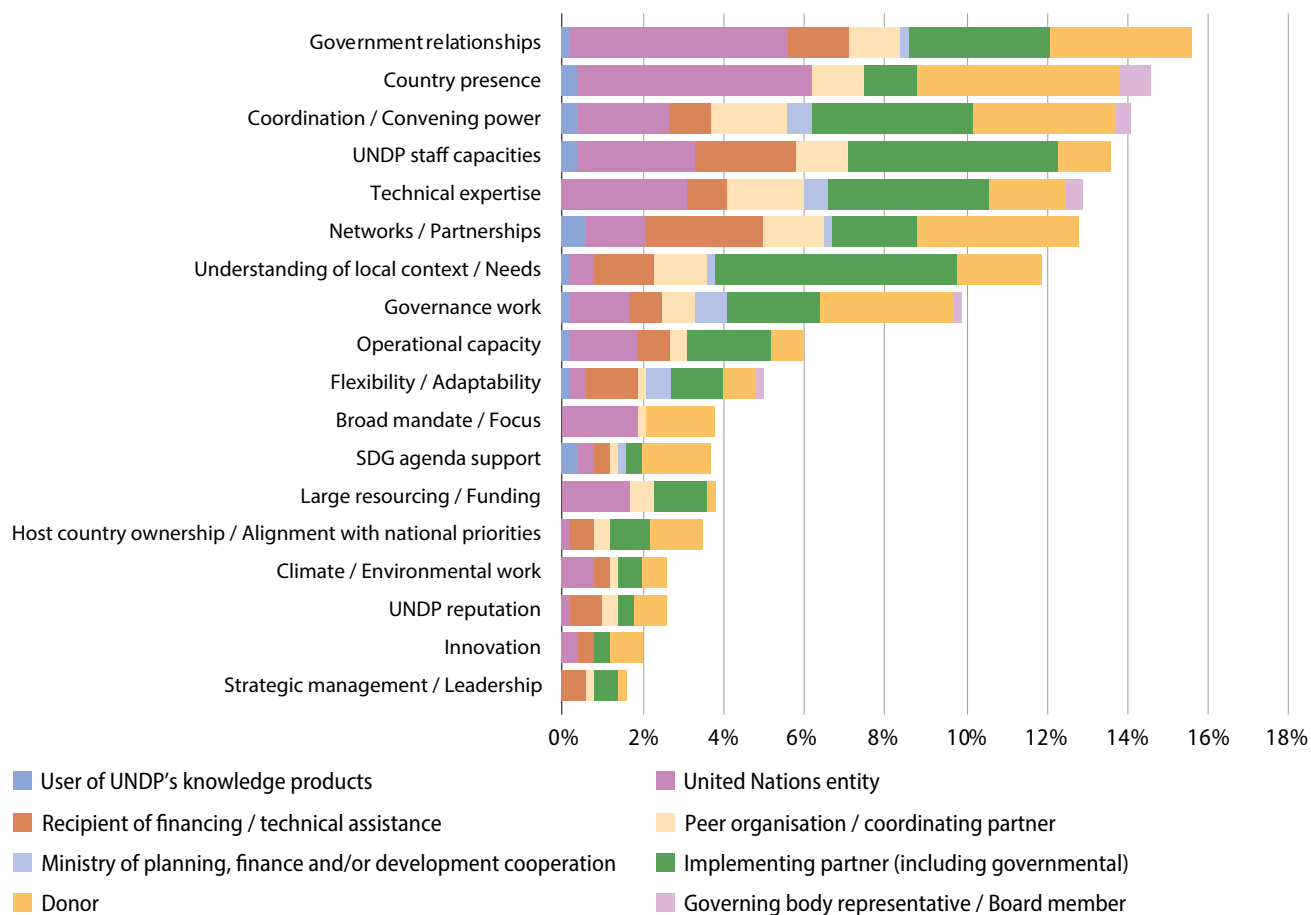

UNDP participates in joint evaluations at the country/regional level

## UNDP learns lessons from previous experience, rather than repeating the same mistakes

Strongly agree   Agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Don't know / No opinion

UNDP GREATEST STRENGTHS

Government relationships
Country presence
Coordination / Convening power
UNDP staff capacities
Technical expertise
Networks / Partnerships
Understanding of local context / Needs
Governance work
Operational capacity
Flexibility / Adaptability
Broad mandate / Focus
SDG agenda support
Large resourcing / Funding
Host country ownership / Alignment with national priorities
Climate / Environmental work
UNDP reputation
Innovation
Strategic management / Leadership

0%   2%   4%   6%   8%   10%   12%   14%   16%   18%

- User of UNDP's knowledge products
- United Nations entity
- Recipient of financing / technical assistance
- Peer organisation / coordinating partner
- Ministry of planning, finance and/or development cooperation
- Implementing partner (including governmental)
- Donor
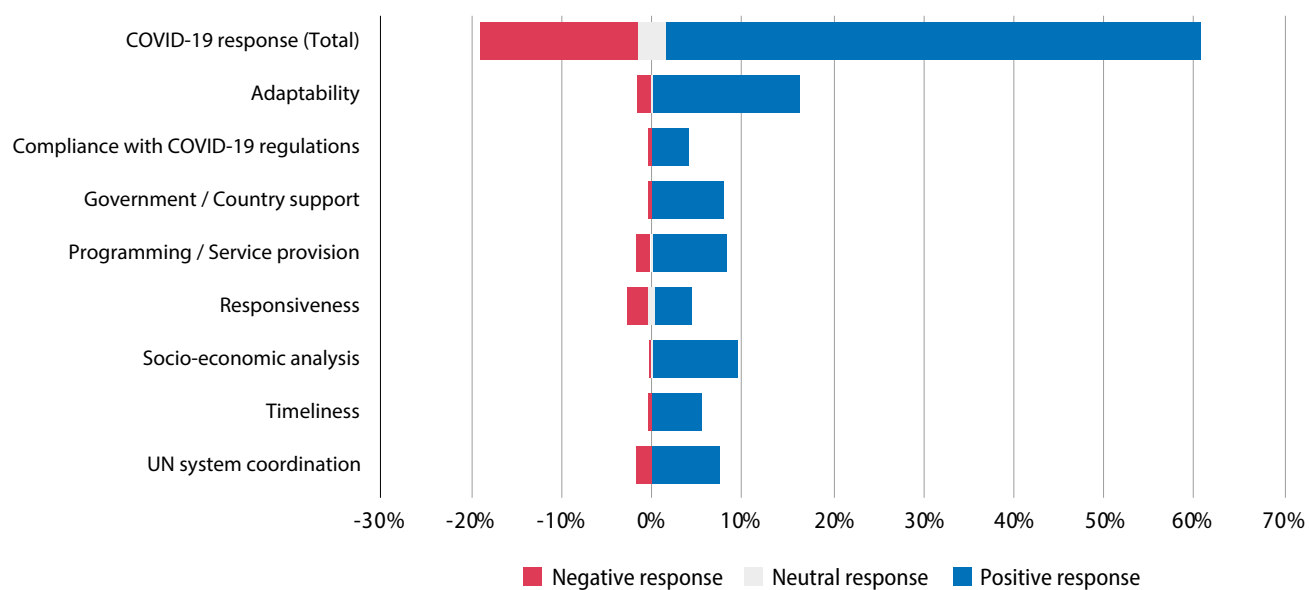- Governing body representative / Board member

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

UNDP AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
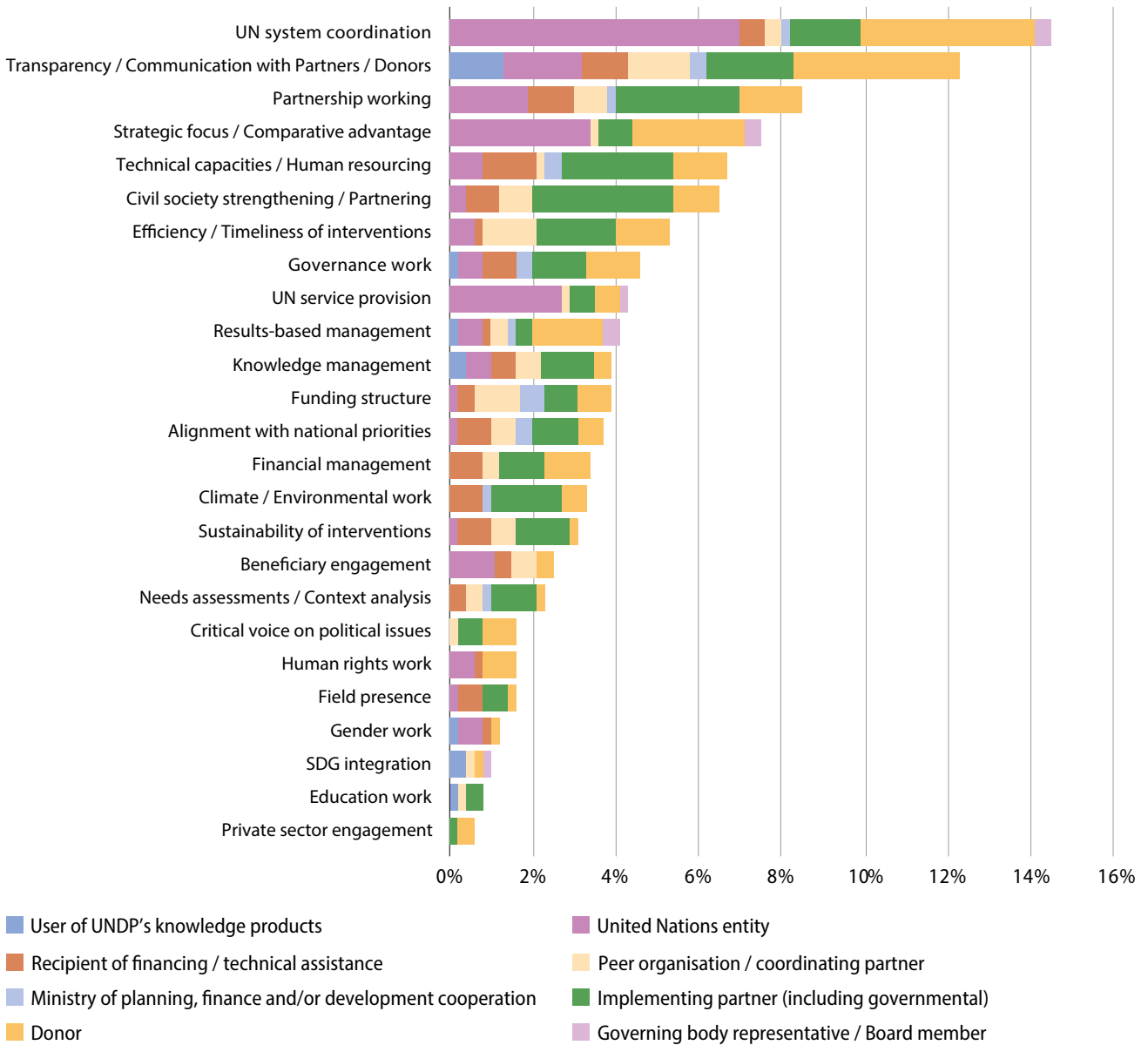
Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.

PERCENTAGE OF SURVEY RESPONSES TO: "HOW HAS UNDP ADAPTED TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS?"

Source: Based on responses to the 2020 MOPAN External Partner Survey: UNDP, February to March 2021.