

# EVALUATION BRIEF

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In the context of transition, UNDP quickly established itself as a capable and reliable implementing agency for the government as well as donors. In particular, UNDP has contributed to policy development and dialogue, incorporation of pro-poor concerns and the Millennium Development Goals into the national development strategy. National human development reports and strategic research on key issues supported by UNDP have been important in informing policy. Other UNDP-supported initiatives, in human security, governance and social protection, have contributed to capacity development at various levels of government. Nevertheless, there are a number of areas in which UNDP can provide valuable assistance, especially in the fields of public administration reforms and participatory municipal governance. A critical area in terms of integration into the European Union is complementing and supporting EU leadership of public administration reform efforts by providing a perspective on development priorities and contributing to strategic direction.

## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a middle income country, which is in the process of preparing for European Union accession. Policy reforms have been under way for more than five years, guided by the government's Medium-Term Development Strategy and with the eventual goal of integration into the European Union (EU). Towards that end, the EU and the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement in June 2008. Efforts are now under way to accelerate the pace of reforms to ensure that political, administrative, economic and legal institutions in the country are stable. Despite trends showing solid economic growth, Bosnia and Herzegovina faces numerous challenges, including tackling poverty, reducing unemployment, strengthening the capacities of public management institutions, controlling fiscal deficit, and harmonizing complex administrative structures.

## MAIN CONCLUSIONS

### Choices in programming and strategic focus

While all UNDP interventions are relevant in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is less certain that UNDP can provide meaningful contributions to development results in all these areas. Moreover, to transform lessons into appropriate policy advice for relevant entity- and state-level bodies would require far greater resources for

analysis and preparation of information for concerned decision-makers than are currently available. While some of the interventions are strong and focused (such as those relating to mine action, reduction of small arms and light weapons, gender, municipal planning, and support for sustainable return), others seem to have been taken up mostly due to the availability of funding. The overall strategic focus of UNDP's country programme today is not clear, nor is its comparative advantage in some areas of intervention. UNDP can play a critical role in advancing discussions among governments and donors on important development issues, particularly in support of processes related to EU membership.

### Micro-macro linkages in programming

Among the most critical areas of intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the strengthening of local government institutions where the legal framework is weak and service delivery is unstructured. UNDP has been working with municipalities from the start. As intended early on, this enables it to contribute to the formulation and application of national (state and/or entity, and cantonal in the case of the Federation of BiH) public administration and sector reform policies, strategies and plans that have implications for municipalities and for local economic development. However, the necessary linkages have not been systematically developed and used to good effect.

## Development partnerships

While UNDP has developed many types of partnerships in Bosnia and Herzegovina, only a few government partners share a sense of ownership and responsibility that would allow them to continue joint work on their own. Partnerships have been effective with national government agencies in the area of mines, small arms reduction and gender. The state government is the key partner of UNDP and a signatory to the country programme action plan. Much of the programme, however, has been implemented almost entirely by UNDP, which has implications for the level of government engagement and significantly diminishes the nature of the partnership. UNDP has worked with civil society organizations (CSOs) in a variety of ways, mainly at the municipality level to strengthen the transparency and accountability of local government. But the evaluation team found that, in some instances, participation by civil society was overtaken by various interest groups and political parties. UNDP has more infrequently (and mainly at the national level) worked with CSOs as resources and full partners in advancing analysis and political dialogue in support of a national human development agenda in areas of common concern. UNDP should move on from being an implementer of donor projects to developing synergies with the international community. In particular, attention should be directed towards clarifying a partnership with the European Commission so that UNDP can support, complement and reinforce the EC's tasks related to Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession process.

## Implementation modality

Use of the direct implementation modality (DIM) for programmes is an issue of concern in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where a large proportion of projects are implemented directly by UNDP. This has implications for the sustainability of development results, especially in relation to strengthening the capacities of the government. Continued reliance on DIM weakens the focus on one of the core objectives of UNDP, namely capacity development, as it tends to perpetuate a reliance on UNDP for the implementation of assistance programmes. The country office perceives weak capacity within the public administration and the incomplete deployment of the public procurement system as constraints to implementation under National Implementation Modality (NIM). By not promoting national implementation, UNDP in fact creates a high risk of capacity substitution and perpetuating dependence on international assistance, without real national ownership.

The country office has had a very successful experience with shifting to NIM: the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre. It should use the lessons from this experience to begin introducing elements of NIM in all its projects. Realistically, the transfer of ownership may need to be spread over several years, to allow adequate support and advice in later stages.

# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a strategy to transfer ongoing projects from direct to national implementation modalities, and use a form of NIM for new projects.
- UNDP should shift from direct to national implementation of projects so that counterparts are able and willing to carry work forward without UNDP by the time of its departure.
- Establish stages through which UNDP can transfer responsibility to the counterpart(s) within a specified time frame.
- Develop an overall exit strategy for development assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, to be carried out within a defined time frame.
- A strong emphasis should be placed on capacity development, together with advocacy and political dialogue, to ensure that national ownership is achieved.
- Define clearly the strategic focus for current and future UNDP interventions and narrow the range of activities accordingly.
- UNDP should take necessary measure to be more tactical in its focus to maximize results in areas central to UNDP's mandate and build on its comparative advantages.
- UNDP should strengthen linkages between policy initiatives at the state level and operational interventions at the entity and municipality levels.



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

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