

## Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

This report sets out the findings of an evaluation of the third global cooperation framework 2005–2007 (GCF-III) that was approved by the Executive Board in June 2005.<sup>8</sup> The Executive Board approved the evaluation of the GCF-III in June 2007<sup>9</sup> as part of the Evaluation Office programme of work for 2007–2008. This evaluation supported the UNDP Administrator’s substantive accountability to the Executive Board. The findings are intended to provide substantive inputs to the formulation of the new global programme (2008–2011), to be presented to the Board for its review and adoption.

The objective of the evaluation was to assess the performance of the GCF-III, provide lessons learned, and offer key recommendations for strengthening the effectiveness of the global programme. The audience for the report includes the UNDP Executive Board and senior management, the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), the regional service centres (RSCs), the country offices, national governments and counterparts, and the international development community at large.

The GCF-III<sup>10</sup> was intended to complement and strengthen ongoing UNDP support to programme

countries in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was intended to bring to bear the development experience and knowledge that UNDP accumulated globally to support the development efforts of programme countries. In doing so, it relied on a two-way exchange between the global programme and country offices.

The work of the GCF-III took place within the context of a rapidly changing development and aid environment, as well as UNDP’s evolving strategies and structures aimed at providing more effective support to programme countries. Specifically, this included:

- An international consensus on the MDGs<sup>11</sup>—this focus was reaffirmed by the World Summit in 2005.<sup>12</sup>
- An increased emphasis by the General Assembly in successive Triennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews on greater effectiveness of country-level work by the United Nations,<sup>13</sup> emphasizing poverty reduction, sustainable development, capacity development, gender equality and economic growth.
- The increasing importance of South-South cooperation (SSC) in development cooperation, which often falls outside of the Organisation

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8. The GCF-III was adopted by UNDP in ‘Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board During 2005’, DP/2006/2, 8 November 2005, decision 2005/16, 21 June 2005. GCF-III is described in the programme document: UNDP, ‘UNDP Global Programme, 2005–2007’, DP/GP/1/Rev.1, 22 April 2005.

9. Decision 2007/24, ‘Annual Report on Evaluation’, 22 June 2007, as contained in DP/2008/2, ‘Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board During 2007’, 18 October 2007, p. 20.

10. The global cooperation frameworks, I, II and III, are, when referred to in general terms, often called the “global programme”, especially when compared with regional and country programmes.

11. United Nations, ‘Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly: United Nations Millennium Declaration’, A/RES/55/2, 18 September 2000.

12. United Nations, ‘Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly: 2005 World Summit Outcome, A/RES/60/1, 24 October 2005.

13. United Nations, ‘Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly: Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System’, A/RES/59/250, 59th Session Agenda item 90 (b) 17 December 2004.

for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) modalities. This cooperation included development assistance, trade, foreign direct investment, and exchange of development expertise, experience and solutions.

- A growing awareness of the special development requirements of countries in crisis or post-crisis situations.
- An increasing global appreciation of the developmental challenges related to climate change.
- Increased emphasis on effectiveness of aid and on agreements to work towards better harmonization, alignment and results.

Factors within UNDP included:

- A continuing emphasis on human development as the overarching concept that guides UNDP in all aspects of its work and defines the value of UNDP contributions in its priority programme areas.<sup>14</sup>
- A growing importance assigned by UNDP to the issue of development effectiveness and its 'drivers', including national ownership, capacity development, SSC and gender equality.
- A sustained focus on strengthening UNDP as a knowledge-based organization, which has played an important role in the work of most UNDP bureaux.
- A sustained UNDP orientation towards building partnerships for development beyond the UN system, including with non-governmental organizations, multilateral and bilateral donors, civil society, the private sector, academia and other research institutions.

- A continued emphasis on cooperation and coordination within the UN system, and the pivotal role assigned to UNDP in this context, particularly at the country level.
- A continuing roll-out of the UNDP regionalization process, impacting all UNDP bureaux, which has raised challenges regarding the coherence and alignment of policies and practices within UNDP.
- An evolving division of labour between BDP and regional bureaux as well as a proliferation of policy-oriented entities within UNDP in addition to BDP, such as the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the Partnerships Bureau, the Human Development Report Office, and the Office of Development Studies.
- A growing emphasis, since UNDP's adoption of the results-based management approach in 1997,<sup>15</sup> on the achievement of outcomes rather than processes and outputs.
- A stronger focus by the Executive Board on greater accountability through monitoring, evaluation and audit.

Against this background, this evaluation assessed the developmental contributions of the GCF-III, which was managed by BDP, to the work of UNDP.

## **1.2 SCOPE, APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation assessed the performance of the GCF-III against the following: goals set by the second multi-year funding framework (MYFF) 2003-2007;<sup>16</sup> the objectives and results framework presented in the GCF-III programme document;<sup>17</sup> and the management response to the evaluation of the GCF-II.

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14. For example, the second MYFF 2004-2007 (UNDP, 'Second Multi-year Funding Framework 2004-2007', DP/2003/32, 13 August 2003, Executive Board Decision 2003/24, 12 September 2003) refers to human development throughout the document. The Strategic Plan 2008-2011, states that "The UNDP mission is to support countries to accelerate progress on human development," UNDP, 'UNDP Strategic Plan, 2008-2011 Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development', DP/2007/43, Reissued 17 January 2008.

15. UNDP, 'Annual Report of the Administrator', DP/1997/16/Add.7, 1997.

16. During the period covered by this evaluation (2004-2007), the GCF-III operated within the second MYFF. The new Strategic Plan (2008-2011) came into effect in 2008 January.

17. Approved by the UNDP Executive Board in 2005 (DP/GP/1/Rev. 1 22 April 2005).

### 1.2.1 SCOPE

The evaluation covered all programmatic and operational aspects of the GCF-III. It addressed the GCF-III efforts in all UNDP geographic regions for the duration of the programme (2005-2007),<sup>18</sup> and focused on the strategic dimensions of the evaluation's terms of reference. Given the time constraints, this evaluation did not focus on reviewing work carried out under non-core funding modalities. This study recognized the close links between the GCF-III efforts and the regionalization policy and took into account how implementation of this policy affected the performance of the GCF-III. However, it did not assess the regionalization policy per se.

The strategic reserve, which received a financial allocation through the global programme, was not subject to this evaluation since it did not constitute an integral component of the GCF-III's programmatic and operational framework.

### 1.2.2 APPROACH

The primary focus of the evaluation was to ascertain the contribution of the GCF-III to the achievement of development results at the country level. This also involved assessing the distinct contribution of the GCF-III as a global programme to strengthening RSC, subregional resource facility (SURF) and country office support to programme countries.

The GCF-III was intended to provide catalytic support to development efforts of programme countries. The expected outputs—such as knowledge products, strategic partnerships, and technical cooperation initiatives aimed at strengthening capacity in formulating policies, implementing development programmes and raising resources for development—could not be expected to make a direct contribution to the achievement of development results. Therefore, direct contribution was neither possible to determine nor expected in many cases.

This study did not analyze each individual project, strategic partnership or policy initiative. Rather, through a carefully chosen sample of the GCF-III initiatives, the evaluation aimed to present forward-looking findings and recommendations of a strategic nature.

The evaluation focused primarily on issues of relevance and effectiveness of the GCF-III. It also addressed issues of efficiency (particularly relating to management) and sustainability. The following questions reflect the overall thrust of the inquiry:

- To what extent has the GCF-III supported UNDP's vision, overall strategies and role in development, especially at the global level?
- How has the role and strategic focus of the GCF-III been relevant to country and regional priorities?
- To what extent have the components and actions of the four practice areas and two cross-cutting areas been relevant to and supportive of the GCF-III objectives and expected contributions?
- How well has the GCF-III contributed to UNDP systems and efforts aimed at supporting partner countries' development in each of the practice areas?
- To what extent have the management and institutional systems been appropriate and adequate to ensure effective, high-quality programme delivery?
- What key factors have influenced the approaches and strategies applied by the GCF-III?
- To what extent were the GCF-III initiatives led by a concern to ensure sustainability of effective action and positive effects?
- To what extent have management and operational arrangements led to increased efficiency?

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18. The original duration was 2005-2007 and a one-year extension was granted by the Board in June 2007. UNDP, 'Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board During 2007', DP/2008/2, Decision 2007/44, 18 October 2007, p. 42.

The approach and methodology developed for this evaluation was described in detail in an Inception Report. Evaluation questions were developed based on consultations with key stakeholders during three rounds of discussions in New York and pilot field visits to South Africa and Zambia.

The evaluation was based on quantitative and qualitative analyses. Evidence obtained was triangulated in order to determine findings from differing perspectives. The evidence for this evaluation was collected through:

- Case studies from 14 countries, 7 RSCs/SURFs, 3 thematic centres, and UNDP Headquarters
- Two electronic surveys (one targeting 70 policy specialists and analysts, the other targeting 146 Resident Representatives/Country Directors)
- Analysis of 34 of the 121 global projects
- Desk study of relevant secondary material

### 1.2.3 CASE STUDIES

Case studies were conducted in Headquarters, country offices, RSCs and thematic centres. The primary data collection methodology used was semi-structured interviews with individual stakeholders. In all countries, stakeholders were identified among UNDP, government, civil society organizations, other UN organizations and bilateral donors. A mapping exercise was carried out where stakeholder groups were identified and the nature of their relationship to the GCF-III was determined. Different interview and data gathering methods were constructed to ensure that the views and inputs of all stakeholder groups could be captured. Annex C provides a list of all people interviewed.

Interviews at the UNDP Headquarters in New York were also conducted as part of the case studies. Interlocutors included members of the UNDP Executive Board, the Special Unit for SSC, and other relevant UN institutions.

Extensive consideration was given to the selection of case-study countries. Given the time and resource limitations, a purposive sampling approach was adopted in choosing case-study countries. Selection criteria included: level of global programme support received; development context in terms of income level (with special attention to Least Developed Countries); and representation across regions (with special emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa). Based on these criteria, and in consultation with BDP and the regional bureaux, the 14 countries listed in Table 1 were selected. The Johannesburg RSC and Zambia served as a pilot case.

Interviews were conducted in all RSCs (Bratislava, Bangkok, Colombo, Dakar and Johannesburg), as well as the SURFs in Beirut and Panama City. All three thematic centres (Oslo Governance Centre, International Poverty Centre in Brasilia, and Nairobi Drylands Development Centre)—all of which are partially funded by the GCF-III—were also selected as case studies.

### 1.2.4 TARGETED SURVEYS

Two questionnaire-based surveys were carried out. The first was of all policy advisors linked to the GCF-III.<sup>19</sup> The survey was sent to 70 policy specialists, 36 of whom (51 percent) responded. The second targeted all 146 Resident Coordinators, Resident Representatives and Country Directors, 33 of whom responded (23 percent). Due to the low response rate of the second survey, the survey was only used for selective analyses and to indicate certain trends among the respondents. See Annex F for the questionnaires and results of these surveys.

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19. Hereinafter the term 'policy specialists' is used and includes the three UNDP levels of policy analysts, policy specialists and policy advisors. The term 'policy advisory services' is meant to include all services delivered by the policy specialists, including programme support services.

**Table 1. Case-study Countries, RSCs and SURFs**

UNDP Region/Thematic Centres	Case-study Countries	RSCs and SURFs
Africa	Liberia Mali Rwanda Tanzania Zambia	RSC Dakar RSC Johannesburg
Arab States	Tunisia Yemen	SURF Beirut
Asia and the Pacific	Cambodia Indonesia Nepal	RSC Bangkok RSC Colombo
Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States	Armenia Uzbekistan	RSC Bratislava
Latin America and the Caribbean	Bolivia El Salvador	SURF Panama City
Thematic centres	Drylands Development Centre, Nairobi International Poverty Centre, Brasilia Oslo Governance Centre	

### 1.2.5 ANALYSIS OF A SAMPLE OF GLOBAL PROJECTS

A stratified random sample of 34 projects out of the total of 121 projects under the GCF-III was analyzed. A general portfolio analysis was conducted in all 34 projects and a more detailed substantive analysis was conducted in 20 of these projects, which were chosen by another stratified random sampling process. The stratification took place according to the practice and cross-practice areas and weighted in proportion to the total number of projects in each area. Given the breadth of the project portfolio and the modest size of most projects, in-depth study of a representative sample of global projects was considered to be beyond the scope of the evaluation.

### 1.2.6 DESK STUDY

Secondary evidence was gathered through a study of evaluations and reviews, programme and project documents, annual reports, back to office reports, and knowledge products pertaining to the GCF-III. Material related to similar work conducted by other organizations was also reviewed to situate the work in UNDP in a

comparative manner. A list of the documents reviewed is found in Annex B.



The emphasis of this evaluation was on assessing the GCF-III role in reinforcing support to country offices in their efforts to achieve the MDGs, and strengthening UNDP as a globally networked and knowledge-based organization. Particular attention was given to whether the rationale and principles that underpin the GCF-III have been adhered to and the degree to which they have contributed to fulfilling the GCF-III objectives.

### 1.3 LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

The limitations of the evaluation included: challenges in developing a methodology to address the broad and complex nature of the GCF-III, inability to cover the full diversity of country experiences, lack of data and evaluative evidence due to inadequate monitoring and self-assessments, and extremely tight timelines.

- Challenges in developing methodology—The complex character of the GCF-III posed obstacles to developing a rigorous evaluation methodology. At some times, the GCF-III served as a ‘framework’—setting boundaries and defining broad parameters for its operation including what was ‘global’ in the global programme and the practice areas within which the programme functions. At other times it served as a ‘programme’, with the expectation of a clear purpose and results-orientation. In addition, the nature of the intended outputs and outcomes (such as the influence of knowledge products, partnerships built and capacities developed) made rigorous assessment of performance challenging. It was also difficult to clearly identify a community that includes both direct and indirect stakeholders (for example, people or organizations that make use of the GCF-III-funded knowledge products.)
- Inability to cover the full diversity of country experiences—As with all case-study approaches, there were challenges to capturing the diverse experience at the country level through select case studies. Although this evaluation considered 14 countries, most RSCs and SURFs, and all thematic centres, generalizing case-study findings was difficult.
- Lack of data and evaluative evidence—The GCF-III programme document contained a ‘results and resources framework’ that presented the intended outputs, outcomes and indicators. However, there was very little evaluative evidence generated due to a lack of consistent performance monitoring on these intended outputs and outcomes. The paucity of such evidence inhibited more detailed substantive assessments.
- Tight timelines—The evaluation was conducted under extremely tight timelines,

which influenced the amount of data that could be collected as well as the depth of analysis. In addition, the evaluation was deprived of some substantive and analytical inputs because of the last-minute withdrawal of one team member due to personal reasons.

## 1.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE

An independent Advisory Panel of five international experts was constituted to review the rigour of the evaluation methodology and the validity and quality of evidence, to verify if findings were based on evidence, and to ensure the conclusions and recommendations were based on findings. This was complemented by an Evaluation Office internal review of the Inception Report, Evaluation Terms of Reference, and the draft reports.

The Inception Report and the Terms of Reference were developed based on consultations with a number of stakeholders at UNDP Headquarters and pilot case studies. Stakeholder feedback was sought for factual inaccuracies, errors of interpretation and omission of evidence that could materially change the findings of the report.

## 1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is organized in five chapters. Against the background of this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 presents the historical context of the global programme and how the GCF-III was operationalized within UNDP. Chapter 3 reviews the performance of the GCF-III in terms of the results achieved under the four practice areas and two cross-cutting themes, implementation strategies and management arrangements. Chapter 4 discusses some of the main issues and themes that emerge from the evaluation. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation.