

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation illustrates the complexity of the GCF-III, which was intended to play a critical role within UNDP in supporting programme countries. The GCF-III sought to provide support within the guiding framework of the second MYFF 2004-2007, using a range of interconnected implementation modalities. The GCF-III was able to deliver a wide range of products and services, particularly within UNDP's supporting regional and country programme architecture, as well as at the programme country level. However, demonstrating that these products and services resulted in concrete development results at the programme country level is difficult. The GCF-III faced considerable programmatic, systemic and managerial challenges in achieving its intended outcomes.

This chapter identifies a range of factors that influenced the GCF-III's performance. UNDP addressed some of the factors that adversely affected the performance of the GCF-III through a number of initiatives taken over the past year-and-a-half, but much remains to be done. The recommendations identify critical areas where changes are needed and, where possible, direction for such changes.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The global programme has an important role to play in the context of the broader programming landscape of UNDP. The GCF-III registered some successes, but was unable to translate them into a systematic programme of a global nature for a range of systemic, design and management-related reasons. There was a lack of clarity regarding its 'global' role, its 'cooperation' agenda and modalities, and the scope and purpose of its programmatic 'framework'.

1. The GCF-III fell short in its strategic mission to underpin and integrate the practice architecture of UNDP.

In particular:

- (a) The GCF-III was placed at the centre of the practice architecture to provide coordination, guidance and knowledge services to country programmes on practice-related issues. Considerable intellectual capital was made available through the network of policy specialists and other experts, and some useful work was conducted. However, the full scope of these mandated functions could not be addressed effectively in all programme countries due to limited core resources and inadequate institutional support mechanisms.
- (b) The central role of the global programme in the practice architecture of UNDP and in strengthening support to countries in each of these practice areas was not fully recognized by most UNDP units. In most cases, the framework was not seen as a programme through which new ideas and innovative approaches emanating from country experiences were infused into the entire UNDP system.

2. The effectiveness of the GCF-III in meeting demand was constrained by weak strategic choices regarding focus areas, implementation modalities, allocation of resources and partnerships.

In particular:

- (a) The contribution of the GCF-III to the achievement of development results could have been significantly strengthened by focusing on areas of high demand, in which it also had a clear comparative advantage. The service lines of the MYFF 2005-2007 were taken as the programmatic determinant. This resulted

in insufficient attention being paid to areas where the programme could have made a major contribution, while continuing to fund areas where the programme could not add as much value.

- (b) Emphasis on developing generic approaches rather than contextualizing products and services in order to address specificities of sub-regions or country types limited the appropriateness of the work. Partnerships, with a few notable exceptions, were more opportunistic than strategic, and did not fully exploit the comparative advantages of partners or build new development opportunities for programme countries.
- (c) By virtue of its global mandate, and in line with the guiding principles of the MYFF, the GCF-III was in a strong position to develop cross-practice approaches to address complex development challenges for application by country and regional programmes. It was also well placed to provide guidance on mainstreaming approaches in the areas of gender, capacity development and other issues, such as HIV/AIDS. The GCF-III could have enhanced its relevance by focusing more systematically on cross-practice and mainstreaming approaches.

3. The GCF-III contributed to UNDP becoming a more globally-networked knowledge organization.

In particular:

- (a) The support of the GCF-III to knowledge networking was an effective means to support practice and cross-practice work. In general, the practice networks, websites and other instruments to share knowledge were appreciated by internal stakeholders. However, the effectiveness of the sharing and exchange of knowledge was constrained by an ad-hoc approach to codification, most practice networks being closed to external partners, and the uneven quality of the knowledge products. Such ad hoc approaches also prevented the GCF-III from engaging in SSC in a systematic way. Early successes

achieved through the networks were not optimized through systematic codification and technical improvements.

- (b) While the GCF-III made considerable efforts to enhance knowledge management and some successes were achieved in strengthening UNDP as a globally-networked knowledge organization, the absence of a corporate strategy meant it could not achieve its full potential in knowledge management.

4. Weak management and lack of corporate oversight limited the effectiveness of the GCF-III.

In particular:

- (a) The GCF-III would have benefited significantly from a consistent application of results-based management principles and techniques. By neglecting standard UNDP planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation practices, decision makers were deprived of clear programmatic targets and the opportunity to regularly assess the contribution of the programme to the achievement of development results. Management could not use evaluative evidence to strengthen the quality of the programme's products, services and approaches or make strategic decisions regarding the future direction of the programme.
- (b) There was little evidence of a clear understanding between BDP and the regional bureaux on their respective roles and responsibilities in their collaborative efforts, especially in the RSCs and SURFs. The matrix management system through which BDP-funded policy specialists were managed was not generally effective in supporting the alignment of the practice architecture. The tensions that arose from mixed funding mechanisms and multiple lines of accountability weakened the potential effectiveness of the framework. These tensions will have to be addressed in the regionalization strategy.
- (c) In the absence of an internal UNDP oversight mechanism, UNDP was unable to harness the full potential of the framework

for the benefit of the organization. Moreover, without an external consultative process with development partners, the responsiveness and relevance of the GCF-III to emerging priorities of programme countries was uneven.

5. Although the GCF-III has not fulfilled its global role, there is a need for a global programme in UNDP.

In particular:

- (a) The GCF-III has supported some successful initiatives to strengthen support to programme countries drawing from the global experience of UNDP, and at the country level there is significant demand for the type of services provided by the programme. However, these successes were not translated into a systematic effort of a global nature and the framework was unable to go beyond compiling country experiences to use this accumulated knowledge to contribute to global development debates and approaches on any significant scale.
- (b) There are development issues that cannot be addressed solely at the country or regional levels, for which UNDP needs a global programme. Given its universal presence, UNDP has the potential to contribute to global development debates and approaches drawing from its development experience at the country, regional and global levels. In turn, UNDP can benefit all programme countries by drawing from this global experience and developing innovative development policy approaches as well as facilitating SSC. In this regard, the GCF-III has not realized its full potential.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation recommends that UNDP should design a new global programme that embodies a clear departure from the previous global cooperation frameworks. The new global programme should be based on demand from programme countries, be fully integrated within UNDP, and add value as a 'global' programme. It should address 'global' issues and leverage all

UNDP entities with a view to generating, codifying and applying 'global' knowledge. The following detailed recommendations aim to support UNDP in developing such a new global programme. They are intended to be mutually reinforcing and should be treated as a whole.

1. The new global programme should clearly set out its global role, development goals, a strategic focus and a corresponding results and accountability framework based on the following considerations:

- (a) A clear rationale and the specification of clear criteria to distinguish global programme initiatives from those that can be addressed at the regional and country level.
- (b) A programme approach, which should replace the current framework approach. It should have unambiguous goals, a clear substantive focus and a detailed results framework that covers all dimensions of the programme.
- (c) A clear definition of its global contribution and its contribution to programme countries, through the regional and country programme architecture of UNDP.
- (d) Alignment with the UNDP strategic plan. It should continue to work within and across the three main focus areas identified therein, namely poverty reduction, democratic governance and environment. Within each of these focus areas, work should be concentrated on a limited number of key result areas selected on the basis of past performance and comparative advantage. The approach in the GCF-III of carrying out activities in all service lines should be discontinued.
- (e) A concentration on mainstreaming approaches in the cross-cutting areas of gender equality, capacity development and HIV/AIDS across the focus areas for application by regional and country programmes.
- (f) The identification of means to reduce the dependency on the global programme to fund posts required by BDP to carry out its core functions such as global development

policy work and practice coordination and development. One option may be to amend existing programming arrangements to explicitly allow for the funding of BDP posts.

2. UNDP should develop improved corporate strategies and delivery mechanisms so that the new global programme can better support the achievement of results at the country level based on the following considerations:

- (a) The need for a corporate knowledge management policy and strategy that clearly identifies the type of knowledge to be codified, how the processes are managed, and how best to respond to the needs of the organization and programme countries. The role of the new global programme in implementing the new strategy should be clearly defined.
- (b) The new global programme should provide country offices and their national partners with codification of cutting-edge analyses of global issues that are grounded in UNDP experience.
- (c) Demand by country offices for policy advisory, knowledge and programme support should be met by units best placed to respond based on their location and capacity. Primary responsibility and accountability should rest with the RSCs for managing and delivering programme and policy support to country offices and for conveying country level experience back to the central bureaux responsible for analysis and codification.
- (d) Responsibility for implementing the new global programme should be shared by BDP and the regional bureaux through the RSCs. Those components involving the provision of services and support to the country level should be managed by the regional bureaux and the RSCs. Resources for the new global programme should be allocated and managed based on the requirements of the programme's functions at the global and regional levels and the comparative advantage of respective UNDP units.

3. The new global programme should have an explicit strategy to partner systematically with other UN organizations and development institutions in order to contribute to development policy debates and approaches that are critical to programme countries for the achievement of their development goals by:

- (a) Identifying partners who will add most value in priority areas, specifying joint outcomes to be achieved, and identifying sustained cooperation modalities.
- (b) Collaborating with other United Nations development agencies and development partners to effectively address global development challenges and contribute to global development debates and approaches.
- (c) Strengthening SSC modalities, in close partnership with programme countries, centres of excellence worldwide and the Special Unit for SSC, as a means of ensuring the relevance and appropriateness of the knowledge generated, codified and further promoted.
- (d) Enabling the thematic centres to enter into long-term collaboration with Southern think tanks and centres of excellence.

4. UNDP should establish a management system for the new global programme that ensures results orientation and accountability through strengthened corporate management and compliance with standard UNDP programming requirements by:

- (a) Institutionalizing standard results-based planning, performance monitoring and reporting practices that are underpinned by effective support mechanisms, such as a comprehensive substantive database.
- (b) Establishing standards of management performance across all work areas and ensuring, through central coordination, the most strategic deployment of human and financial resources and consistency in implementation.
- (c) Instituting regular audits and outcome evaluations.

- (d) Conducting a mid-term review of the new global programme to ensure that benchmarks outlined in the management response to the GCF-III evaluation, and set in the new global programme approved by the Executive Board, are met.

5. UNDP should institutionalize mechanisms to ensure corporate oversight and ownership of the global programme by:

- (a) Strengthening mechanisms to enable the active participation and full support from corporate UNDP in order to promote buy-in by all units that it serves and from which it draws vital development information.
- (b) Ensuring synergy among the different UNDP units dealing with policy development at the global level, including the Human Development

Report Office, the Office of Development Studies, and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, in order to contribute more effectively to global policy debates and advances in development approaches.

- (c) Establishing an advisory board for the global programme involving external partners and internal stakeholders, in order to identify comparative advantage and ensure the relevance of a new global programme.
- (d) Ensuring corporate oversight over the global programme, through a senior management group such as the operations group or management group.
- (e) Explicitly reporting, on an annual basis, on the performance of the new global programme, as part of the regular system of reporting by UNDP to the Executive Board.