

UNDP: A Better Business of Development

At UNDP, more than five years of rigorous internal reform have gone far in broadening our ability and our commitment to deliver development that makes a real difference towards achieving the MDGs. We have successfully confronted the enormous challenge of linking offices in 166 countries into an updated and cohesive organization, while deepening our capacity to respond with precision and efficiency to individual countries. We have used new wave technology to share knowledge, strengthen our operational backbone, and become more transparent and accountable. Results-based management now links all of our programmes to the MDGs, and includes assessments of how well we perform on every project in developing national capacities, forging partnerships and furthering gender equality. In 2005, in our sixth annual Global Staff Survey, members of our global team revealed unprecedented confidence in their work and UNDP at large.

By streamlining our programme activities under our five practices, and reinvigorating our traditional core mission of capacity development, we have sought to focus our efforts on what we do best—by 2005, for example, we had become the largest international procurer of assistance for elections. We have delivered as well in areas where we can offer new services based on evolving needs. Our [Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery](#), created in the midst of an escalating number of conflicts, has brought our development expertise into bridging crucial gaps between crisis and reconstruction in countries around the world. In reaching out to private sector and civil society partners, at times through models unique within the UN system, we are tapping new sources of innovation, along with additional human and financial resources required to achieve the MDGs.

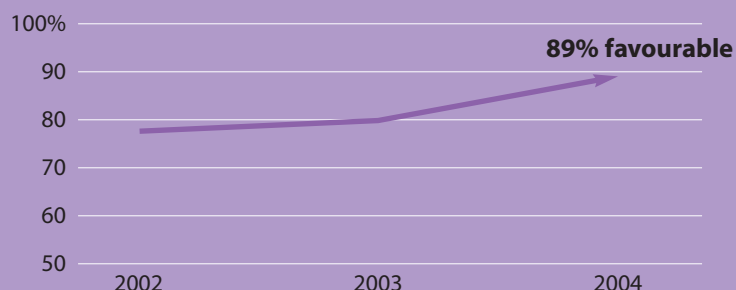
“UNDP is perceived to be a crucial player in the international efforts for development—both as a multilateral organization with its own programme and through its role as coordinator of the UN development system.”

The Multilateral Organizations Performance Assessment Network (Austria, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, with Finland and Ireland as observers)

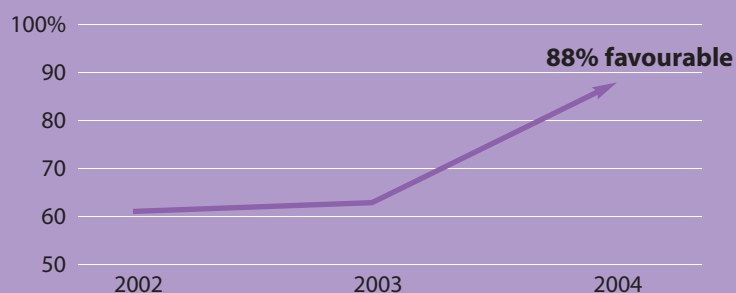
High Scores for Partnership

To help guide our transformation, UNDP has asked for annual feedback on performance from national, regional and global partners. In 2004, they lauded our strong support to national development priorities.

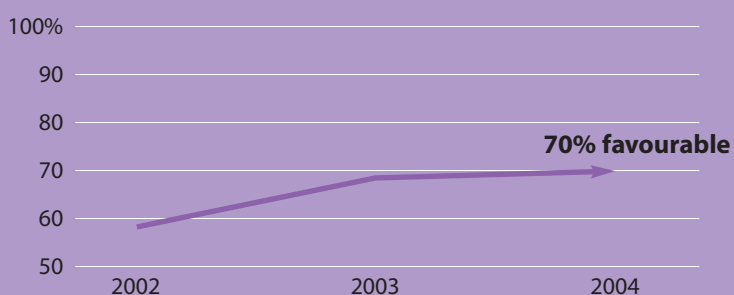
UNDP's projects and programmes reflect national priorities



UNDP involves beneficiaries in its projects and programmes



UNDP is effective at integrating projects and programmes into government systems



National ownership of UNDP projects and programmes



Source: UNDP Partner Survey 2004

Donors and programme countries have recognized the remarkable transformation that has taken place at UNDP. Overall resources have soared by \$1.6 billion since 2000. In 2005, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) released an assessment of the organizational effectiveness of 23 multilateral organizations, and rated UNDP number one on internal performance, country-level results and partnership. The assessment called UNDP "strategically focused," lauded our rigorous financial planning and controls, and noted UNDP's leadership in harmonizing procedures within the UN system and the larger donor community.

In 2004, UNDP continued building on these substantial accomplishments. We moved closer to the countries we serve by decentralizing headquarters-based programme and support functions and establishing a regional office in Johannesburg, joining our existing regional facility in Bratislava. Other regional offices opened in [Bangkok](#) and [Colombo](#) in 2005, and more are slated for the future to help UNDP provide closely attuned assistance to national offices in surrounding countries. The Bangkok office took on an entirely new level of responsibility early in 2005 when it became the main hub for supporting UNDP's response to the tsunami.

A major step forward was the 2004 implementation of Atlas, an enterprise resource planning system devised through collaboration with the [UN Population Fund](#) and the UN Office for Project Services. The rollout was unprecedented in its scope—at UNDP, it stretched across 143 of our offices. Using best-practice business methods and state-of-the-art technology, Atlas links data on projects, finances, human resources and procurement. It allows all offices to work on the same system and access the same information, guaranteeing a higher level of organizational transparency. Managers can now see who is doing what by logging on through any computer in the world. UNDP offices have lauded Atlas for allowing them to do more with less time and fewer staff—the reduction in time spent on procurement processes, for example, is as much as 20 percent. Funds dispersal has been significantly eased, and Atlas' e-banking option has proved a huge advantage in countries without established banking systems.

A new Internal Control Framework debuted in 2005 to ensure that Atlas corresponds with UNDP audit and financial control principles—a way of assigning responsibility that has not been possible in the past. We are also preparing for a global rollout of the Prince2 system for project management, widely recognized as an international best practice. By giving UNDP a standardized system for managing the projects it carries out worldwide, Prince2 will boost transparency in tracking project risks and results, and will enhance our capacity for tailoring projects to country needs.

“I chose to become Goodwill Ambassador for UNDP partly because of its focus on the Millennium Development Goals, and partly because of its coordinating role within the UN family. Since UNDP is responsible for coordination of all UN agencies, my engagement with them is an engagement with the whole UN family.”

UNDP Goodwill Ambassador and Norwegian Crown Prince Haakon

We are stepping up investments in our human capital through initiatives that hone the skills of our staff. Our online Virtual Development Academy now engages 10 to 15 percent of our professional staff at any one time in professional learning. In our fourth year of running this service, we have been able to decrease its costs by 30 percent. In 2004, we added courses on development economics and communications, and struck new partnerships to bring in faculty contributions from the London School of Economics, among other prominent academic institutions.

A Practice Experience Map, set up to identify and track staff competencies related to our practices, is helping us develop better training strategies overall. We are also moving forward on personalized learning plans that will not only ensure professional standards and back corporate priorities, but will pinpoint individual learning needs. This increased efficiency is expected to result in further cost reductions.

Other efforts are underway to reduce the time required for appointments, reassignments and separations. A new succession management policy has been designed to introduce a transparent and competitive placement process, and to help in adhering to corporate requirements, such as balance in terms of gender, geographical representation and movement between different regional bureaus. A Web-based corporate gender scorecard will help lead UNDP to gender parity at all levels by 2010.

In these and all other areas, UNDP will stay firmly committed to remaining among the top international organizations working on development, and pushing forward wherever we need to improve ourselves. Fueling our continued drive will be the larger purpose of making our greatest contribution to a UN system best equipped to support countries in achieving the MDGs, and in spreading the twin benefits of peace and prosperity to the world.

Inside UNDP, Confidence Has Soared

A record number of staff now participate each year in our Global Staff Survey, which reveals an increasingly motivated work force, one committed to the organization’s common purposes.

	Year No. responses	1999 3,395	2000 2,298	2001 3,235	2002 4,443	2003 5,228	2004 5,895
Question	(as % of responses)						
I am encouraged to be a team player in my office		52	72	76	79	78	80
UNDP’s overall goals are clearly defined		60	71	73	79	80	82
I would recommend UNDP as a good place to work		60	53	65	71	72	72
In my work unit people accept responsibility for problems that arise in their work		62	66	70	74	74	72
My job contributes to the achievement of UNDP’s goals		81	81	79	84	86	90
My job gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment		69	71	77	79	78	78
I have confidence in the Resident Representative of my office		—	64	73	78	80	79

Source: UNDP Global Staff Surveys, 1999–2004