Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: Côte d'Ivoire

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would like to thank all those who contributed to this evaluation.

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The IEO would not have been able to conduct this evaluation without the support of:

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Other stakeholders and partners: Ivorian Government authorities; representatives of the United Nations, civil society, and non-governmental organizations; and bilateral and multilateral development partners.

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ACRONYMS

CCM	Civil-Military Cells
CEI	Independent Electoral Commission
CPCs	Civil Protection Centres
CPD	Country Programme Document
EIH	Entrepreneurial Innovation Hubs
GBV	Gender-based violence
HDI	Human Development Index
ICPE	Independent Country Program Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IGA	Income-generating activities
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework
INP-HB	Institut National Polytechnique Félix Houphouët-Boigny
MRV	Monitoring, reporting, and verification
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NCHR	National Council for Human Rights
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDP	National Development Plan
OSCS	Observatory of Solidarity and Social Cohesion
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

Evaluation Brief: Côte d'Ivoire

The Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme conducted the third independent country programme evaluation for UNDP in Côte d'Ivoire in 2024. The objective of the evaluation was to inform the development of the upcoming UNDP country programme, to report on programme implementation to national stakeholders and the UNDP Executive Board, and to contribute to organizational learning and decision-making.

The evaluation team assessed the 2021–2025 programme cycle, which encompassed three key outcomes: (1) inclusive governance, rule of law, and institutional quality; (2) inclusive growth, resilience, and the reduction of inequalities; and (3) sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change. Through this programme, UNDP contributed to achieving the results outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework as well as Côte d'Ivoire's National Development Plan (NDP) for 2021–2025.

In 2024, Côte d'Ivoire, classified as a lower middle-income country with a population of approximately 29 million, experienced increasing political and social stability, a consequence of a decade of peacebuilding following the civil war that ended in 2011. The country witnessed significant economic growth, although it faced a temporary slowdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the world's largest producer of cocoa and cashew nuts, the Ivorian economy benefited from substantial public and private investment, fostering a dynamic aimed at establishing a foundation for sustainable and inclusive development.

This economic momentum contributed to a notable reduction in poverty levels. However, significant disparities remained, particularly between urban and rural areas. Women continued to encounter challenges related to representation and safety, highlighting the urgent need for greater equality of opportunity.

Despite its economic advancements, Côte d'Ivoire faced political challenges, including election-related violence, during the evaluation period. The country's resilience was tested by internal tensions and security issues, which were further exacerbated by an unstable regional context. Additionally, the unsustainable management of natural resources and the impacts of climate change emerged as critical concerns for the future, necessitating innovative and sustainable approaches.

To tackle these challenges, the National Development Plan 2021–2025 aimed to enhance essential services, support the private sector, and promote social inclusion. As the country approached the 2025 presidential elections, social peace remained fragile, necessitating ongoing efforts to build trust and stability within society while safeguarding resources for future generations.

Findings and conclusions

In the realm of governance, UNDP in Côte d'Ivoire has continued its peacebuilding efforts initiated after the 2011 conflict, focusing on electoral matters, social cohesion, and strengthening the security sector. The organization has been instrumental in enhancing the electoral process by reinforcing the Independent Electoral Commission and facilitating dialogue between the Commission and political parties. Despite presidential elections being marred by violence, UNDP played a crucial role in promoting stability and inclusiveness in subsequent polls by encouraging voter turnout, bolstering electoral security, and upholding human rights. Through integrated projects aimed at conflict prevention and fostering social cohesion, UNDP

targeted Ivorian youth and contributed to economic inclusion and the reduction of tensions. Additionally, complementary initiatives within the security sector enhanced the capacities of the National Office of Civil Protection and the National Police, thereby increasing public trust in security institutions.

Many of the strategies implemented during this period drew from previous approaches, but were better tailored to the post-2011 peacebuilding context than to the upcoming 2024 environment. Furthermore, despite UNDP's substantial financial investment at the local level, its activities were dispersed over an extensive territory, which limited their effectiveness and sustainability while overlooking critical high-level political and institutional challenges.

In the area of inclusive growth, UNDP supported national planning and the mobilization of public and private financing, although assistance for local development planning and the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remained limited. The organization facilitated the development of entrepreneurial innovation hubs and mobilized resources for youth training. While challenges persisted, UNDP emphasized innovation through its Acceleration Lab, which developed concrete projects to address pressing issues such as COVID-19 and deforestation.

Regarding sustainable natural resource management, UNDP expanded its strategic offerings to encompass climate change mitigation and adaptation – areas previously absent from its programmes. The organization played a key role in revising the Nationally Determined Contribution and developing the first national adaptation plan, while also supporting the design of significant structuring projects. However, mobilizing resources for their implementation continued to pose a significant challenge.

Lastly, UNDP adopted a flexible approach to promoting gender equality and human rights, although the impact of these initiatives was limited. The integration of the LGBTI community into public policies marked progress, yet the absence of long-term, structured projects for vulnerable groups remains an area for further exploration.

Overall, the country office exhibited remarkable relevance and adaptability in crafting a programme that addressed the country's emerging challenges, even within a volatile context. By concentrating on areas where it could provide genuine added value, UNDP prioritized support for populations most at risk of being left behind. However, resource mobilization, particularly from the Ivorian Government, remained a significant hurdle for the implementation of the programme and its key projects, despite increased financial support from various bilateral donors compared to the previous round.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: UNDP should concentrate its efforts on a limited number of specific geographical areas, adopting a multisectoral and integrated approach to the implementation of the SDGs. In this context, it is essential to strengthen partnerships with decentralized local authorities and services to empower these communities to plan, finance, implement, monitor, and evaluate their own economic, social, and environmental development programmes.

Recommendation 2: UNDP should design a programme with gender as its primary objective to pilot approaches that address the underlying causes of gender inequalities, advocate at a high level for adequate funding for inclusion and gender initiatives, and strengthen sectoral capacities to tackle these issues. If a new electoral programme is developed, it should aim to enhance the effective representation of women in elected assemblies.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should deepen its partnerships with academic, scientific research, and vocational training communities, including public institutions and incubators, to align training offerings with market needs and demands, thereby enhancing the employability of young people and contributing to the country's economic growth. Support for community income-generating activities should be rationalized and refocused around strategically targeted, complementary, or integrated groupings with existing national programmes, with an emphasis on long-term support that enables integration into value chains.

Recommendation 4: UNDP should increase its involvement in environmental and climate initiatives by capitalizing on climate finance opportunities. It should assist the government in designing, financing, and implementing a portfolio of identified structuring projects to significantly contribute to achieving the objectives outlined in the Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plan, and REDD+ initiatives (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation).

Recommendation 5: UNDP should enhance the innovative nature of its programme and continue advocating for the Ivorian Government to finance the next country programme, emphasizing the importance of a reliable and impartial partner to accelerate the country's development by providing significant added value in areas such as social cohesion, electoral assistance, and strategic development planning, and as a key partner in the green transition dedicated to youth.

CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope

The Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme conducts independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) to gather and present evidence of the organization's contribution to national development priorities, as well as the effectiveness of its strategies in leveraging national efforts to achieve these results. ICPEs are independent evaluations conducted within the framework of the general provisions of the UNDP Evaluation Policy.[1]

The objectives of this ICPE were to:

- Contribute to the development of UNDP's Country Programme Document (CPD) in Côte d'Ivoire for 2025–2030;
- Ensure UNDP's accountability to its stakeholders, including the UNDP Executive Board, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, and civil society;
- Promote organizational learning, particularly at country and regional levels.

This ICPE covered the UNDP CPD 2021–2025, as formally approved by the Executive Board. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Terms of Reference (Annex 1, available online) and encompassed all UNDP activities in the country, irrespective of the source of funding (see Annex 2 for the list of projects).

1.2 Evaluation approach and methodology

The ICPE was structured around three main questions. These were further expanded in an evaluation matrix (see Annex 3), which organized the available evidence by OECD Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria. Outcome-level findings were structured using the capacity development framework, which is based on the premise that a country reaches its development goals by empowering individuals, strengthening organizations, and creating an enabling policy environment.

The evaluation team gathered and analysed both qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources to inform its findings, conclusions, and recommendations. In addition to a document review (see Appendix 4), in May 2024 the IEO conducted 145 semi-structured interviews with key informants including 99 beneficiaries of UNDP interventions during a seven-day field visit covering 10 localities in the centre and north of the country.[2]

BOX 1. Evaluation questions

1. To what extent has the country programme strategically addressed key national development priorities and the needs of key stakeholders, including those at risk of being left behind?
2. To what extent was UNDP positioned to leverage comparative advantages and respond strategically to changing contexts and emerging opportunities?
3. To what extent have UNDP approaches and interventions been successful in achieving the objectives of the country programme and contributing to national development goals?

[1] See https://www.undp.org/evaluation/about.

[2] The localities of Boundiali, Odienné, Korhogo, Ferkéssédougou, Ouangolodougou, Bouaké, Sakassou, Yamoussoukro, Toumodi and Agboville were visited in the order indicated from 12 to 18 May 2024.

The evaluation assessed the performance of the UNDP country office using a four-point scale in the evaluation matrix, drawing conclusions and recommendations based on the evidence for each indicator.[3] The performance score for the Côte d'Ivoire country programme is detailed in Annex 6. The IEO Gender-Results Effectiveness Scale was employed to evaluate the quality and level of achievements by programme outcome.[4]

The draft report went through an internal and external quality assurance process before being submitted to the country office and the Regional Bureau for review and identification of any factual errors. The report was then shared with government officials and other national partners.

1.3 Evaluation limitations

A primary limitation of this evaluation is that several key positions were vacant during the data collection period, including the Head of the Governance Pillar and the Head of Inclusive Sustainable Development, along with their respective analysts. This absence reduced the institutional memory of the office. However, this limitation was partially mitigated by the willingness of some individuals to participate in interviews, as well as the availability of numerous project evaluations.

1.4 Country context

In 2024, Côte d'Ivoire, a lower middle-income country with a population of 29 million, enjoys increasing political and social stability, a result of over a decade of peacebuilding and economic reconstruction.[5] Following a protracted civil war from 1999 to 2011, the country experienced a turbulent period that significantly impacted its socio-economic development and social cohesion. Between 2012 and 2019, Côte d'Ivoire achieved real GDP growth of 8.2 percent, one of the highest rates in sub-Saharan Africa. Although the pandemic slowed growth to 2 percent in 2020, the economy rebounded to nearly 7 percent from 2021 to 2023.[6] As the world's leading producer of cocoa and cashew nuts, the economy has benefited from substantial public and private investments, enabling it to navigate geopolitical challenges successfully.

This economic momentum has led to a significant reduction in poverty, which decreased from 44.4 percent in 2015 to 39.5 percent in 2018, and further to 37.5 percent in 2021.[7] The Human Development Index (HDI) has also risen during this period, reaching 0.534 in 2023, although this ranks the country only 166th out of 193 nations.[8] Inequalities persist, particularly between urban and rural areas. The urban poverty rate stands at approximately 24 percent, compared to 51 percent in rural regions.[9] The most affected areas include the west and north, while Abidjan, the economic capital, reports a lower rate (10.2 per cent).[10] Despite a continuous decline in inequality since 2008, the inequality-adjusted HDI remains low at 0.318.

[3] 4 = Fully Achieved/Exceeds Expectations; 3 = Mostly Achieved; 2 = Partially Achieved; and 1 = Not Achieved.

[4] The IEO Gender-Results Effectiveness Scale classifies gender outcomes into five categories: negative, insensitive, targeted, sensitive, and transformative. See https://erc.undp.org/pdf/GRES_French.pdf.

[5] World Bank, Population, total - Côte d'Ivoire, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=CI.

[6] Ibid.

[7] National Statistics Agency (2024), Côte d'Ivoire Poverty Profile 2021, https://www.anstat.ci/assets/projet/ehcvm2021.pdf.

[8] UNDP, "Human Development Report," https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights#/ranks.

[9] The 2021 Harmonized Survey on Household Living Conditions places urban poverty at 54.4 percent in rural areas and 22.2 percent in urban areas.

[10] Economic Analysis Unit, National Institute of Statistics (2022), "Analysis of extreme poverty and its determinants, inequalities and vulnerability in Côte d'Ivoire."

Gender inequalities are also pronounced. Women have a slightly higher life expectancy (59.9 years) than men (57.4 years), yet their incomes remain significantly lower, averaging $3,763 compared to $6,643 for men.[11] The political landscape in Côte d'Ivoire is marked by the under-representation of women, with fewer than 13 percent of seats in the National Assembly and limited representation in regional and municipal councils.[12] Additionally, in 2018, 16 percent of women aged 15 to 49 reported experiencing physical or sexual violence, and female genital mutilation affects more than a third of Ivorian women and girls.[13]

Despite remarkable economic performance and a peaceful atmosphere surrounding the 2021 and 2023 legislative and municipal elections, Côte d'Ivoire has faced political turmoil, particularly during the 2020 presidential elections, which resulted in violence and internal displacement. Historically, Côte d'Ivoire has experienced episodes of violence, most notably the 2002 civil war that deeply divided the nation. This period was characterized by violent clashes and human rights violations, leading to a humanitarian crisis that left lasting scars on Ivorian society. Ethnic and social tensions persisted, culminating in the 2010–2011 post-election crisis, which caused significant violence and casualties. Armed groups have emerged, exacerbating divisions and fostering a climate of mistrust. Even after this troubled period ended, the aftermath of these conflicts continues to influence the country's social and community dynamics. Initiatives such as 'Football for Peace' promoted social cohesion; and Côte d'Ivoire's victory at the Africa Cup of Nations, while bolstering this spirit of solidarity and highlighting progress in infrastructure and stability, does not negate persistent challenges.[14] The country remains vulnerable due to past crises, inter-community conflicts, and resource tensions, particularly regarding land in rural areas. Côte d'Ivoire ranks 20th out of 54 countries in the Mo Ibrahim Index of Governance in Africa, indicating general progress in governance, although there has been regression in specific areas such as corruption and democratic elections since 2019.[15]

The Gulf of Guinea region, including Côte d'Ivoire, is increasingly susceptible to armed conflict and violent extremism, with a rise in arms trafficking in border areas. In 2023 over 40,000 people sought refuge in Côte d'Ivoire due to conflicts in Burkina Faso and Mali.[16] The degradation of natural capital and the impacts of climate change are becoming significant concerns, with the country losing an estimated 171,000 hectares of natural resources annually.[17]

In response to these challenges, Côte d'Ivoire has launched its National Development Plan (NDP) for 2021–2025, with a budget of approximately $106 billion. The plan aims to enhance essential services, support the private sector, promote social inclusion, and strengthen infrastructure. With a vision focused on industrialization, human capital development, and environmental preservation, the NDP seeks to reduce regional disparities, double per capita income by 2030, and elevate the country to upper middle-income status while fostering sustainable and equitable economic growth.[18]

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11 UNDP, Gender Inequality Index 2022, https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII.

12 Inter-Parliamentary Union (2023), PARLINE database, https://data.ipu.org/parliament/CI/CI-LC01/election/CI-LC01-E20210306/.

13 World Health Organization (2024), "Intimate partner violence – Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15–49 years subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months (%)," https://data.who.int/indicators/i/BEDE3DB/F8524F2.

14 European Commission (2022), "'Football for Peace' at the service of social cohesion in Côte d'Ivoire."

15 Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Côte d'Ivoire - Ibrahim Index of African Governance, https://iiag.online/data.html?loc=CI&meas=GOVERNANCE&view=overview&subview=absoluteTrends; the proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older who experienced intimate partner sexual violence in the past 12 months, by age and location of the event, https://data.who.int/fr/indicators/i/BEDE3DB/F8524F2.

16 UNHCR (2024), "Côte d'Ivoire: Report on the situation of asylum seekers in the North," https://data.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/106347.

17 World Bank (2023), Côte d'Ivoire – Country Partnership Framework 2023–2027, https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099130001102332831/bosib03b42f3280ea0ba61024bfe1f329dc.

18 For additional data on the country context see Annex 6.

1.5 UNDP in Côte d'Ivoire

UNDP's current CPD is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025, which is itself aligned with the national priorities set out in the NDP. It also builds on lessons learned and recommendations from evaluations of previous country programmes. The last ICPE conducted by the IEO recommended, among other things, that UNDP revisit its Theory of Change to make it more explicit and to improve the understanding of its contributions to sustainable change. In addition, UNDP was recommended to map its projects in order to systematize data and results, based on updated theories and lessons learned, with a view to improving the effectiveness of the new country programme. Peacebuilding, security, democratic governance, and sustainable development efforts remained crucial, and future programmes should avoid spreading themselves too thin by focusing on a few specific thematic areas. The focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and young people, especially those most vulnerable, should be maintained and strengthened. In addition, planning, monitoring, evaluation, risk management, and communication mechanisms also needed to be strengthened. The evaluation also reiterated the need for UNDP to update its resource mobilization strategies to align with the new development assistance directions, identifying new partners and mobilizing resources for key sectors to achieve inclusive and sustainable development in Côte d'Ivoire.

The CPD – in line with the six distinctive solutions of the UNDP Strategic Plan on poverty and inequality, governance, resilience, environment, energy, and gender equality – aspires to contribute to the SDGs through the following three goals by 2025:

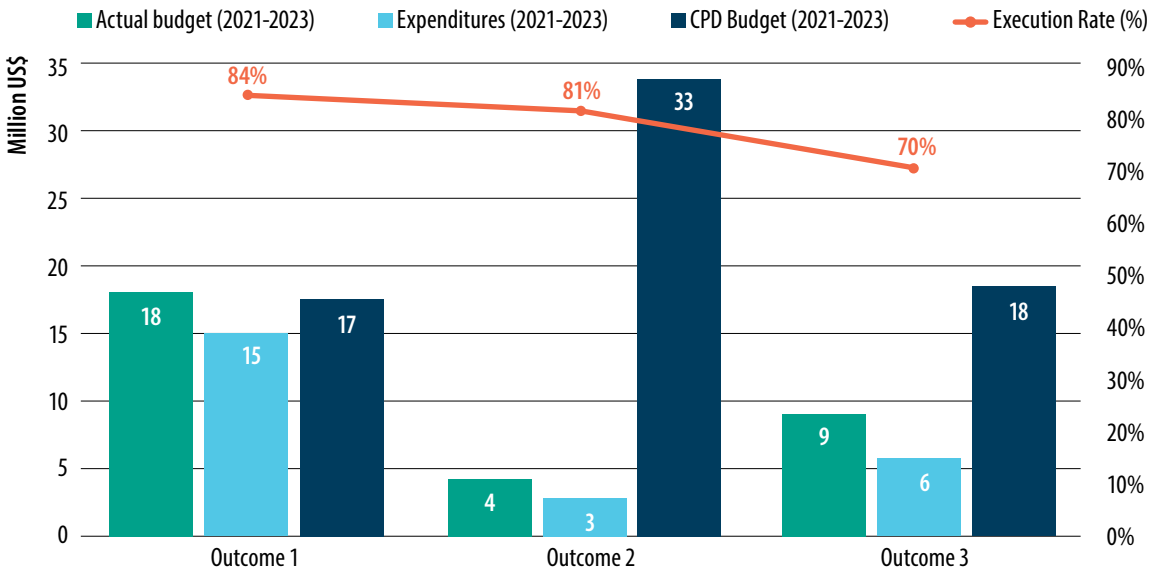
Outcome 1: Inclusive governance, rule of law, and quality of institutions. By 2025 governance systems are more inclusive, accountable, effective, and have quality data, and people live in an environment where the rule of law, labour rights, gender equality, and peace and security are respected and effective.

Outcome 2: Inclusive growth, resilience, and reduced inequalities. By 2025 small and medium-sized enterprises and industries have better access to innovative systems for sustainable and inclusive economic diversification and trade opportunities as well as investments, including in the manufacturing sector.

Outcome 3: Sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change. By 2025 people have better access to more sustainably managed, integrated, inclusive, and resilient terrestrial and marine ecosystems and living environments.

The budget outlined in the CPD for the period 2021–2025 was set at $69.1 million. However, the actual budget (resources mobilized for the years 2021 to 2023, for which financial data is available) totalled approximately $31.3 million. Of the total expenditure of $24.8 million, 62 percent was allocated to Outcome 1, followed by 25 percent to Outcome 3 and 13 percent to Outcome 2 (see Figure 1).

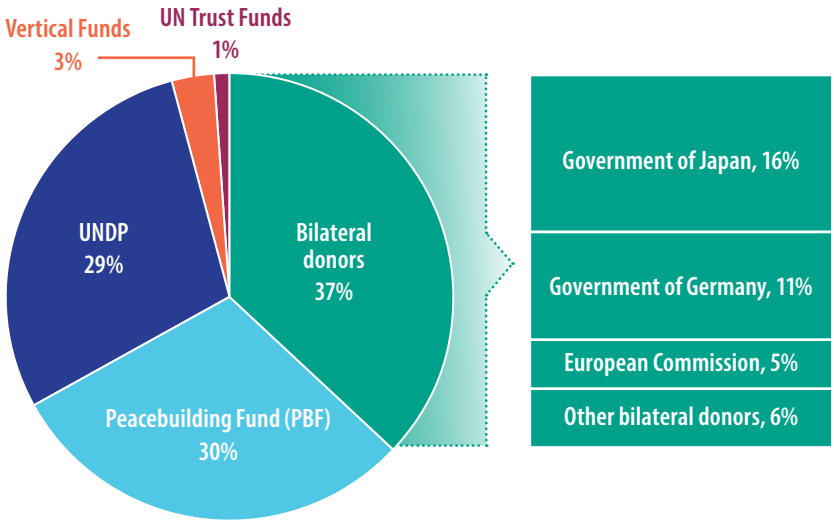
FIGURE 1. Budget and expenditure breakdown by outcome, 2021–2023



Source: Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of February 2024

In the early years of this funding cycle, the bulk of support for UNDP activities came from bilateral donor contributions, which accounted for 37 percent of total funding. The Peacebuilding Fund was in second place at 30 percent, closely followed by UNDP contributions at 29 percent. The remaining funds came from vertical funds, United Nations trust funds, and modest contributions from the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, confirming the leading role of bilateral donors in the UNDP programme (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. Distribution of expenditures by source of funds, 2021–2022



CHAPTER 2
FINDINGS

Finding 1: Relevance and adaptability. Despite operating in a volatile context, the country office successfully implemented a programme that addressed the emerging challenges facing the nation. By focusing on areas where it could provide substantial value, the office was able to prioritize support for populations most at risk of being marginalized.

The UNDP country programme was developed in a context of uncertainty, marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the presidential elections of October 2020. On the one hand, forecasts at the time already suggested a major economic slowdown, affecting progress towards achieving the SDGs. On the other hand, the United Nations Electoral Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) alerted the country to the potential dangers of electorally motivated inter-communal violence, exacerbated by an upsurge in hate speech on the national territory.[19] The country was still in the process of peacebuilding and reconstruction, but faced new threats of insecurity and violent extremism in the north, which is also the poorest region of the country. The degradation of the country's natural capital and its increasing vulnerability to climate change added a new dimension to the uncertain situation. In line with the National Development Plan and, subsequently, the Government's Social Programme 2022–2024 and the Government's Youth Programme 2023–2025, UNDP implemented a programme that responds directly to these challenges through its three outcomes.

Outcome 1 of the UNDP programme placed particular emphasis on electoral support, peace and social cohesion, and the strengthening of the security sector, with various projects accounting for 62 percent of programme expenditure. The Côte d'Ivoire Electoral Cycle Support Project, implemented following the NAM's recommendation to entrust such a project to UNDP, was welcomed by the government as well as by the international community. In 2020, 10 donors funded the project in the amount of $8.2 million in a short period of time, confirming the key strategic role that UNDP plays in the electoral field.[20] UNDP is one of the few actors actively engaging in the critical area of peace and social cohesion since the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire in 2017. It invested over $15 million in the previous cycle and is now working to replicate its integrated approach to social cohesion in other regions of the country during the current cycle. Additionally, UNDP continued to support the security sector reform initiated in the previous country programme by providing assistance to both civil protection and the National Police.

Outcome 2 was marked by more targeted and focused interventions aimed at supporting national planning, financing for development, public administration modernization, and dialogue with the private sector. However, the effectiveness of these efforts was constrained by limited resource mobilization. Initiatives to strengthen community socio-economic resilience, combat gender-based violence, promote the inclusion of marginalized populations and youth, and foster innovation were addressed across the three pillars of the programme.

Through Outcome 3, UNDP has solidified its role as a strategic partner to the Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Ecological Transition. The collaboration has intensified to facilitate the country's access to vertical funds and to implement interventions that tackle pressing environmental challenges.

The evaluation confirms that the UNDP programme concentrated a critical mass of its interventions on key issues where it could add substantial value (Outcomes 1 and 3), aligning with its capacity to mobilize resources. It also provided more focused support on areas where domestic and international resource mobilization proved to be more challenging (Outcome 2).

[19] United Nations (2019), "Report of the Côte d'Ivoire Electoral Needs Assessment Mission."
[20] Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, European Union.

Interviews indicated that UNDP has leveraged its status as an international organization, along with its credibility and impartiality, to advocate for and provide direct assistance to the most vulnerable populations. The evaluation highlights that the majority of projects and interventions, in terms of financial volume, have been implemented at the local level, particularly in the poorest regions of the country, in accordance with UNDP's commitment to target populations most at risk of being left behind. While the interventions associated with Effect 3 were primarily executed at the central and institutional levels, those related to Effect 1 were implemented locally, especially in the northern and western regions of the country, or were carried out nationwide (see Annex 7).

Finding 2: Resource mobilization. Resource mobilization, especially from the Ivorian Government, has emerged as a significant challenge to the implementation of the programme and its key projects. This challenge persists despite an increase in financial support from various bilateral donors compared to the previous cycle.

UNDP launched the country programme with a substantial financial commitment of $24.6 million from the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, which was intended to supplement the existing budget of $31 million for the programme. This funding was earmarked to support the implementation of several flagship projects, particularly in the areas of youth employment and public administration modernization. Funding agreements had been established with eight government departments, but these funds were not transferred to UNDP due to unspecified issues within the government. This significantly hindered UNDP's ability to fully implement the planned projects and programme.

As highlighted by the audit and the ICPE conducted in 2019, the office faced considerable difficulties in mobilizing the necessary resources to implement the programme, and this issue has become a major concern in the current cycle. This concern was further intensified by the fact that the ratio of management costs to programme costs was higher than the average for comparable offices.

Despite these challenges, during this cycle 73 percent of the mobilized resources ($20.8 million) came from 10 bilateral donors. This indicates that, despite the hurdles of resource mobilization in a rapidly developing middle-income country, efforts with these partners have yielded positive results. While more resources were mobilized in this cycle compared to the previous one, the overall challenge of resource mobilization remained unresolved, as only 45 percent of the resources allocated in the CPD had been mobilized by the time of the evaluation. As illustrated in Figure 1, the major variance is associated with Outcome 2, where only 12 percent of planned resources were mobilized, and to a lesser extent with Outcome 3, which achieved 48 percent mobilization. On the other hand, resource mobilization targets were exceeded for Outcome 1.

These challenges have impacted the UNDP programme in various ways. First, regarding human resources, the office has reorganized its structure, reducing the number of deputy resident representatives from two to one. Additionally, the uncertainty surrounding resource mobilization prompted some staff to pursue other employment opportunities, resulting in seven national staff members securing international promotions within UNDP by the time of the evaluation, which left key positions vacant.[21] Finally, these departures affected the efficiency of the office, as the overall programme implementation rate dropped to below 60 percent in 2023, down from 87 percent in 2021 and 2022.

[21] DDI Specialist Programme, Governance Specialist Programme, National Economist, DDI Analyst Programme, Governance Analyst Programme, Human Resources Analyst, PMSU Analyst.

2.1 Inclusive governance, rule of law and quality of institutions

Outcome 1: By 2025 governance systems are more inclusive, accountable, effective, and have quality data, and people live in an environment where the rule of law, labour rights, gender equality, and peace and security are respected and effective.

Related products

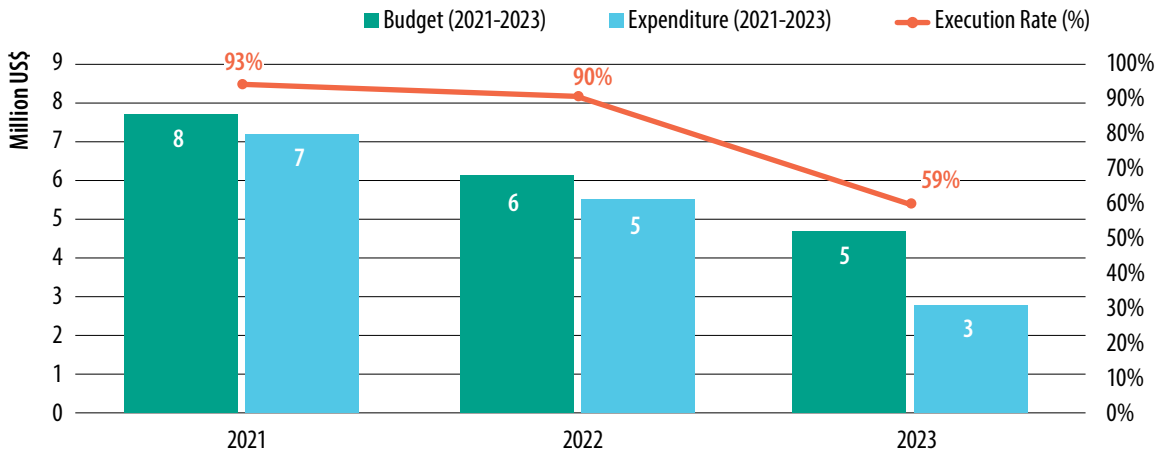
Output 1.1: Rule of law institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations have the technical and operational capacity to better promote and enforce human rights and to respond more effectively to gender-based violence.

Output 1.2: State and non-state actors in charge of the state modernization process and citizen control are equipped with digital or innovative solutions and provide quality services at the national and local levels.

Output 1.3: Public institutions and non-state agencies responsible for consolidating democracy and strengthening social cohesion, local authorities, and local actors, including women and youth, have technical and operational capacities to improve inclusion and the prevention and peaceful management of conflicts.

During this cycle the country office spent $15.3 million out of a budget of $18.3 million allocated to inclusive governance and peacebuilding (83 percent budget execution), with projects on electoral support, social cohesion, security sector strengthening, and strengthening public administration (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3. Budget and expenditure developments (Outcome 1), 2021–2023



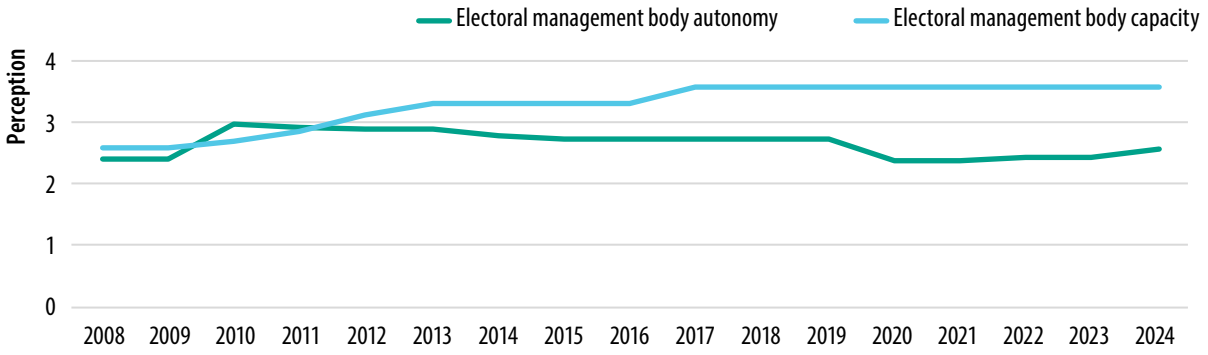
Source: *Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of February 2024*

Finding 3: Electoral support. UNDP has played a crucial role in enhancing the electoral process in Côte d'Ivoire. By strengthening the capacities of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and serving as a mediator between the CEI and political parties, UNDP has fostered a more peaceful and inclusive electoral environment. While these efforts did not entirely eliminate violence and irregularities during the presidential elections, they were instrumental in ensuring that all political parties were represented in the National Assembly during the legislative elections – a significant achievement, marking the first time in nearly 25 years.

Mediation, consensus, and strengthening of the CEI

The evaluation underscored UNDP's mediation role in bringing together 15 political parties and the CEI for an initial pre-election dialogue in May 2020. Despite prevailing tensions, issues concerning voter registration, electoral disputes, and results management were addressed. Through subsequent meetings facilitated by UNDP, the list of acceptable identification documents for registration was expanded from one to four, and the registration period was extended.[22] Subsequently, the project bore the costs of nearly 4,000 local CEI commissioners who assisted in updating the electoral list between June and August 2020. This increased the number of registered voters by 13.6 percent (to nearly 7.5 million, 49 percent women) compared to 2018, out of a total voting-age population of just over 15 million.[23]

FIGURE 4. Evolution of the perception of autonomy and capabilities of the CEI, 2008–2023



Note: Perception scale from 0-4 with 4 being the highest.
Source: *V-Dem Institute, 2024*

UNDP bolstered the capacity of the CEI, thereby aiding the successful execution of the elections. For the first time, the results of the 2020 presidential elections were presented polling station by polling station, within the legal timeframe of 72 hours, averting the delays and tensions experienced in 2010.[24] This approach was adopted for subsequent legislative and local elections. As illustrated in Figure 4, there has been an improvement in the perception of the capacity and autonomy of the CEI, testifying to the success of the efforts made.[25] Project support included the production of training manuals and videos, the training of local CEI commissioners, the acquisition of IT equipment, and the establishment of 78 logistics bases.

[22] Challenges remain regarding the legal framework, the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission, the electoral list, the electoral boundaries, and the financing of political parties.
[23] UNDP (2022), "Côte d'Ivoire Election Support Project (PACE) Final Implementation Report"; IDEA (2024), Voter Turnout Database for Côte d'Ivoire.
[24] United Nations (2010), Press Release: UN Security Council on Côte d'Ivoire, https://press.un.org/fr/2010/cs10102.doc.htm.
[25] V-Dem Institute (2024), V-Dem Dataset version 14, https://www.v-dem.net/data/dataset-archive/.

Security and human rights

In response to concerns about a repeat of the 2010 electoral violence, the project set up an Early Warning and Response Coordination System to manage electoral conflicts and human rights violations. During the presidential elections, 643 mediators addressed 125 of the 256 identified incidents. For the parliamentary elections the system was reactivated, and an additional 451 ombudsmen dealt with 86 of the 141 reported incidents. The mediators either intervened directly or relayed the information to the command post, which coordinated the responses, whether security or technical, with the police, the gendarmerie, and the CEI.[26]

The system, designed in collaboration with the CEI and the UNDP-European Commission Electoral Task Force, was still operational at the time of the evaluation, attesting to its usefulness and sustainability. This collaborative initiative, involving the state, civil society, and the United Nations,[27] leveraged existing mechanisms such as those of the Observatory for Solidarity and Social Cohesion, the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR), and the CEI. The project facilitated the establishment of standardized early warning indicators and the training of trainers in electoral mediation, thus ensuring the system's sustainability.[28] Additionally, it supported the NCHR in setting up a human rights-based early warning platform, which, although separate, is interconnected.

The project also supported election security in a manner that respects human rights. It assisted in training the Defence and Security Forces on democratic crowd management and human rights. National trainers were also educated on these topics, and equipment such as motorcycles and armbands was provided in large quantities. Extensive efforts were made to raise awareness about peace and electoral participation through information campaigns (television, radio, print, online, workshops) targeting young people, women, and people with disabilities.[29] However, there is no data available to measure the effectiveness of these actions.

Advocating for the electoral participation of women and persons with disabilities

In collaboration with the African Union and the NCHR, UNDP initiated efforts to promote electoral participation among women and persons with disabilities through awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building workshops. The project evaluation observed that the concurrent timing of awareness and electoral campaigns diluted their impact and occasionally led to confusion among the population, as some mistook awareness-raising agents for political party representatives.[30] However, there is no data available to confirm the actual impact of these efforts on the electoral participation of these groups.

Election proceedings and emerging challenges

Despite efforts, the conduct of the 2020 presidential elections was hampered by violence resulting in human and material losses.[31] While all polling stations in the north of the country were able to open during the presidential elections, voting was disrupted in most departments in the south, west, and centre of the country, while sources indicate that some polling stations were unable to open. While some election

[26] UNDP (2020), Draft press release, https://rci.pace.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/2020/12/04/draft-communique-de-presse/.

[27] CEI, police, gendarmerie, Ministry of Civil Protection, National Council for Human Rights, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, National Coordination Centre of the Early Warning Response Mechanism, and UN Women.

[28] Thus, 836 mediators have been trained for the presidential elections and 100 others for the legislative elections.

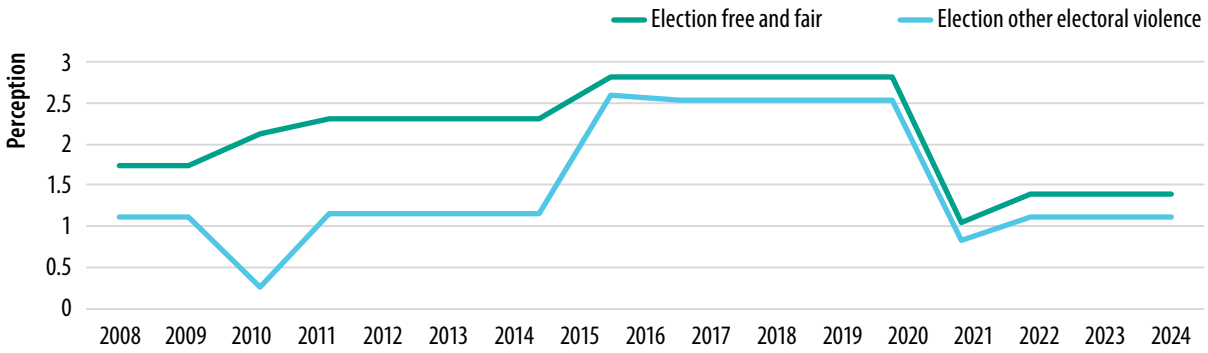
[29] These efforts undertaken by local NGOs have, indirectly, increased their experience in carrying out such activities.

[30] UNDP and UN Women (2020), "Final evaluation of the project to support the democratic process in Côte d'Ivoire."

[31] According to the final report of the Electoral Cycle Support Project, 14 branches of the Independent Electoral Commission were burned, 43 commissions and their equipment were ransacked, and thousands of polling station members withdrew on election day.

observation missions gave a relatively positive assessment of the electoral process itself,[32] others expressed reservations about its inclusiveness.[33] The turnout of 53.9 percent of eligible voters was slightly higher than that of the previous presidential elections in 2015 (52.9 percent), but well below the turnout of 81 percent achieved in 2010.

FIGURE 5. Evolution of the perception of electoral freedom and violence, 2008–2023



Note: The scale (0 to 3) reflects the perceived level of election-related violence. A score of 3 indicates that no violent incidents occurred in connection with the elections.[34]
Source: *V-Dem Institute, 2024*

The 2021 legislative elections and the 2023 local elections were peaceful, suggesting that the concerted efforts of UNDP and other actors have borne fruit (see Figure 5).[34] For the first time since 2000 all political parties took part in the 2021 legislative elections, but despite a relatively low turnout (37.9 percent), 2021 saw the election of 91 opposition candidates, marking a return of the opposition to the National Assembly previously dominated by the presidential camp. The results were widely accepted. However, only 13 percent of elected officials were women, compared to 11 percent in 2016, one of the lowest rates in Africa, indicating that the new law on women's representation in elected assemblies has not had the desired effect.

According to V-Dem data (see Figure 5), the period leading up to the 2020 presidential elections was marked by a degraded perception of the freedom and fairness of elections, as well as of the absence of violence. However, this perception improved slightly in subsequent elections.

Three factors internal and external to the Electoral Cycle Support Project have significantly influenced its ability to effectively achieve its objectives. First, the project was signed in January 2020, but the priority activities were only determined in April 2020, leaving only six months before the October presidential elections, thus preventing the full implementation of the activities beforehand. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the country in March 2020, hampered the operation of the project and the entire electoral process, such as voter registration being delayed by two months. Finally, the social and political

[32] African Union (2020), "Report of the African Union Election Observation Mission for the presidential election of 31 October 2020 in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire," https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/40267-doc-rapport_de_la_mission_dobservation_electorale_de_lunion_africaine_pour_lelection_presidentielle_du_31_octobre_2020_en_republique_de_cote_divoire.pdf.

[33] The Carter Center (2020), Preliminary statement of the Presidential Election Observation Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, 2020, https://www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/2020/cote-divoire-110220-fr.pdf.

[34] According to this scale, 0 tends to indicate that widespread violence between civilians took place throughout the electoral period, or during an intense period of more than a week and in large areas of the country, while 4 tends to indicate that no violent events related to the elections took place. Similarly, 0 tends to indicate that the election results were fundamentally flawed and have little to do with the will of the population, while 4 tends to indicate that some human error and logistical restrictions may have occurred but that they were largely unintentional and without significant consequences.

climate deteriorated in 2020 following calls for civil disobedience and boycott, hindering the smooth conduct of elections in many localities, despite the deployment of an electoral process deemed credible and transparent by some international observers.

Finding 4: Conflict prevention and social cohesion. UNDP-led integrated projects addressing socio-economic and security challenges have, in certain instances, fostered economic inclusion and social cohesion, thereby helping to alleviate inter- and intra-community tensions. However, the outcomes varied between the western and northern regions of the country, with interventions in the west proving to be more effective and sustainable. Ongoing challenges include securing adequate financing, ensuring the sustainability of conflict resolution mechanisms, tailoring activities to the specific context, and addressing the dispersion of support.

Since the previous cycle, UNDP implemented pilot projects in the northern and western zones of Côte d'Ivoire that promoted an integrated approach at the community level, addressing issues of peace, security, social cohesion, prevention of violent extremism, reintegration, and economic resilience. These various projects focused on the promotion of: (a) community and civil-military dialogue, awareness-raising, and civic education; (b) the creation of economic opportunities through income-generating activities (IGAs) and the training of youth and women; and (c) the rehabilitation of socio-economic infrastructure.[35]

Deploying an integrated approach in the west

This integrated approach was initially implemented in the western and south-western regions of the country, where two successive cross-border projects with Liberia were carried out.[36] These regions had to manage an influx of nearly 30,000 Ivorian refugees[37] who returned to their country of origin nine years after the 2011 post-election crisis.[38] This sudden influx exceeded the capacity of existing infrastructure, sparking tensions over the exploitation of natural resources between indigenous communities and the recently repatriated populations.

Evaluations of these projects reveal that they have been successful across various regions of the country, significantly enhancing access to essential socio-economic services for returnees. This includes improvements in water supply, health care, and education, particularly benefiting children. They fostered economic inclusion and promoted social cohesion. The rehabilitation and construction of social infrastructure[39] combined with the establishment of mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution[40] and support for IGAs[41] jointly contributed to reducing both inter- and intra-community tensions.

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35 Project to Support Crisis Prevention and the Consolidation of Social Cohesion and Inclusion (098298); Cross-border engagement between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to strengthen social cohesion and border security (00122921); Youth and Women's Engagement in Crisis Prevention, Social Stability, Peacebuilding and Reducing Community Violence in Northern Côte d'Ivoire (140615); Strengthening the governance of border areas to consolidate social cohesion and prevent conflicts (140615).

36 Projet d'appui à la prévention des crises et à la consolidation de la cohésion et de l'inclusion sociale (098298); Engagement transfrontalier entre la Côte d'Ivoire et le Liberia pour renforcer la cohésion sociale et la sécurité des frontières (00122921).

37 According to UNHCR's consolidated report No. 29 of 31 July 2018, since 2015 a total of 29,803 Ivorian refugees have been repatriated, mainly from Liberia and other countries in the sub-region, making the west and south-west regions the main regions of return.

38 The decade of politico-military crisis in Côte d'Ivoire culminated in a post-election crisis in 2011, which deepened the social divide and led to a slowdown in economic activity and the displacement of more than 700,000 people within the country as well as in neighbouring countries. It has also led to the destruction of social infrastructure in several regions as well as the deterioration of the security environment.

39 The 098298 project contributed to the rehabilitation and construction of 12 critical infrastructures, including school buildings, human-powered pumps, drinking water systems, and community courtyards. Similarly, the 00122921 project made a significant contribution to the construction of a community meeting room. It also made it possible to donate school tables and benches in Bakoubli, as well as delivery and consultation beds to the dispensary and maternity ward in Toyébli. In addition, this project has promoted the rehabilitation of village pumps in Koarho, Ziouebli, and Toyébli.

40 Some 44 peace committees and 605 community relays have been set up by the #098298 project; and 74 peace committees, including 11 cross-border committees, have been set up by the 00122921 project; while an unknown number of CCM have been strengthened.

41 The 098298 project supported various economic activities (agriculture, aquaculture, poultry farming, handicrafts, agro-food processing), benefiting 1,626 individuals, the majority of whom were women and returnees.

Quantitative data from the perception survey on social cohesion in the return areas of western and south-western Côte d'Ivoire, conducted in 2021, effectively illustrate the beneficial effects of the integrated support provided by UNDP.[42] Indeed, 86.7 percent of respondents stated that social cohesion has improved, 40 percent of conflicts have been resolved, 44 percent partially resolved, and 5.5 percent remain unresolved. Respondents attributed this to the combined actions of equitable and non-discriminatory access to basic social infrastructure, facilitation and indigenous participation in intra- and inter-community dialogues, and access to IGAs. However, the limited duration of agreements with NGO implementing partners has hindered long-term support for peace committees to sustain and strengthen achievements in conflict resolution and social cohesion. Furthermore, the demand for IGAs and basic social infrastructure remained high and could increase with the continued arrival of new and returning returnees in the region.

Addressing fragilities in the north

Recently, UNDP replicated this integrated approach to address escalating vulnerabilities in the north, exacerbated by the Sahelian conflict and the arrival of refugees from Burkina Faso and Mali. The UNDP-UNICEF cross-border projects between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso in the north aimed to respond to the government's request to prioritize the north, as stipulated in its 2022–2024 social programme, by emphasizing youth employment and the establishment of basic socio-economic infrastructure in the region. While the integrated approach was successful in the west, it had less impact in the north, where efforts to support conflict resolution, rehabilitation, and economic inclusion mechanisms appearing more modest and dispersed, and generating fewer synergies among the various components of the approach.

BOX 2. Success factor of peace mechanisms

The evaluation identified recognition by local authorities, legal legitimacy, and stable, predictable funding as pivotal factors for the success of these mechanisms. In Agboville the Civil Military Cells (CCM), even without UNDP support, were able to effectively extend their activities to the sub-prefectural level due to special funding from the Regional Security Council. Elsewhere, in the absence of public funding, the CCM struggled to cover all the sub-prefectures in their jurisdiction, as in Korhogo. Other mechanisms, such as peace or cross-border committees, operated with more limited resources and heavily relied on the support of local and traditional authorities. Differences in the nature of conflicts, actors, and cross-border issues in the west and north could also explain variations in project performance.

As observed in previous evaluations carried out in the west, Civil-Military Cells, Peace Committees, and Transboundary Committees have been relevant and well received locally, fostering positive intra- and inter-community interactions, and resolving local conflicts.[43] In the north, UNDP's material and technical support helped to activate or revitalize these mechanisms, which are often underfunded, under-equipped, and operate thanks to the voluntary involvement of its members. However, support consisted of the provision of basic equipment (laptops, tarpaulins, megaphones, chairs), which was used to hold some

[42] UNDP (2021), Perception survey on social cohesion in the return areas of western and southwestern Côte d'Ivoire.

[43] Mbzibain, A., Kam, O., and Sopp, M. J. (2022), Final evaluation report, Project PBF/IRF-346 & 347, "Cross-border engagement between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to strengthen social cohesion and border security" (ID# 00119702 & 00119703) Phase II, https://mptf.undp.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024-02/cross_border_phase_ii_evaluation_report_final_0.pdf; Kouassi, A. (2019), "Final evaluation of the cross-border project between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia for peace and social cohesion," https://mptf.undp.org/sites/default/files/documents/30000/evaluation_finale_rapport_provisoire_cross_border.pdf.

meetings, trainings, and dialogue sessions. Consequently, although these contributions motivated the members, who also valued the opportunity to be associated with UNDP, they were too modest, short-lived, and had limited potential for long-term impact due to the dispersion of resources and lack of funding.

Institutionalized by a presidential decree in 2019, the CCM have received UNDP support since 2014. This initiative demonstrates the complete integration of the CCM into state structures and the commitment of its constituent actors, highlighting the importance of their support. However, government budget constraints have frequently hindered adequate funding for several CCM, thereby limiting their operational effectiveness.

The aspect of the approach aimed at improving access to basic social services has facilitated the establishment of certain socio-economic infrastructures in Gbêkê (centre),[44] particularly in Béoumi, Botro, Bouaké, and Sakassou. However, this support was less visible in the north, where the main contribution was the rehabilitation of a Laleraba border post, compared to efforts in the west.[45]

The economic empowerment dimension of support to IGAs provided limited and often insufficient inputs to significantly enhance the economic resilience of the targeted populations. As implemented, this approach did not seem sufficient to promote positive interactions among participants and, by extension, social cohesion. Overall, field visits, interviews, and literature reviews did not highlight the existence of synergies between the three strategies implemented to foster social cohesion in the north.

Support aimed at the poorest but spread too thin

According to UNDP monitoring indicators, over 9,000 young people and members of various groups have received UNDP support for their income-generating activities. While this figure cannot be independently verified by this evaluation, it suggests that support may have been spread thin across a large number of participants, which could explain the limited inputs and changes observed during field visits. A comprehensive mapping of activities, including IGAs and support for conflict resolution mechanisms, based on the analysis of the four primary UNDP projects implemented during this cycle, reveals that nine regions and 29 different departments were targeted.[46] This dispersion of support across numerous localities indicates a tendency to dilute efforts. This dilution is partly a result of the aspirations of national and local governments to maximize the reach of UNDP projects to benefit as many stakeholders as possible. Additionally, the focus on short- to medium-term project implementation has hindered UNDP's ability to engage with these beneficiaries over the long term.

In response, the commitment of the government – including regional directorates and prefectural and local authorities – was reinforced through the systematic establishment of project monitoring and steering committees. The regular functioning of these committees is a positive aspect of the UNDP approach, as corroborated by the evaluation.

[44] Integrated support project for the management of local development and the promotion of peaceful societies and human security in the Gbêkê region.

[45] The rehabilitation of several infrastructures and equipment has already been finalized: (i) the health centre of Souafoué-Djanhan; (ii) the maternity hospital of Béoumi; (iii) the customary court of Sakassou; (iv) the equipping of four school groups with 581 table benches; (v) the GBV care centre in Bouaké; and (vi) the equipping of four community radio stations with air conditioners, computers, and a mixing desk.

[46] Project to Support Crisis Prevention and the Consolidation of Social Cohesion and Inclusion (098298); Cross-border engagement between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to strengthen social cohesion and border security (00122921); Youth and Women's Engagement in Crisis Prevention, Social Stability, Peacebuilding, and Reducing Community Violence in Northern Côte d'Ivoire (140615); Strengthening the governance of border areas to consolidate social cohesion and prevent conflicts (140615).

Ongoing strategic interventions with more limited reach

At the strategic level, UNDP supported the development of conflict management guides and initiated support for the development of the national strategy for the prevention of violent extremism and the fight against terrorism. In collaboration with the Observatory for Solidarity and Social Cohesion (OSCS), an early warning mechanism was established, separate from the one used during election periods, allowing for a better understanding of regional conflicts. UNDP also contributed to the establishment of OSCS regional commissions across the country, thus ensuring national coverage for conflict prevention or management. These commissions, whose role is similar to that of the CCM, identify, communicate, and intervene on issues of conflict and human security, raising questions about the relevance of multiplying this type of local mechanism.

Finding 5: Youth and social cohesion. UNDP has strategically focused on engaging young people in its programmes, aligning with government priorities and addressing the needs of a predominantly young population, which was often at the heart of social and political conflicts. The implemented approaches had localized positive effects on social cohesion, particularly through UNDP's support for existing peace structures. However, the potential for wider impact and scalability has been limited by the short-term nature of the project initiatives.

Responding to the demographic reality where 75 percent of the Ivorian population are under the age of 35, the government launched its Youth Programme for 2023–2025; and UNDP aligned its programme with the three pillars of the Youth Programme, making young people a prime target.[47]

Several UNDP projects have integrated young people into social cohesion and conflict prevention initiatives, particularly in the west of the country and border regions. These projects trained young people in conflict prevention and community dialogue, and involved them in the management of forest resources.[48] Evaluations of these projects suggest that they contributed to some extent to improving social cohesion in some of the targeted communities.

UNDP also worked within the academic community to promote positive leadership and prevent intercommunity clashes. It contributed to understanding the dynamics of university conflicts, including gender-based violence (GBV), and strengthened the capacities of members of university peace clubs. Notable contributions include:

- The implementation of participatory action research to better understand the dynamics of university conflicts, including GBV.
- The provision of an early warning system for students in peace clubs, inspired by the community model.
- Training of approximately 600 students in leadership, mediation, gender, human rights, public speaking, and communication/mobilization.

Notable progress has been observed, such as young people's awareness of the need for new approaches to conflict management, and improved relationships within the university community. However, the early warning system that has been put in place lacks protection mechanisms for whistle-blowers and involved parties, and counts on only minimal involvement from girls.[49]

[47] The three pillars are: (1) promote professional integration and youth entrepreneurship, (2) strengthen civic engagement and social ethics of young people, and (3) improve the conditions for young people to flourish.

[48] Young people have been sensitized and trained in conflict prevention and community dialogue, joined local peace and forest resources management committees, and have been provided with inputs and equipment to initiate IGAs outside classified forests.

[49] Dr. Appiah, A., and Nevry, R. K. (2023), "Contribution to the construction of a responsible political elite through the peaceful management of crises in the university space for sustainable peace in Côte d'Ivoire – Final Evaluation."

Efforts to raise awareness about the dangers of hate speech have been implemented, targeting not only young people but also journalists and influencers. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives has not been assessed, although it is acknowledged that sustained awareness campaigns are essential for fostering meaningful behaviour change. Overall, UNDP's support for already established structures, such as university peace committees and CCM, has enhanced the effectiveness of its initiatives. Nevertheless, the short-term nature of this support has limited the potential for these mechanisms to broaden the scope of their interventions.

Finding 6: Security sector reform. The projects executed have bolstered the operational capacities of the National Office of Civil Protection and the National Police in Côte d'Ivoire. Despite facing some hurdles, these initiatives have enhanced law enforcement training and equipment, promoted the adoption of modernized management systems, and heightened the efficacy of emergency responses. Additionally, they have aided in fostering trust among the population. These successes have positioned UNDP as a crucial strategic partner, paving the way for the development of new projects focused on continuous capacity-building and social cohesion.

Strengthening civil protection and social cohesion

UNDP, through support of the Japanese Government and the Peacebuilding Fund, successfully implemented a project to strengthen the capacity of the National Office of Civil Protection until 2021. This project contributed to strengthening the operational capacities of civil protection through the training and equipping of five of the country's 30 Emergency Relief Centres, now called Civil Protection Centres (CPCs). For example, the evaluation noted that:

- CPCs received a variety of equipment, including fire trucks, ambulances, and protective and rescue equipment, as well as office, recreational, and kitchen equipment.
- 226 firefighters, including 19 women, were trained in fire, first aid, and prevention techniques, with a strengthening of international humanitarian law and gender.
- 26 firefighters have been trained for the maintenance of protective equipment and machines. Three years later, these skills were still visible during the evaluation.

The improvements directly benefited the populations of the intervention areas, with better equipped and trained brigades. Visits to the CPCs of Bagoué and Agboville revealed an increase in the intervention rate of the brigades, testifying to their increased efficiency.

The project also bolstered trust between the population and the firefighters, some of whom were ex-combatants from 2014.[50] The approach aimed to support the construction of community infrastructure, such as playgrounds and water towers on behalf of CPCs and to disseminate this information within the communities. The evaluation of this project noted an improvement in trust, and it highlighted the project's influence on this strengthening, a conclusion that was deemed plausible by the independent team's field visits.[51]

[50] Radio France Internationale (2018), "Côte d'Ivoire: Veterans become firefighters," https://www.rfi.fr/fr/emission/20180421-cote-ivoire-anciens-combattants-deviennent-sapeurs-pompiers.

[51] Coulibaly, M. (2021), "Final evaluation report: Project for the Strengthening of Disaster Prevention Capacities for the Improvement of Civil Protection in Côte d'Ivoire (PRCA-PC)," https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/CIV/RAP%20FINAL%20EF-PRCA%20PC%2021102021.pdf.

Despite the progress made, challenges persist. CPC buildings are in disrepair, teams lack maintenance skills, and ambulances are underutilized due to a shortage of medical staff. These issues were evident in the 2021 assessment. Nonetheless, the positive results achieved and the favourable perception among national partners have encouraged the Government of Japan to replicate the project in 2024 across five additional regions.

Institutionalization of in-service training for police

From 2013 to 2019, UNDP and Japan launched a two-phase programme aimed at strengthening the National Police in Côte d'Ivoire. The first phase focused on training trainers, regional coordinators, and 3,900 facilitators, as well as equipping police services through the construction of offices and training rooms, along with the provision of police and office equipment. The second phase established a framework for continuing education, featuring initiatives such as the development of training guides and plans, the construction of additional training facilities, and the training of coordinators. A new project was being initiated to extend this collaboration, with the goal of consolidating training efforts and enhancing human resources while fostering an environment conducive to ongoing professional development.

The project achieved several milestones. It introduced mandatory in-service training for the police, linking promotions and appointments to the validation of training modules, thus improving the skills of police officers and standardizing training. It also supported the digitization of human resource management, adding training tracking features to the existing software and setting up a digital archiving system. This should allow for more strategic management of staff, despite the lack of substantiation by the evaluation. The project also improved the criminal statistical data collection system, bringing it into line with international standards; and it trained law enforcement in democratic and ethical crowd management, in line with the Electoral Cycle Support Project.

The success of the project established UNDP as a strategic partner of the National Police, leading to a new project with Japan to strengthen community policing. Signed in 2024, this project aims to sustainably strengthen social cohesion.

Finding 7: Strengthening public administration. UNDP's initiatives to modernize public administration have yielded significant results, even in the face of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to mobilize state resources for one of its flagship projects.

The National Support Programme for Institutional Reforms and State Modernization (PRIME) is a collaborative initiative between UNDP and the Ministry of Public Service and Administration Modernization aimed at enhancing governance and the quality of public institutions through institutional reforms and state modernization. Launched in 2017 and set to run until 2025, the programme has faced delays and funding challenges. The late evaluation of the first phase hindered the development of the current phase, while the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the implementation of certain planned activities, leading to a redirection of project resources to support the government's crisis management efforts, including the implementation of telework within public administration. Furthermore, the government did not transfer the anticipated national contribution to the project management unit for undisclosed reasons, resulting in UNDP being unable to administer the project despite its establishment.

In light of these challenges, the PRIME project was executed solely by the national side. According to interviews conducted with national representatives, the project has successfully integrated gender, conflict management, and climate considerations into the curricula of the National School of Administration, ensuring that students receive training in these critical areas. Additionally, the project facilitated the establishment of digital platforms for monitoring the government's roadmap and tracking decisions made

by the Council of Ministers, thereby enhancing decision-making processes and improving governance. As a result, despite UNDP's limited involvement in the project's implementation, its contribution to the project's design remains noteworthy and successful.

2.2 Inclusive growth, resilience and reduced inequalities

Outcome 2: Inclusive growth, resilience and reduced inequalities. By 2025 small and medium-sized enterprises and industries have better access to innovative systems for sustainable and inclusive economic diversification and trade opportunities as well as investments, including in the manufacturing sector.

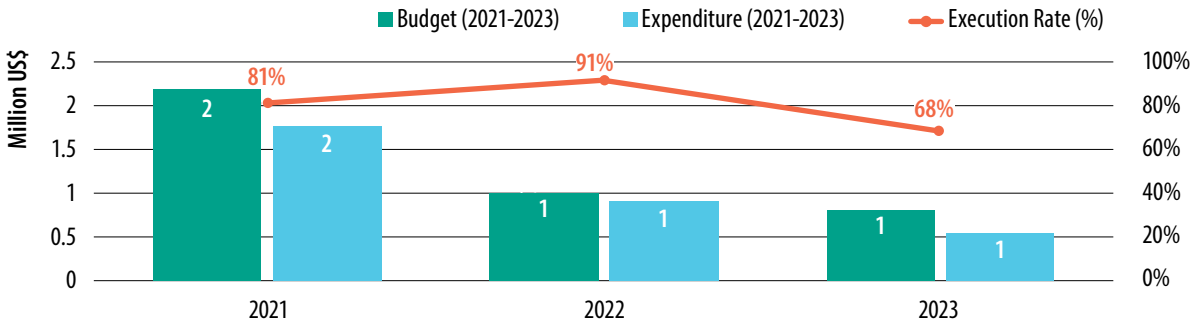
Related products

Output 2.1: National and local development policy institutions strengthened their capacities in planning, gender-responsive budgeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Output 2.2: Public-private dialogue is strengthened and creates an inclusive environment conducive to the development of value chains, the circular economy and small and medium-sized enterprises, the employment of women and youth in the digital economy sectors, and the green and blue economies.

During this cycle, the country office invested $3.2 million out of a budget of $4 million on issues related to inclusive growth, more specifically in efforts to improve business environment, entrepreneurship, and job creation and resilience (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6. Budget and expenditure evolution (Outcome 2), 2021–2023



Source: *Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of February 2024*

Finding 8: Development planning. UNDP played a strategic role in supporting the Ivorian Government in the development of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021–2025 and in the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals, the environment, and gender into this plan. It also contributed to establishing a participatory and inclusive monitoring and evaluation process for the SDGs and the NDP. However, when it came to localizing the SDGs, initiatives to support local planning were still in their infancy, highlighting the need for increased attention and support for these efforts.

BOX 3. UNDP's contribution to poverty reduction and the COVID-19 response

UNDP facilitated strategic decision-making by supporting major studies that helped target priority areas in the context of the pandemic. These included:

- A study on the analysis of extreme poverty and its determinants, carried out in March 2022, providing a reference on extreme poverty in Côte d'Ivoire.
- An assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on household living conditions in Côte d'Ivoire, carried out in 2020.
- An assessment of the economic and social impact of COVID-19 in Africa, carried out in 2021 and leading to the formulation of new resilience strategies.

Since the end of the 2011 post-election crisis, UNDP played a pivotal role in strategic development planning efforts in Côte d'Ivoire, supporting the development of the first two National Development Plans (NDP 2012–2015 and 2016–2020). Under the current programme, UNDP provided substantial technical and financial support to the Directorate General for Planning and the Fight against Poverty in finalizing the National Development Plan (2021–2025) and aligning it with the 10-year document Côte d'Ivoire 2030 (2021–2030).

UNDP organized workshops, conducted baseline studies, and prepared policy briefs to support this process,[52] thus helping to guide the integration of the SDGs and cross-cutting dimensions such as gender, youth, environment, inclusion, and inequality into the NDP. However, the SDG costing approaches proposed by UNDP were not retained for the NDP. The process was instead resumed later with national participation, resulting in the estimation of the costs of the SDGs at 21,714 billion CFA francs (approximately $36 billion) over the period 2021–2030. UNDP also backed the establishment of a national framework for managing the NDP through advocacy and technical assistance for the preparation of steering tools. This led to the adoption of a government decree in September 2022, setting up the institutional framework for steering the NDP.

Through UNDP's technical and financial support, the Ivorian Government developed its second report on the monitoring of SDG indicators and produced its second Voluntary National Review in 2022, thus upholding its international commitments. Additionally, UNDP helped to foster the inclusion and participation of civil society organizations in the monitoring of the SDGs, which were previously managed almost exclusively by the government. This enabled the Civil Society SDG Initiative to participate in a series of interactive dialogues and discussions on development and lessons learned from the implementation of the SDGs.

[52] UNDP provided technical and financial support for the organization of two key workshops aimed at consolidating sectoral and thematic analyses of the pillars of the National Development Plan, and integrating observations on the 2030 10-year strategy into the NPD 2021–2025. In addition, several studies have been carried out, in particular on the poverty profile of regions and their municipalities, the rationalization of private sector support structures, the assessment of the economic and social impact of COVID-19 in Africa, resilience and lessons learned for the formulation of a new approach to emergence strategies, the data collection system from administrative sources, and, finally, a survey conducted by civil society organizations on the 2030 Decade of Action and their capacities to implement the NDP/SDGs.

UNDP's assistance for local planning was comparatively modest. In particular, the organization aided in the creation of guidance documents to facilitate local development planning and in the implementation of the SDGs at a local level. This includes a study on the mechanism for financing the investments of local authorities, supplemented by an intervention strategy, a business plan, and an operational action plan.

In terms of localizing the SDGs, UNDP supported a pilot initiative with the municipality of Grand-Bassam, which facilitated a local development plan integrating the SDGs, including gender and climate change. However, financing this plan remained a challenge. In the Bélier region, the Regional Council drafted a local urban planning and development plan based on the results of studies funded by UNDP as part of efforts to develop a territorial climate plan.[53] The plan was being implemented, although challenges persisted due to the insufficient budget allocated by the state and the limited capacity of the project management centre. The majority of local authorities in Côte d'Ivoire do not have local development plans, hindering the localization of the SDGs and reflecting the challenges that persist in terms of decentralization.

Finding 9: Financing for development. UNDP played a pivotal role in facilitating resource mobilization for the National Development Plan 2021–2025 by bringing together the government and its partners to address key issues. The organization also supported the establishment of an Integrated National Financing Framework, created an investor map, and developed various knowledge products to enhance decision-making. Despite these efforts, however, significant challenges persist, particularly in the need to secure additional funding for the NDP and to optimize the delivery of resources.

Implementation of the NDP requires the mobilization of significant resources, estimated at 59,000 billion CFA francs ($98.45 billion). Of these funds, 74 percent had to be mobilized from the private sector and 26 percent by the public sector. Specifically, 9,336 billion CFA francs ($15.6 billion) had to be mobilized from bilateral and multilateral partners. In 2022 the government had already obtained financing of 3,922.2 billion CFA francs ($6.55 billion) from Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs), leaving a gap of 5,413.4 billion CFA francs ($9.03 billion).

Owing to UNDP's assistance in coordinating preparatory meetings between the concerned ministries and the partner group ahead of the consultative group meeting in June 2022,[54] substantial funding commitments were secured for the NDP. Financing announcements exceeded initial expectations, reaching 15,706 billion CFA francs ($26.2 billion).[55] This support was greatly appreciated by government officials. In May 2024 the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development confirmed that these efforts had made it possible to mobilize 59 percent of the overall investments of the NDP and 68 percent of the commitments of the advisory group. Other key contributions of UNDP to resource mobilization for development include:

- UNDP supported the Directorate-General for Strategy and Aid Coordination in developing decision-making tools,[56] revitalizing TFP working groups, establishing a joint development committee, and organizing a high-level dialogue. [57]

[53] This support has also enabled the region to update its five-year investment plan with a three-year programme for 2025–2027.

[54] The Advisory Group, composed of the Ivorian Government, UNDP, the World Bank, the European Union, the African Development Bank, and other agencies of the United Nations system, has the mission of sharing Côte d'Ivoire's vision, as set out in the National Development Plan 2021–2025, with all partners. The main objective of this group is to mobilize the external public and private financing necessary for the implementation of the NDP, which requires investments of about 59,000 billion CFA francs, of which about 74 percent (or 43,646.4 billion CFA francs) is intended for the private sector.

[55] The initial targets were set at 9,336 billion CFA francs ($15.6 billion).

[56] UNDP has produced methodological notes for a structured government dialogue, a better division of tasks between the Directorate-General for Strategy and Aid Coordination and the Planning Directorate, and for the next phase of the Framework Programme to Support Strategic Development Management. It also assisted in the drafting of a Memoranda of Understanding between Côte d'Ivoire and Canada as well as with Great Britain.

[57] The Joint Development Committee, created under the aegis of the Ministry of Planning and Development, meets quarterly to discuss development issues, follow up on decision points, and propose solutions to identified obstacles.

- The capacity of the ministries' focal points was strengthened by UNDP in the area of development cooperation reporting, which has improved reporting and knowledge of frameworks on international financial partnerships.[58]
- UNDP supported the creation of a computerized aid management platform and strengthened the skills of actors for its use.[59] However, its operationalization remained limited due to the lack of personnel.
- UNDP helped establish an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), in line with the commitments made at the Third United Nations Conference on Financing for Sustainable Development, as well as the Financing for Development Assessment. However, the INFF was not finalized and its financial benefits are yet to materialize.

UNDP played a modest and indirect role in public-private dialogue during this cycle, which mainly consisted of contributing to the production of knowledge and technical and financial tools to facilitate decision-making, the mobilization of funding, and dialogue between the state and the private sector.

Overall, UNDP's contribution to government resource mobilization remained modest, prompting the government to seek an overhaul of UNDP's programmatic offering to strengthen the mobilization of innovative financing. To date, only 53 percent of the necessary investments have been made between 2021 and 2023, highlighting the challenges to close the implementation and financing gap by 2025. Reforms to improve the business environment in Côte d'Ivoire were slow to materialize, a situation deplored by private sector actors. In addition, resource mobilization by the private sector remains a challenge despite international financing opportunities.

Finding 10: Entrepreneurship, employability and poverty reduction. UNDP implemented strategies to bolster micro, small, and medium enterprises, entrepreneurship, and employability in Côte d'Ivoire. Innovative approaches, such as the establishment of entrepreneurial innovation hubs, demonstrated promising results and robust national adoption. Conversely, more conventional strategies to support income generating activities (IGAs) yielded mixed outcomes.

UNDP relied on two broad strategies to enhance micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), foster entrepreneurship, and improve the employability of youth and women. First, the organization contributed to the design and implementation of a government programme aimed at establishing Entrepreneurial Innovation Hubs (EIHs) within vocational training centres and public universities, which are focused on mentoring and supporting young entrepreneurs. Second, UNDP has assisted rural populations and marginalized groups in their income-generating activities. The first strategy, which is more innovative and widely adopted at the national level, is on track to deliver promising results, while the second, a more traditional approach, has produced mixed outcomes.

The project aimed at supporting entrepreneurial innovation among youth, co-created by UNDP through its Acceleration Lab in collaboration with three sectoral ministries (youth, vocational training, and MSME promotion), has an estimated budget of $20 million. However, it has only received $1.86 million of the $4 million expected from the government, alongside $1.7 million from UNDP.[60] Notably, the government's

[58] UNDP also funded the participation of two executives from the Ministry of Planning and Development in the summit on Côte d'Ivoire's new global financial compact, held in Paris in June 2023.

[59] The Computerized Platform for the Management of External Financing has been set up to effectively monitor the financing and interventions of development partners in Côte d'Ivoire.

[60] The project was prototyped by the UNDP Acceleration Lab as part of the 2022–2023 youth employability challenge, and resulted in the formulation of a project document that the government has taken ownership of and which depends on the participation and coordination of three sectoral ministries: Ministry of Technical Education, Vocational Training, and Apprenticeship; Ministry of Youth, Professional Integration, and Civic Service; and Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Promotion of SMEs.

contribution has not been disbursed to UNDP as stipulated in the agreement signed by the parties, which operates under a governance framework based on national execution modalities. While tangible results have yet to materialize due to the ongoing nature of the project, the mechanisms established have already fostered favourable conditions for stimulating youth and women's entrepreneurship, facilitated by collaboration among various sectoral ministries.[61] During the evaluation, several significant achievements were noted:

- A digital platform for youth employment developed by UNDP was launched, integrated into the state system, and has already attracted 20,000 visitors and 2,300 registrations.[62]
- Of these enrolments, 900 young people were trained in life skills, personal development, and leadership and financial education in preparation for their enlistment.
- Three EIHs were established in Abidjan, San Pedro, and Korhogo, two were equipped by UNDP, and one received its first cohort of 500 young people.
- The incubator of the Institut National Polytechnique Félix Houphouët-Boigny (INP-HB) was equipped with 3D printers, laser cutters, digital milling machines, and other rapid prototyping tools since 2021, which has allowed students to create various technological prototypes, including in the context of COVID-19.
- Thanks to the equipment provided to INP-HB in 2021, some 100 to 150 students per year were able to learn new skills and test their project ideas.

UNDP also implemented cross-cutting strategies in its programme to bolster the socio-economic resilience of the most vulnerable communities and to combat inequalities, notably in its social cohesion projects. The programme widely supported community-level IGAs in diverse areas such as agribusiness, handicrafts, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and petty trade. This approach, which consisted of providing material inputs to groups, yielded mixed results, both when combined with social cohesion efforts and when implemented independently. While these IGAs enabled some to initiate or enhance their economic activities, leading to job creation and income increases, challenges related to financing, supervision, marketing, and integration into value chains persisted.

BOX 4. The successful integration into value chains of the Koudougou 2 cooperative

The Koudougou 2 cooperative society, composed of 157 members (including 120 women), serves as a notable example of success. The cooperative achieved significant performance through UNDP's comprehensive financial and technical support, which facilitated the construction of storage infrastructure and the procurement of seeds, fertilizers, and equipment for a total of 12 million CFA francs ($20,000), as well as training on production techniques and associative management. Cultivated land increased from 5 hectares to more than 50 hectares, thanks to access to mechanization, fertilizers, and seeds. Production also saw a substantial increase in 2023, with 150 tonnes of maize compared to 10 tonnes previously, and 50 tonnes of rice compared to 4 to 5 tonnes previously. Additionally, 30 percent of the production was distributed to members for food, improving access to consumer products. Thanks to contractualization, the volume of maize marketed increased, offering more profitable prices to its members. Consequently, both members' incomes and the cooperative's revenues increased, which helped cover the costs of renting tractors and restocking fertilizers and seeds. Due to this exceptional performance, the cooperative won the award for the most dynamic cooperative in the Odiéné region, awarded by the Ministry of Social Welfare.

[61] The Ministry of Technical Education, Vocational Training, and Apprenticeship; Ministry of Youth, Professional Integration, and Civic Service; as well as Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Promotion of SMEs.

[62] Youth Employment Agency, https://www.agenceemploijeunes.ci/site/.

BOX 5. The case of the Koudougou 1 cooperative society: Challenges and consequences of selective support

Koudougou 1 cooperative society, which unites three cooperatives with a total of 642 active members in the maize value chain, faced challenges despite funding of 10 million CFA francs ($16,500). This investment facilitated the construction of a storage warehouse for processed and harvested products, the procurement of weighing equipment and a tricycle, as well as training on store management. However, this support targeted only one link in the maize value chain, leaving other actors, such as producers, processors, and traders, facing unresolved constraints. These challenges include the lack of a maize processing unit, which would have fostered the development of business relationships between the various actors in the chain, the lack of working capital to allow traders to buy products at field edges, and the lack of tractors and funds for the purchase of fertilizers and seeds, thus limiting agricultural production. In addition, producers have expressed the need for additional coaching and technical training. Currently, the cooperative is in a state of lethargy, highlighting the challenges that persist despite initial funding and support efforts.

The examples of the Koudougou cooperative societies underscore that the effectiveness of the same strategy can significantly differ depending on its implementation in varying contexts. These instances also suggest that comprehensive support to all actors in a value chain is more likely to yield success compared to approaches focusing on a single type of actor. In essence, the embrace of innovative approaches and consideration of the entire value chain appear to be critical factors in maximizing the impact of development initiatives. It is unclear, however, whether UNDP has systematically drawn lessons from the implementation of these projects in order to improve the approaches advocated.

2.3. Sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change

Outcome 3: By 2025 people have better access to more sustainably managed, integrated, inclusive, and resilient terrestrial and marine ecosystems and living environments.

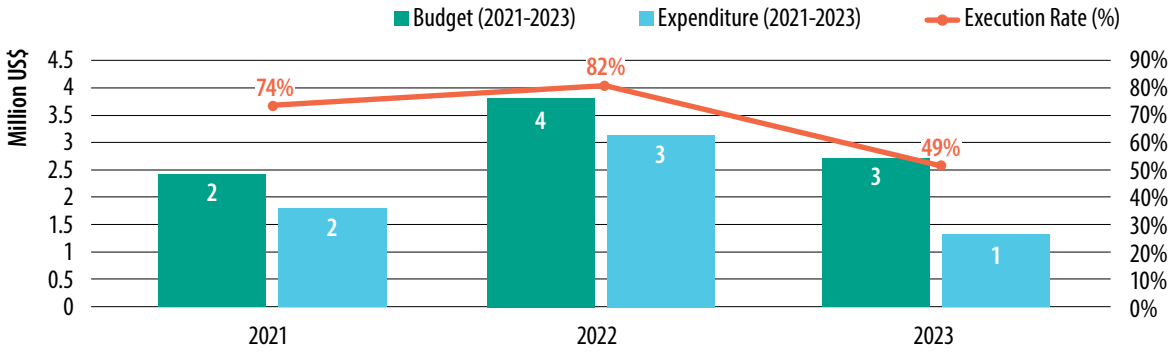
Related products

Output 3.1. Public and private institutions committed to preserving the environment and combating climate change, as well as the affected populations, have the necessary instruments, new methods, and technologies to sustainably manage natural resources in the target regions and to protect vital ecosystems.

Output 3.2. Public institutions, local authorities, and communities in the target regions have the infrastructure and technical and technological capacities to prevent and manage natural disaster risks and improve resilience.

During this cycle the country office invested $6.2 million out of a budget of $8.9 million on climate change mitigation and adaptation, resilience of local people and ecosystems, and forest resource governance (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7. Evolution of the budget and expenditure (Outcome 3), 2021–2023



Source: *Atlas/Quantum data through the IEO Datamart as of February 2024*

Finding 11: Climate change mitigation and adaptation. UNDP has played a leading role in the revision of the Nationally Determined Contribution, developing the country's first National Adaptation Plan as well as its gender and climate change strategy. It subsequently supported the development of project ideas and conceptual notes to translate the identified mitigation and adaptation measures into projects. However, the task of mobilizing resources for the implementation of the NDC and NDP continues to be a significant challenge.

Since 2013 the National Climate Change Programme benefited from UNDP strategic support, enabling the revision of the 2021–2025 Nationally Determined Contribution and the development of the country's first National Adaptation Plan. This contribution has helped increase the government's climate ambition, with a projected reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from 28.25 percent to 30.41 percent by 2030. The cost of the revised NDC is estimated at $22 billion. The NAP 2023–2030, which aimed to strengthen the resilience of people and ecosystems, was accompanied by a communication strategy and an investment plan estimated at $18.5 billion, and included initiatives in various sectors, including agriculture and health.[63]

UNDP has also helped in the development of a national strategy on gender and climate change, with a five-year action plan. The fact that the Ministry of Environment has created a national platform managed by a unit within the National Climate Change Programme for the implementation of the strategy, and that an agreement has been signed between the Ministry of Women and UNDP to support this strategy, are important indicators of the degree of ownership of these efforts by the national side. Capacity-building efforts have also been notable, with more than 100 actors from various backgrounds trained on various climate themes. Interviews indicate that capacity-building has contributed to raising the level of knowledge of stakeholders, which has enabled them to actively participate in the assessment of adaptation and

[63] It aims to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems to the adverse effects of climate change in the sectors of agriculture, water resources, land use, coastal resources, and health, including gender.

mitigation options, and in the analysis and validation of NDC reports and the NAP. However, these meetings indicate a need to continue capacity-building to reach a critical mass of national and local actors, as well as to support sectoral ministries in the internalization of the NAP and NDC.

Despite a portfolio of 300 projects that UNDP has helped to structure, including 53 ready for funding, the challenge of mobilizing resources for implementation and managing such a portfolio remains.[64] The government and the private sector expressed the need for more sustained input from UNDP for the mobilization of innovative climate finance. The importance of this mobilization is underlined by a World Bank report that predicts a 13 percent reduction in real GDP due to climate change, preventing an estimated 1,630,000 Ivorians from escaping poverty by 2050.

Finding 12: Climate governance: UNDP's vital role in establishing legal, institutional, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks in Côte d'Ivoire has been pivotal in the adoption of major reforms for climate governance. However, the effectiveness of these developments hinges on the ability of the new entities to secure adequate resources and to benefit from continuous technical and financial support.

UNDP was one of the major players that supported the Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Ecological Transition in the process of setting up institutional, legal, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. UNDP's technical and financial support has been essential for the adoption of major climate governance reforms in Côte d'Ivoire. Through the completion of preparatory studies, the preparation of draft decrees, and the organization of consultation and capacity-building workshops, two key reforms have been adopted.[65] These led to the creation of the National Commission for the Fight against Climate Change and the Carbon Market Office. In addition, UNDP has contributed to building the capacity of public and private actors in the field of carbon market, providing a specific technical guide to support their activities. These new entities allow for increased coordination and synergy of climate initiatives and facilitate the country's participation in carbon mechanisms.

However, the newly established bodies needed adequate human, financial, and logistical resources, as well as continuous technical and financial support to carry out their tasks. In addition, the country had not yet put in place a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework to achieve its adaptation and mitigation goals. Although UNDP helped draft the Climate Change Act and the decree establishing the National Climate Expert Group, these documents had yet to be adopted by the government. In addition, the country still lacked a national low-carbon strategy, which would serve as a reference framework for all projects, programmes, and initiatives related to the carbon market.

With the help of UNDP, Côte d'Ivoire has made significant progress in setting up monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems for its climate commitments. UNDP funding and technical assistance have enabled studies and capacity-building workshops, resulting in the design and implementation of three national computerized MRV systems.[66] These operate from a management unit in which the sectoral ministries are represented, and they have allowed the country to meet a requirement of the Paris Agreement in order to access carbon finance. The MRV systems, centralized at the level of the Ministry of Environment, illustrate the country's desire to meet international requirements in the fight against climate change.

[64] This process resulted in the development of a national portfolio of 300 projects, including 53 mature (ready to be financed) projects, 134 projects with concept notes, and 128 project ideas. Total potential funding is approximately $16 billion.

[65] Decree on the creation, attribution, organization, and functioning of the National Commission for the Fight against Climate Change by decision of the Council of Ministers of 26 June 2024; and the decree on the creation, attribution, organization, and functioning of the Carbon Market Office, by decision of the Council of Ministers of 1 August 2024.

[66] MRV-adaptation, MRV-Mitigation, MRV-GHG inventory.

These systems encountered challenges in data collection and processing, while the need for technical and financial support to ensure their effectiveness was highlighted by the partners interviewed. In addition, the absence of GHG emission factors specific to Côte d'Ivoire for the calculation of emissions requires the use of global emission factors from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, despite the risk of inaccuracy. This challenge highlights the importance of developing reliable and tailored metrics to track GHG emissions in order to effectively implement the country's NDC and NAP.

Finding 13: Deforestation and desertification. UNDP played a critical role in Côte d'Ivoire's battle against climate change, which included assistance in organizing the 15th United Nations Conference to Combat Desertification (COP15), launching the Legacy Programme, and developing the nation's first-ever regional climate and forest plans. Despite these substantial strides, there remained a persistent need for funding to implement these plans, an improvement of reforestation tools, and ongoing support for community-based forest management initiatives.

UNDP's strategic support was decisive for the Ivorian Government during the organization of COP15 in 2022. Thanks to UNDP financial and technical support, multi-stakeholder consultations were organized,[67] promoting dialogue and scientific reflection.[68] One of the major achievements of this conference was the launch of the Legacy Programme, an initiative to combat deforestation and restore degraded forests and landscapes, and the creation by presidential decree of its Coordination Unit. UNDP played a key role in the implementation of this programme, mobilizing experts and helping to raise funds, with funding pledges amounting to $2.5 billion.

UNDP's assistance towards local planning has been primarily focused in the Cavally and Bélier regions. In the former, it contributed to the formulation of a strategic plan for zero-deforestation agricultural production,[69] while in the latter, it aided in the creation of a strategic plan for forest landscape restoration and a territorial climate plan.[70] Consequently, the Bélier region emerged as the first region in the country to possess such a climate plan. A new collaborative project between UNDP and FAO was starting to assist in executing the plan in Cavally.[71] However, the structuring funding required to implement these plans was still insufficient, particularly in the Bélier region, where no project had been identified. Nonetheless, with UNDP's assistance the region secured a funding agreement from the West African Development Bank to develop the project concept note.

UNDP implemented several ad hoc forest protection initiatives to explore strategies for scaling up their impact. This includes the development of reforestation drone prototypes by the UNDP Acceleration Lab through the INP-HB FABLAB, aimed at enhancing reforestation efforts, particularly in challenging terrains. Additionally, surveillance and training drones have been provided to the Special Surveillance and Intervention Brigade to combat forest crime. However, these initiatives remain in the experimental phase and have not yet conclusively demonstrated their effectiveness in ensuring the adoption of these techniques by the relevant ministries.

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67 Government actors, women and youth, journalists, artists, social media actors, civil society organizations, and the private sector. Meetings were organized with producer and farmer organizations for cocoa production with zero deforestation.

68 On the side-lines of COP15 on desertification, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development – in collaboration with the West African Scientific Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use of the University Félix Houphouët Boigny – organized the National Seminar on Adaptation to Climate Change on the theme "Adaptation to Climate Change: Between scientific reflections, public policies, and private commitment for innovative responses," 16–19 May 2022.

69 Green Climate Fund, United Nations Development Programme, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, and Cavally Region (2021), Strategic plan for zero-deforestation agricultural production in the Cavally region, https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/gcp/cbc4c2f932c7f744e06fc0f614367defe24d87d4ce6452857c8422949827a026.pdf.

70 Five multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms have been set up in these regions and serve as frameworks for reflection for territorial planning, the implementation of development projects, and monitoring and evaluation.

71 The "Scaling Transformative Innovations in Cocoa-Based Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration in Côte d'Ivoire" project.

At the community level, UNDP supported small-scale forest management initiatives, such as a project aimed at involving youth in preventing and managing conflicts related to the exploitation of sacred forests. This project, which drew on the integrated approaches to social cohesion discussed earlier, led to the protection of several sacred forests, the facilitation of inter-community dialogue for forest preservation, and the development of income-generating activities that deterred young people from exploiting these forests.

Finding 14: Disaster risk management and other opportunities: Contrary to what was outlined in the country programme document, UNDP did not implement any tangible initiatives associated with disaster risk reduction. Additionally, even though opportunities were identified in the spheres of renewable energy, waste management, and the blue economy, these areas remained unexplored.

Despite disaster risk reduction being an output area agreed upon in its CPD, UNDP had not yet designed concrete interventions. Some preliminary measures were taken, such as conducting diagnostic studies and developing a capacity-building plan, but these did not culminate in project interventions.

In the energy sector, UNDP had not established any initiatives either. However, opportunities abounded for UNDP to carve out a niche in renewable energy, especially in providing clean and affordable energy solutions for MSMEs and households. It is also worth noting that – due to the negative impacts of the 2021 and 2024 energy crises – the private sector, MSMEs, and entrepreneurs expressed a need for support in transitioning to renewable energy sources.

Waste management posed another significant challenge, with per capita waste generation in Côte d'Ivoire exceeding the sub-Saharan Africa average.[72] While UNDP had not yet intervened in this area, it had the potential to position itself in waste management and recovery. This could be achieved through conducting studies on the circular economy's potential and testing solutions for waste collection, treatment, and recycling.

2.4 Leaving no one behind

Finding 15: Eliminating gender-based violence. Utilizing a flexible and timely approach, UNDP supported a range of targeted initiatives aimed at promoting respect for human rights in specific contexts, such as elections, the Africa Cup of Nations, and the COVID-19 pandemic. While these actions contributed to nation-wide efforts to combat gender-based violence (GBV), their impact remained limited in light of the scale of the challenges.

UNDP invested in interventions addressing gender-based violence in Côte d'Ivoire in each year of the its programme. First, UNDP helped improve the NCHR's early warning and rapid response system, integrating the analysis of human rights violations and facilitating the deployment of election observers trained in the prevention of GBV during presidential, legislative, and local elections.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP supported a national study on the social factors influencing the prevalence of GBV in emergencies. This study, carried out in collaboration with the non-governmental organization RHEEG-CI and the Ministry of Women, Family, and Children, provided essential data on the increase in GBV cases during the lockdown.[73]

[72] World Bank (2018), "What a Waste 2.0: A global snapshot of solid waste management to 2050."

[73] On a sample of 3,188 people in 1,288 households, 54 percent of whom were women, the study showed that the health crisis contributed to the increase in GBV cases due to the lockdown according to 57 percent of those interviewed.

In 2021, UNDP used art to raise awareness and denounce GBV during a photographic exhibition entitled 'Dévoilée' (Revealed) as part of '16 Days of Activism against GBV'. This initiative also strengthened the professional capacities of 14 photographers, including 10 women, allowing them to better document GBV.

In addition, in partnership with the NGO Akwaba Mousso, UNDP set up a mechanism to combat GBV during the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). The NGO set up information, awareness-raising, and psychological support stands in two stadiums in Abidjan, and also deployed a module for denouncing harassment on the AFCON's AkwabaCI mobile application.[74]

The NDP has bolstered the operational capacities of relevant ministries to facilitate a multisectoral response in the fight against GBV, thereby supporting the government's Zero Tolerance vision. This initiative included enhancing the capabilities of the directorates within the penal chain of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights to expedite the processing of GBV cases, as well as supplying motorcycles and protective equipment to the National Police. However, the actual effectiveness of this support remains unverified.

Finally, UNDP aimed to enhance access to services for survivors of gender-based violence by rehabilitating the Bouaké prevention centre and providing necessary equipment. However, the absence of permanent staff, including specialists for the psychosocial care of GBV survivors, has rendered the new facility inactive. This situation can be attributed to insufficient budget allocation by the government, which raises concerns regarding the adequacy of UNDP's support.

The country office was awarded UNDP's Gold Seal for gender, a key element that has contributed to the flexible implementation of these initiatives. This seal was awarded due to the fact that the country office had a gender strategy aligned with the UNDP global gender strategy, that its team of gender focal points was in place, and that the vast majority of its projects aimed to strengthen gender equality (GEN2 and GEN3). Despite this, the field visits highlighted that achieving tangible results in this area remained a huge challenge, and that the simple integration of gender issues into the design of projects was not a sufficient condition for achieving the expected results.

Finding 16: Inclusion. The combined advocacy efforts of UNDP and NCHR had a positive effect on the inclusion of the LGBTI community in governance and public policies in Côte d'Ivoire. This advancement transpired amid a complex sociopolitical landscape, rendering the nation a distinct instance within the region.

In the current cycle, UNDP has strengthened its efforts to promote respect for human rights and the inclusion of marginalized groups, with positive preliminary results that position Côte d'Ivoire as a regional leader in this area. Among the notable initiatives, UNDP partnered with NCHR to initiate the Inclusive Governance Initiative, which sought to encourage the inclusion of the LGBTI community in public policy development. This initiative allowed for the training and awareness-raising of civil servants and parliamentarians on LGBTI issues, including the organization of a presentation and exchange session with 20 MPs on Resolution 275 of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. This dialogue, unthinkable a few years prior, enabled the identification of 'champion deputies' that were prepared to support activities related to the LGBTI community.[75]

[74] Radio France Internationale (2024), The AFCON and gender-based violence [podcast], https://www.rfi.fr/fr/podcasts/mondial-sports/20240121-la-can-et-les-violences-de-genre.

[75] National Human Rights Commission, UNDP (2022), "Guide to the inclusion of gender minorities in policy documents," https://cndh.ci/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CNDH-PROJET-GUIDE-PROTCT-MINORITES-CI-1.pdf.

Beyond its advocacy and dialogue roles, UNDP offered financial and technical assistance to address specific issues, such as identity change advocacy for the LGBTI community. UNDP also backed efforts to combat stigma against individuals living with HIV/AIDS, which included the training of trainers to educate health professionals and seminars for civil society organizations and the NCHR.

The incorporation of the term LGBTI in the NCHR's annual report, which was presented unamended to the President of the Republic and to both parliamentary houses, marked a significant advancement.[76] This demonstrated an official acknowledgement of the rights of LGBTI individuals and an intent to address these issues at a high political level.

Despite these positive developments, the Inclusive Governance Initiative report underscored the significance of persisting with advocacy and training programmes for parliamentarians, given the turnover rate in the National Assembly. Although the administration, ministries, and government officials are now more attuned to the issue of human rights for all, including LGBTI individuals, LGBTI people are not sufficiently shielded from discrimination.[77] Thus, substantial challenges remain to be addressed to ensure full inclusion.[78]

[76] National Human Rights Commission (2023), "2022 Annual Report," https://cndh.ci/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/RAP-ANNUEL-2022-CNDH-10mai2023.pdf.

[77] State Secretariat for Migration (2021), "Situation of LGBT people in Côte d'Ivoire".

[78] UNDP, (2022), "Inclusive Governance Initiative: Background Report," https://www.undp.org/fr/cote-d-ivoire/publications/initiative-de-gouvernance-inclusive-rapport-de-base#:~:text=18%20mars%202022,les%20droits%20de%20l%27Homme.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The UNDP programme was drawing to a close at a time when Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth had rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, the political atmosphere had stabilized, and national reconciliation endeavours had made positive strides – all just a year before the 2025 presidential elections. Despite these improvements, however, social peace remained tenuous, jeopardised by both internal politics and the threat of violent extremism associated with the Sahel crisis. Meanwhile, climate change, unsustainable management of natural resources, and land tenure issues persisted as underlying challenges. The ensuing conclusions and recommendations were derived from the aforementioned findings and formulated in response to the country's evolving context.

3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. A Programme bridging continuity and renewal. UNDP has maintained several strategies from previous programme cycles to promote social cohesion, although these efforts have largely been limited to the local level. The organization has continued to play a pivotal integrative role in aligning development planning and financing with the Sustainable Development Goals, while also establishing itself as a strategic partner in national efforts to combat climate change. Most notably, UNDP has encouraged innovation by successfully experimenting with new approaches.

The 2021–2025 country programme represents a continuation of the peacebuilding efforts initiated in the aftermath of the 2011 conflict, focusing on electoral issues, social cohesion, and the strengthening of the security sector, while also exploring new avenues led primarily by its Acceleration Lab. Additionally, it expanded its programmatic offerings to encompass strategic initiatives in climate change mitigation and adaptation – areas that were not addressed in the previous programme. UNDP reaffirmed its critical role as an integrator of the Sustainable Development Goals, supporting national development planning and facilitating the implementation of various strategies to mobilize both public and private financing for these initiatives.

Several strategies employed during this programme cycle were built upon previously tested approaches, such as supporting peace mechanisms, fostering cross-border cooperation, assisting income-generating activities, establishing early warning systems, and enhancing police capabilities. However, these strategies appeared to be more aligned with the post-2011 peacebuilding context rather than the evolving landscape of 2024. Present challenges – including redundant peace and early warning mechanisms, insufficient funding, and diluted UNDP support for community actors – highlight the need for a reassessment. Furthermore, these strategies focused primarily on local activities with limited sustainability, rather than addressing higher-level strategic, political, and institutional issues. Consequently, there is a pressing need to adjust UNDP's strategy in the realm of social cohesion, a need that has not been adequately captured by the monitoring and evaluation system.

Nevertheless, the management team has recognized the importance of fostering innovation and has valued the contributions of the Acceleration Lab, which has addressed various *frontier challenges* that played a role in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, gender-based violence, and deforestation. Some of these initiatives have resulted in tangible projects, such as the entrepreneurial innovation project that has been adopted by the government.

Conclusion 2. A comparative advantage in supporting elections, social cohesion, and the rule of law. UNDP has reaffirmed its role as an integrator in Côte d'Ivoire by mobilizing the international community's contributions for comprehensive support of the electoral process, which has fostered a climate of peace and inclusiveness during elections. Its initiatives promoting peaceful conflict resolution and reforming the security sector – complementing electoral support – have been pivotal to the programme's impact,

bolstered by the ongoing support from bilateral donors. However, the effectiveness of these interventions has been waning, primarily due to challenges in adapting activities to the specific context, the fragmented and diluted nature of support, and insufficient funding.

While the Ivorian electoral institutions possessed the financial and technical capacity to successfully conduct elections, UNDP effectively served as a credible and impartial intermediary among these institutions, political parties, civil society, and security forces. Its support strategically targeted potential points of friction among these actors, fostering mutual trust, reducing the risk of incidents, and contributing to credible and transparent elections. Additionally, support for local peace mechanisms and security and civil protection forces, alongside electoral assistance, further strengthened trust among these stakeholders and promoted positive intra- and inter-community interactions within a national context of appeasement and reconciliation.

However, the integrated approach that UNDP had been implementing for several years at the local level, particularly in the west and more recently in the north of the country to promote social cohesion, appeared to be reaching its limits. The support provided was too dispersed among numerous actors across an expansive territory, rendering the assistance to each entity insufficient to effect meaningful change and preventing the development of solutions tailored to the specific challenges of each region. National and local funding for peace mechanisms and complementary initiatives, such as income-generating activities supported by UNDP, remained uncertain, and the absence of a sustainability strategy involving local and decentralized authorities jeopardized the gains achieved. Furthermore, most governance efforts were localized and operational in nature, with minimal emphasis on sectoral policies and strategies, indicating that UNDP had not been able to position itself to address these issues at a more strategic level.

These initiatives were made possible through the continued financial support of a few bilateral donors, who recognized the comparative advantage and added value of UNDP in the domains of electoral support, social cohesion, and the rule of law. Consequently, these areas have become the primary focus of UNDP's intervention in Côte d'Ivoire. However, the evolving context and needs of the country necessitate a re-evaluation of the office's offerings in this niche.

Conclusion 3. Added value in development planning and financing at the national level. The primary added value of UNDP lies in its role as an integrator of the Sustainable Development Goals at the highest levels, providing critical support for the formulation and strategic direction of national development policy, as well as assisting in the establishment of mechanisms for resource mobilization. However, its contribution to development planning and the integration of the SDGs at the local level remains a crucial missing link that could facilitate more effective coordination of development efforts by national authorities at the local level.

UNDP continued to play a pivotal strategic role in providing technical advice and financial support to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, making significant contributions to the development of the National Development Plan for 2021–2025. This plan incorporates essential elements of the SDGs, including gender equality, youth employment, and environmental sustainability. However, despite UNDP's efforts to implement resource mobilization tools, securing funding for the NDP remains a significant challenge.

Support for local development planning, as well as the integration and localization of the SDGs, has been a marginal aspect of the UNDP programme, with only a few pilot initiatives targeting three local authorities. While capacity-building for traditional, prefectural, and regional authorities in this area is crucial for optimizing local multi-stakeholder development efforts – particularly the integrated approach to peace, security, and social cohesion championed by UNDP – such support has been limited. Most local authorities lack local development plans, which are essential for the localization of the SDGs, thus underscoring the need for enhanced support in this area.

Conclusion 4. Two approaches to job creation and poverty alleviation with varying results. UNDP implemented two distinct approaches to job creation and poverty alleviation: a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach. The top-down strategy involved the establishment of a national entrepreneurial innovation programme aimed at empowering young people, while the bottom-up approach focused on supporting rural and vulnerable populations. The top-down approach demonstrated greater potential for impact, largely due to its full integration and ownership within government programmes, whereas the bottom-up approach showed more limited outcomes.

The top-down support for promoting entrepreneurship and employability through the establishment of Entrepreneurial Innovation Hubs has played a catalytic role, encouraging the government to mobilize three sectoral ministries and domestic resources to finance their deployment across Ivorian territory. Although only two of the seven EIHs were operational at the time of evaluation, they were already benefiting 500 young people with quality infrastructure, training, and supervision fully supported by the state. The incubator at the Institut National Polytechnique Félix Houphouët-Boigny demonstrated significant potential, although it still requires technical support and structured investments to successfully transition from training and incubating young people to facilitating the startup of their businesses.

UNDP's bottom-up support for economic initiatives, particularly through the development of income-generating activities for women and youth—whether in groups or as individuals—has proven to be a relevant strategy for the socio-economic reintegration of vulnerable groups in the fragile northern regions of the country, as well as for preventing violent extremism. However, this strategy has struggled to achieve consistent results due to inadequate inputs and support, as well as the sporadic nature of assistance, which failed to ensure long-term benefits. In contrast to the well-integrated top-down approach, which was fully embraced by the state, the bottom-up approach lacked integration into local development planning programmes and did not receive sufficient local funding.

Conclusion 4: Organizing support at the national level to promote good climate governance. UNDP has significantly enhanced its strategic partnership with the Ministry of Environment, focusing its interventions primarily at the strategic and institutional levels. This collaboration aims to create an enabling environment for effective climate change adaptation and mitigation, fostering good climate governance across the nation.

UNDP strengthened its position as a strategic partner to the Ministry of Environment by assisting in the planning of climate change adaptation initiatives, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing stakeholder capacity, establishing institutional and regulatory frameworks, and implementing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to improve climate governance. Additionally, UNDP supported the identification of viable projects and the execution of pilot initiatives. However, the success of these objectives depended on the government's ability to mobilize financial resources for project implementation and the effective operation of climate governance bodies. Furthermore, while UNDP initiated efforts to combat deforestation, promote reforestation, and enhance forest monitoring, these initiatives remained largely demonstrative and in need of further support. Lastly, despite its mandate and inherent advantages, UNDP had not yet proposed comprehensive solutions to address the country's challenges related to energy access, waste management, disaster risk reduction, and the development of the blue economy.

Conclusion 5: Proactive promotion of gender, youth, and the rights of vulnerable groups. UNDP has systematically integrated the advocacy for the rights of women, LGBTI communities, and individuals living with disabilities into its programmes, prioritizing youth whenever possible. By adapting to emerging needs and opportunities, UNDP has effectively leveraged its credibility and legitimacy to champion these rights and to promote inclusivity for all vulnerable groups.

UNDP adopted a flexible and proactive approach to supporting initiatives that promote gender equality, inclusion, and human rights in specific contexts, such as elections, the Africa Cup of Nations, and the COVID-19 pandemic. While these efforts contributed to the global fight against gender-based violence, their overall impact was limited given the scale of the issue. Simultaneously, the collaborative advocacy of UNDP and the National Human Rights Commission effectively advanced the integration of the LGBTI community into governance and public policies in Côte d'Ivoire, despite a challenging socio-political landscape. Moreover, UNDP strategically focused on youth within its programmes, aligning its initiatives with government priorities and addressing the needs of the country's predominantly young population. Consequently, despite its limited financial resources, UNDP utilized the organization's credibility and legitimacy to advocate for significant yet sensitive issues in a regional context that is generally unfavourable to such topics. However, the lack of a long-term, structured project specifically aimed at achieving results for these vulnerable groups remains an untapped opportunity for UNDP, primarily due to insufficient funding.

3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: UNDP should concentrate its efforts on a limited number of specific geographical areas, adopting a multisectoral and integrated approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, it is essential to strengthen partnerships with decentralized local authorities and services to empower these communities to plan, finance, implement, monitor, and evaluate their own economic, social, and environmental development programmes.

Having accumulated over eight years of experience in implementing local interventions aimed at strengthening social cohesion, economic resilience, and access to basic socio-economic infrastructure, UNDP should maintain and focus its efforts in the northern and western regions of the country. The implementation of these various strategies should be more integrated, ensuring that the components of the approach work in a truly complementary manner to generate synergies. Additionally, these efforts should be better integrated into local development programmes to foster greater ownership.

To achieve this, UNDP should enhance its support to regional directorates, prefectures, and local authorities to enable them to effectively plan, finance, implement, monitor, and evaluate their own economic, social, and environmental development programmes, ensuring effective coordination of development assistance. These local development programmes, aligned with the National Development Plan, should adopt a systemic approach to reduce poverty, fragility, and inequality, while also preventing violent extremism and improving the coordination and effectiveness of aid at the local level.

Recommendation 2: UNDP should design a programme with gender as its primary objective to pilot approaches that address the underlying causes of gender inequalities, advocate at a high level for adequate funding for inclusion and gender initiatives, and strengthen sectoral capacities to tackle these issues. If a new electoral programme is developed, it should aim to enhance the effective representation of women in elected assemblies.

Despite gender issues being a priority for the UNDP country office, which received the organization's Gold Seal for gender, progress towards transformative results has been slow. Achieving more concrete outcomes requires political will and substantial public funding to implement human rights protection mechanisms, including efforts to combat gender-based violence in both urban and rural settings. Coordinated advocacy by UNDP and its partners could facilitate advancement in this area.

Furthermore, more tangible results necessitate a systematic integration of gender issues at the sectoral level. It is recommended that UNDP advocate for and contribute technically to the development of sectoral and departmental plans and strategies for gender equality with key partners. In the context of potential electoral support for the country, UNDP should intensify its advocacy to ensure the effective implementation of laws mandating quotas for women candidates in elections.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should deepen its partnerships with academic, scientific research, and vocational training communities, including public institutions and incubators, to align training offerings with market needs and demands, thereby enhancing the employability of young people and contributing to the country's economic growth. Support for community income-generating activities (IGAs) should be rationalized and refocused around strategically targeted, complementary, or integrated groupings with existing national programmes, with an emphasis on long-term support that enables integration into value chains.

Given Côte d'Ivoire's predominantly young population, UNDP must implement strategies that ensure the socio-economic integration of youth. Training institutions continue to face challenges related to basic infrastructure (such as equipment and access to digital tools) and a disconnect between theoretical training and the technical and practical skills required by the market. Therefore, UNDP should rely on a bottom-up approach, partnering with relevant national institutions, particularly in the academic, research, and vocational training sectors, to address these needs while ensuring greater sustainability of the support provided.

Support for IGAs targeting vulnerable groups should not operate in isolation but should be linked to existing national or local plans, programmes, or support mechanisms to ensure sustainability. These efforts should be concentrated in priority geographical areas, based on needs assessments to integrate or create viable value chains, and should provide long-term support packages to foster these high-potential value chains.

Recommendation 4: UNDP should increase its involvement in environmental and climate initiatives by capitalizing on climate finance opportunities. It should assist the government in designing, financing, and implementing a portfolio of identified structuring projects to significantly contribute to achieving the objectives outlined in the Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plan, and REDD+ initiatives.

UNDP needs to actively mobilize resources from vertical funds and bilateral donors to support Côte d'Ivoire's green transition, leveraging the increasing availability of funds for this sector in a country experiencing robust economic growth. Opportunities are already being explored regarding mini-energy grids that complement larger energy infrastructures, while the need to establish a regulatory framework for these minigrids offers a new avenue for UNDP's involvement. Moreover, UNDP should continue to support the government in creating a pipeline of green projects aligned with the NDC, NAP, and REDD+, and in establishing mechanisms for the sector to finance and implement such initiatives.

Recommendation 5: UNDP should enhance the innovative nature of its programme and continue advocating for the Ivorian Government to finance the next country programme, emphasizing the importance of a reliable and impartial partner to accelerate the country's development by providing significant added value in areas such as social cohesion, electoral assistance, strategic development planning, and as a key partner in the green transition dedicated to youth.

The evaluation concluded that UNDP has been a vital partner of the Government and Côte d'Ivoire in its peacebuilding process for over a decade. It also highlights that UNDP can continue to play a crucial role in its traditional areas of work, such as social cohesion, electoral support, natural resource management, and

national planning. However, it is in areas where Côte d'Ivoire has less capacity that UNDP must position itself, underscoring the importance of placing a stronger emphasis on the innovative nature of its programme offerings, whether to enhance youth employability or facilitate the green transition – key strategic areas for the country. A renewed programme offering, aligned with the country's emerging needs such as accelerating the execution of development financing, could effectively bolster UNDP's efforts to mobilize resources from the government.

3.3 Key recommendations and management response

RECOMMENDATION 1:

UNDP should concentrate its efforts on a limited number of specific geographical areas, adopting a multisectoral and integrated approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, it is essential to strengthen partnerships with decentralized local authorities and services to empower these communities to plan, finance, implement, monitor, and evaluate their own economic, social, and environmental development programmes.

Management response: Accepted

The avenues indicated in the recommendation align with the new directions of the office. Indeed, the office has decided to reposition its main governance actions towards local development by focusing on a few regions before scaling up. The aim is to concentrate the office's efforts on supporting and strengthening the capacities of decentralized authorities and local elected officials in the management of local development, sustainable management of natural resources, private sector development, and the localization of the SDGs. The approach will focus on the north and west, promoting the localization of the SDGs.

Key action(s)	Timelines	Responsible unit(s)	Aftercare*	
			Feedback	Status
Support for the formulation of the regional development plan for Gbeke through the development of a costed roadmap for the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region, focusing on the priority SDGs around human security.	31/12/2025	Governance	The Gbêke region has been a beneficiary of a pilot project funded by the United Nations Trust Fund on Human Security, which ends in 2025. At the end of this project the regional council aims to use the lessons learned and focus on the priority SDGs related to human security to develop its three-year local development plan. Evidence: SDG roadmap	

Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Timelines	Responsible unit(s)	Aftercare	
			Feedback	Status
Support for the development of five regional climate plans aimed at facilitating the ecological transition on the ground, aligned with the Nationally Determined Contributions and the National Development Plan.	31/12/2025	Inclusive Sustainable Development Unit	UNDP intends to support five regions – Haut-Sassandra, La Nawa, La Mé, Le Gontougo, and La Bagoué – in the development of regional climate development plans by these communities. Evidence: Signing of the project document	

RECOMMENDATION 2:

UNDP should design a programme with gender as its primary objective to pilot approaches that address the underlying causes of gender inequalities, advocate at a high level for adequate funding for inclusion and gender initiatives, and strengthen sectoral capacities to tackle these issues. If a new electoral programme is developed, it should aim to enhance the effective representation of women in elected assemblies.

Management response: Accepted

However, it should be nuanced for two reasons. On one hand, UNDP has adopted a portfolio approach that includes integrated programming, connecting all of the organization's strategic objectives, including gender. On the other hand, UN Women is the dedicated United Nations agency for implementing programmes with gender as the main objective. Nevertheless, UNDP intends to implement this recommendation by using gender as a primary filter and accelerator for its Governance and Inclusive Sustainable Development programmes. The primary goal is to position gender at the heart of climate policies.

Key action(s)	Timelines	Responsible unit(s)	Aftercare	
			Feedback	Status
Gender mainstreaming at the heart of Nationally Determined Contributions.	31/12/2025	Governance	Women are the most affected by the consequences of climate change. They are also the drivers of change and adaptation. They must therefore be put at the centre of climate policies. Evidence: CDN 2026–2030	

RECOMMENDATION 3:

UNDP should deepen its partnerships with academic, scientific research, and vocational training communities, including public institutions and incubators, to align training offerings with market needs and demands, thereby enhancing the employability of young people and contributing to the country's economic growth. Support for community income-generating activities should be rationalized and refocused around strategically targeted, complementary, or integrated groupings with existing national programmes, with an emphasis on long-term support that enables integration into value chains.

Management response: Accepted

The proposed axes in this recommendation are fully aligned with UNDP's strategic priorities in Côte d'Ivoire. The office has decided to focus its attention on the innovation and business incubation ecosystem to contribute to wealth and job creation in key sectors in Côte d'Ivoire. The goal is to strengthen synergies among vocational training centres, scientific research, incubators, and the private sector to tailor training offerings to the needs of the labour market and to promote youth employability. This incubation ecosystem will guide the streamlining of income-generating activities and their integration into public policies.

Key action(s)	Timelines	Responsible unit(s)	Aftercare	
			Feedback	Status
Develop a programme to set up an incubation ecosystem based on innovation and bringing together professional training, scientific research, incubators, and the private sector to prepare the economy of the future.	31/12/2025	Accelerator Lab	New technologies, and in particular AI, are the key drivers of the structural transformation of the economy towards a sustainable and prosperous future. Evidence: Project Document	

RECOMMENDATION 4:

UNDP should increase its involvement in environmental and climate initiatives by capitalizing on climate finance opportunities. It should assist the government in designing, financing, and implementing a portfolio of identified structuring projects to significantly contribute to achieving the objectives outlined in the Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plan, and REDD+ initiatives.

Management response: Accepted

This direction fully aligns with the current strategy of the office. Since November 2024, UNDP has been actively supporting the Ministry of Environment in structuring and implementing climate initiatives. We will intensify our efforts in mobilizing funding, particularly through conducting feasibility studies and utilizing innovative financial instruments such as green and blue bonds, carbon markets, and climate funds such as the Green Fund and the Adaptation Fund. In this effort, we will also strengthen our partnerships with the private sector and other key stakeholders, such as FIRCA, to optimize the resources needed to achieve national climate objectives.

Key action(s)	Timelines	Responsible unit(s)	Aftercare	
			Feedback	Status
Support for the development of a National Portfolio of Bankable Projects to address the NDC funding gap.	31/12/2025	Inclusive Sustainable Development	A national portfolio of bankable projects aligned with the NDCs allows for the prioritization of interventions according to the NDC Results Framework and the mobilization of related resources. Evidence: National Project Portfolio	
Development of the capacity of the national counterpart on innovative financial instruments such as green bonds and the carbon market.	31/12/2025	Inclusive Sustainable Development	Capacity-building in climate finance is the necessary prerequisite for mobilizing resources through innovative climate finance instruments. Evidence: Training Report	

RECOMMENDATION 5:

UNDP should enhance the innovative nature of its programme and continue advocating for the Ivorian Government to finance the next country programme, emphasizing the importance of a reliable and impartial partner to accelerate the country's development by providing significant added value in areas such as social cohesion, electoral assistance, strategic development planning, and as a key partner in the green transition dedicated to youth.

Management response: This recommendation is accepted and is at the heart of the current challenges facing the office.

UNDP intends to enhance its advocacy for the funding of the country programme by the government by demonstrating the added value for the government in using UNDP's services. Initially, the country office wishes to focus its advocacy on accelerating the implementation of projects funded by development financial institutions. UNDP could provide valuable support by accelerating delivery, reducing timelines and transaction costs, ensuring alignment with national and international strategic frameworks, and providing quality monitoring, evaluation, and reporting based on results with reliable and documented data.

Key action(s)	Timelines	Responsible unit(s)	Aftercare	
			Feedback	Status
Proposal of support services for the national implementation of projects for an acceleration of the achievement of results and reporting monitoring in accordance with international standards.	31/12/2025	Policy and Strategy Unit	The absorption rate of loans from international financial institutions is very disappointing at less than 20 percent. UNDP has the ideal capacity to provide support. This is new in Côte d'Ivoire, which has recently joined the middle-income countries. UNDP must therefore demonstrate its added value beforehand through pilot initiatives. Evidence: Proposals to accelerate national implementation	Start of discussions with the head office and the Ministry of Finance.

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database (ERC).

ANNEXES

Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the Evaluation Resource Centre website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/24530

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Project list

Annex 3. Evaluation matrix

Annex 4. Documents consulted

Annex 5. Performance rating

Annex 6. Country at a glance

Annex 7. Geographic distributions of governance related projects overlayed with poverty indicators

Annex 8. Country office at a glance

Annex 9. Status of country programme outcome & output indicators

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