Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION
ARMENIA

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INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: Armenia

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IEO TEAM

Directorate: Isabelle Mercier (Director) and Richard Jones (Deputy Director)

ICPE Section Chief: Ana Rosa Monteiro Soares

Evaluation Manager: Saltanat Rasulova

Regional Evaluation Advisor: Saltanat Rasulova

External evaluation team: Elinor Bajraktari (Team Lead), Nana Gibradze, Vahe Mambreyan

Internal peer reviewers: Richard Jones

External reviewer: Michael Bamberger

Research / Gender analyst: Claudia Villanueva

Publication and outreach: Flora Jimenez and Iben Hjorth

Administrative support: Sonam Choetsho and Walid Totakhil

The IEO could not have conducted this evaluation without the support of the following:

STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

UNDP Armenia staff: Natia Natsvlishvili (Resident Representative), Konstantin Sokulskiy (Deputy Resident Representative), Armine Hovhannisyan, Results-Based Management Programme Analyst, CO Evaluations Manager and other colleagues.

Other stakeholders and partners: The Government of Armenia, representatives of public institutions, the United Nations agencies, civil society, bilateral and multilateral development partners and beneficiaries.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CEC	Central Electoral Commission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHDE	Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise
CO	Country Office
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EU	European Union
HRAP	Human Rights Action Plan
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
INL	US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IT	Information Technology
IWP	Integrated Work Plan
LAG	Local Action Group
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and others
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE/ODIHR	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe / Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
PV	Photovoltaic
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
ROAR	Results-Oriented Analysis Report
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Evaluation Brief: Armenia

Country Profile

Between 2021 and 2025, Armenia experienced a complex development landscape shaped by the continued impact of the 2020 escalation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and subsequent regional tensions. These events contributed to security concerns, population movements and increased humanitarian needs. Armenia also faced external economic shocks and inflationary pressures, which had differentiated impacts across urban and rural areas. The Government of Armenia pursued institutional reforms and strengthened its cooperation with the European Union under the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, while continuing efforts to modernize governance, improve transparency and foster inclusive development. Progress on gender equality and public administration reform continued, though structural barriers remained in certain sectors.

UNDP in Armenia

The 2021–2025 UNDP Country Programme was aligned with seven of eight United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) outcomes and structured across four focus areas: 1) sustainable and inclusive economic development; 2) environmental sustainability and resilience; 3) democratic governance and gender equality; and 4) evidence-based policymaking and SDG alignment. UNDP mobilized over US$99 million, exceeding its planned five-year budget of $75.83 million by 131 percent, and achieved a 101 percent delivery rate against annual targets, demonstrating strong operational execution despite transition-related disruptions and a declining donor base. It engaged in both upstream policy support and downstream service delivery, targeting vulnerable populations, advancing gender equality and strengthening institutional capacity at national and local levels.

Findings and Conclusions

UNDP Armenia advanced inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development through a portfolio of interventions focused on employment, skills development and entrepreneurship, particularly among vulnerable and conflict-affected communities. Notable contributions included reform of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and a 2 percent reduction in the rate of those not in employment, education or training (NEET). Through community-driven development, UNDP helped establish Local Action Groups that enabled participatory planning, financed 110 local initiatives and empowered nearly 93,000 individuals through economic activities and infrastructure rehabilitation.

UNDP supported Armenia's climate commitments by establishing a national Monitoring, Reporting and Verification system, aligning national policy with EU standards and reducing emissions through large-scale energy efficiency retrofits and renewable energy interventions. Adaptation efforts included the development of national and sectoral plans, promotion of climate-smart agriculture, improved water management and deployment of automatic weather stations. UNDP also implemented sustainable forestry practices across 166,000 hectares, restored degraded lands and introduced carbon accounting standards. Biodiversity and resource management were reinforced through community-led reforestation, fire prevention and agroforestry initiatives. In disaster risk reduction, UNDP played a leading role in shaping national strategies, upgrading early warning systems, conducting seismic risk assessments and embedding disaster risk management (DRM) principles into local governance.

UNDP played a pivotal role in enhancing the transparency and inclusivity of elections, strengthening the institutional and digital capacities of the National Assembly and facilitating technical support and civic engagement in constitutional reform. Police reform efforts led to a notable rise in public trust,

while judiciary reform and access to justice initiatives introduced merit-based selection systems, e-court tools and legal aid outreach. Although anti-corruption efforts showed innovation, their scope remained limited. UNDP was instrumental in developing the 2023–2025 Human Rights Action Plan and expanding the Human Rights Defender's regional presence. In mine action, UNDP modernized national systems, scaled up clearance capacity twentyfold and integrated risk education into national curricula, achieving zero explosive ordnance casualties for the first time in three decades.

UNDP pioneered the use of behavioural science in public policy through randomized controlled trials that improved tax compliance, health outcomes and civic participation. It supported Armenia's digital transformation by developing platforms and facilitating the country's first Digital Readiness Assessment. In fiscal policy, UNDP strengthened tax administration, introduced excise taxes aligned with health objectives and implemented Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) budget tagging and integrated financing frameworks. It contributed to the development and implementation of Armenia's Employment Strategy (2025–2031), piloted results-based active labour market programmes and supported social protection reform using international disability classification standards. These initiatives collectively enabled Armenia to link planning, budgeting and policy with the SDGs, despite the absence of national indicators, strengthening institutional capacities for long-term sustainable development.

The evaluation concluded that UNDP Armenia has evolved into a more capable, responsive and innovative development partner over the 2021–2025 cycle. It successfully aligned its programming with national priorities and delivered integrated, multisectoral interventions across governance, crisis response, environmental sustainability and gender equality. The organization demonstrated agility in responding to emerging crises while maintaining progress in long-term reforms, particularly by applying the humanitarian-development nexus and embedding innovation across its portfolio. However, some constraints, such as resource limitations, coordination gaps among stakeholders and limited institutional uptake of new methodologies, impacted the scale and sustainability of successful initiatives. Compared with the 2016–2019 cycle, UNDP progressed significantly, transitioning from fragmented interventions to integrated programming, but sustainability of results is still challenged by reliance on donor funding and insufficient domestic financing.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Focusing on High-Impact Initiatives: Strengthen key initiatives with customized partnerships and funding proposals.

Recommendation 2. Strengthening Social Inclusion: Partner with local groups to address vulnerabilities in line with national policies.

Recommendation 3. Addressing Gender-Based Structural Barriers: Support women's leadership and engage male allies for gender equity.

Recommendation 4. Enhancing Learning and Results Tracking: Improve staff training, data collection and results frameworks.

Recommendation 5. Strengthening Contribution to Development Effectiveness: Collaborate with governments on development effectiveness and databases.

Recommendation 6. Establishing Sustainable Financing and Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Innovation: Advocate for funding, build civil servant capacity and embed innovation.

CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to critically assess UNDP's contributions to national development priorities and results. ICPEs are carried out in line with the provisions of the UNDP evaluation policy.[1] Within the ICPE framework, the evaluation team assesses UNDP's contributions and the effectiveness of the UNDP Country Office's (CO) strategy towards achieving the development results articulated in its Country Programme Document (CPD).

The objectives of this ICPE are to:

- Support the development of the next UNDP Country Programme in Armenia by identifying best practices, results and key lessons learned from the current cycle;
- Strengthen UNDP accountability to national and international stakeholders and to the UNDP Executive Board; and
- Contribute to knowledge generation, organizational learning and decision-making within UNDP.

This is the second country programme[2] evaluation conducted by UNDP in Armenia. The ICPE covers UNDP's performance in the country and includes interventions funded from all sources between 2021 and November 2024, including UNDP's own resources, donor funds and government contributions. It also covers non-project activities such as coordination and advocacy, which are important for supporting the political and social agenda of the country. For further details, see Annex 1 (Terms of Reference).

1.2 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation used the outcomes and outputs defined in the country programme for the 2021–2025 period as a framework for analysing achievements. It examined each of the planned outcomes, their associated outputs and their alignment with the programme's strategic objectives.

The ICPE also examined UNDP's capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and respond to national development needs and priorities. More specifically, the evaluation sought to answer four key evaluation questions (see Box 1).

BOX 1. Key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent has the UNDP country programme strategically addressed key national development priorities and the needs of its main stakeholders, including those at risk of being left behind?
2. To what extent was UNDP able to adapt its positioning and programmatic response to shifts in context and other changes in the operating environment, leveraging its comparative strengths?
3. To what extent were UNDP approaches and interventions successful in achieving the intended objectives of the country programme and contributing to broader, longer-term national development goals?
4. To what extent did internal and external factors influence UNDP's ability to deliver its programme efficiently and maximize contributions?

Source: Evaluation Terms of Reference

[1] See Independent Evaluation Office. 'UNDP Evaluation Policy.' Available at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml.

[2] The past Assessment of Development Results (ADR) and Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) were conducted by the IEO in 2010 (https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/3992) and 2019 (https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/16851).

The evaluation methodology adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards.[3] In line with the UNDP gender mainstreaming strategy, the evaluation examined the degree of gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the formulation and implementation of the country programme, as well as the results achieved. Gender marker data were used to analyse the expected contribution to gender equality in the programme's design and delivery. Gender-related results were assessed using UNDP's Gender Results Effectiveness Scale.[4] Country Office performance was scored for each indicator in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2) using a four-point scale; results are presented in Annex 6.

The following methods were used to respond to the evaluation questions:

- **Document review:** Analysis of the full portfolio of initiatives and relevant documents, including decentralized evaluations, Results-Oriented Analysis Reports (ROARs) and project-level progress and final reports (see Annex 3);
- **Pre-mission questionnaire with the CO:** Collected data on programme performance and results, as well as on major cross-cutting themes such as gender, partnerships and design and implementation issues;
- **Key informant interviews and focus group discussions:** A total of 64 meetings were conducted across stakeholder categories, involving approximately 80 individuals (45 percent women and 55 percent men) (see Annex 9); and
- **Field visits:** Twenty-three site visits were conducted across six regions in Armenia (Armavir, Gegharkunik, Lori, Syunik, Tavush and Vayots Dzor), providing direct observational data to complement stakeholder interviews.

The ICPE report underwent a rigorous quality assurance process, including internal and external peer review, before being shared with the CO and the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) for factual correction. Following revisions, the updated report was presented to the government and other national partners for their input. A final stakeholder debriefing was held via videoconference, bringing together key programme stakeholders.

1.3 Evaluation limitations

The evaluation faced limitations due to programme data challenges, particularly in compiling a clear project list. This was further complicated by UNDP's transition from Atlas to Quantum mid-programme, which changed project numbering from the former Atlas Project number (Award ID) to the new Quantum Project number (Output ID). Resolving these discrepancies required time and coordination between the evaluation team and the CO.

Moreover, while activity and output data were largely available, demonstrating UNDP's concrete impact was difficult due to the strategic nature of interventions and their implementation through a variety of small-scale projects. The complex development context, featuring numerous national and international stakeholders, made it challenging to isolate UNDP's specific contributions to observed outcomes. Although the CO has made progress in strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, opportunities remain to further enhance outcome-level data analysis. Doing so would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of UNDP's contributions in a complex development landscape (see Section 2.3).

[3] See the United Nations Evaluation Group website: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914.

[4] The IEO's Gender Results Effectiveness Scale classifies gender results into five categories: gender negative (results have a negative outcome that aggravated or reinforced gender inequalities and limiting norms); gender blind (results gave no attention to gender and failed to acknowledge the different needs of men, women, girls and boys and other marginalized populations); gender targeted (results focused on the number of women, men or marginalized populations that were targeted); gender responsive (results addressed the differential needs of men, women and marginalized populations and focused on the equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, etc., but did not address root causes of inequalities); and gender transformative (results contributed to changes in norms, cultural values, power structures and the roots of gender inequalities and discriminations).

1.4 Country context

The 2021–2025 UNDP country programme in Armenia was implemented during a period of renewed tensions related to the escalation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, as well as subsequent incidents along the Armenia–Azerbaijan border in 2021 and 2022. These developments contributed to a volatile security environment and resulted in refugees leaving their homes as a result of hostilities.[5] This severe security situation had an extraordinary impact not only on the country, but also on UNDP's programming. The security challenges affected government priorities, leading to a prioritization of the crisis' consequences, such as enhancing the resilience of individuals, communities and institutions, straining public resources, diverting focus from long-term development planning and heightening the need for emergency assistance over longer-term development interventions.

During this period, Armenia's political landscape was characterized by episodes of instability, including demands for leadership changes and snap parliamentary elections. While the elections reaffirmed the ruling party's mandate, they also brought diverse political perspectives, influencing the pace and direction of reforms.[6,7]

Armenia's aspiration to strengthen its ties with the European Union through the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) highlighted its strategic approach to fostering modernization and progress. The partnership reflects Armenia's efforts to balance relationships with traditional allies and new partners, navigating a complex geopolitical environment while advancing essential reforms and development opportunities.[8]

Armenia's economic trajectory in this period was marked by episodes of growth interrupted by significant shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic and post-conflict recovery needs. While the economy rebounded from pandemic-induced contraction, growth remained uneven, with inflation and poverty continuing to affect vulnerable populations. Following 8.3 percent economic growth in 2023, projections for 2024 ranged between 4.5 percent and 6 percent.[9]

Rural areas and displaced communities experienced higher rates of poverty, reduced access to services and fewer economic opportunities.[10] Unemployment, particularly among women and youth, remained high[11] and presented a key structural challenge, underscoring the need for workforce development and economic diversification.[12] The country's reliance on remittances, primarily from the Armenian diaspora, provided a vital economic cushion but also exposed the economy to external shocks, such as global economic downturns.[13] Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the economy, faced significant obstacles including limited access to finance, infrastructure gaps and regulatory constraints.[14]

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5 UNDP Armenia Refugee Crisis Response_26 Print FINAL

6 https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/ARM

7 https://www.dw.com/en/armenia-in-political-crisis-after-nagorno-karabakh-defeat/a-66887521

8 https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/ARM

9 UNDP Armenia, Strategy Note, 2024.

10 The RA SC, Publications, Food Security and Poverty 2021–2023: https://armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=2671

11 The unemployment rate in 2022 was 15.4 percent. Among young people aged 15–29, the unemployment rate was 24.4 percent. For women, the unemployment rate was 19.6 percent. Source – publication listed below.

12 Simonyan, A. & Petrivska, E. (2023). Contribution of Partner Countries to EU Youth Wiki: Chapter III: Armenia – Employment and Entrepreneurship. European Union–Council of Europe Youth Partnership. Retrieved from: https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/246625197/Armenia+Chapter+III.pdf/f9fdc077-838b-25e4-f750-b0bcadde1524?t=1705332375257

13 The RA SC, Publications, Socio-economic situation in the RA, January–December 2021, 2022, 2023.

14 https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/ARM

Armenia made progress in governance reforms, particularly following the 2018 Velvet Revolution, which initiated a wave of democratization and anti-corruption measures.[15] Notable advances were seen in promoting free and fair elections, enhancing transparency and prioritizing reforms aimed at strengthening public institutions. However, further efforts are needed to fully realize the potential of these reforms and address gaps in institutional capacities and public administration effectiveness.[16]

The governance landscape continues to evolve, with opportunities to build consensus and reduce political polarization. Sustained efforts are required to ensure long-term policy implementation and institutional stability. Enhancing judicial independence, accountability and anti-corruption measures remains a priority, reflecting its importance for public confidence in governance.[17]

At the local level, advancing decentralization is key to empowering local governance structures with the autonomy and resources required to implement development programmes effectively, particularly in remote and vulnerable areas.[18] Strengthening institutional capacities at both national and local levels is essential for driving sustainable development, fostering public trust and ensuring responsive governance that meets the needs of all citizens.

Progress in women's political representation and economic empowerment in Armenia was significant yet uneven. Notable advancements included the introduction of a 30 percent gender quota in local elections, which increased women's representation in local councils to 30 percent. However, persistent disparities remained in other areas.[19,20] Women continued to be underrepresented in senior public administration roles, holding only 33 percent of ministerial positions and no governorships[21]. This was primarily due to structural barriers such as patriarchal norms, ingrained stereotypes and weak institutional mechanisms.[22]

Access to quality jobs for women, particularly in rural areas, remained limited, with a 39.2 percent gender pay gap, low labour force participation (48.2 percent) and an employment-to-population ratio of 41.5 percent. Systemic challenges, including insufficient childcare, a lack of family-friendly policies and limited access to credit, persisted. Compounding these issues was high youth unemployment and disengagement from education or training. Rates of those not in employment, education or training (NEET) reflected mismatches between labour market demands and educational outputs. Structural barriers, such as the lack of gender-responsive governance at the local level, further hindered progress despite government efforts, including participatory gender planning in municipalities.[23]

Armenia remained vulnerable to climate-related hazards, including droughts, extreme weather events and biodiversity degradation.[24,25] Agriculture was heavily dependent on water resources, which were increasingly under strain due to inefficient irrigation systems and climate variability. While renewable energy use increased, the pace of transition to a low-carbon economy remained slow, constrained by limited investment and technological barriers.[26]

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15 https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/armenias-velvet-revolution/

16 https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=29607&lang=en

17 https://ge.boell.org/en/2022/08/08/crisis-judicial-system-and-problems-democratic-development-armenia

18 https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/-/local-self-government-in-armenia-positive-developments-but-still-room-for-progress-regarding-the-powers-the-consultation-and-the-financial-resources-o

19 ROAR 2023. UNDP Gender Equality Portfolio Overview, 2024.

20 https://www.undp.org/armenia/projects/women-politics-public-administration-civil-society

21 https://www.gov.am/en/structure/

22 UNDP Armenia Women in Politics, Public Administration, Civil Society: https://www.undp.org/armenia/projects/women-politics-public-administration-civil-society

23 UNDP Armenia, Gender Equality Portfolio Overview, September 2024.

24 https://armenia.un.org/en/126055-government-approves-armenia%E2%80%99s-updated-2021-2030-nationally-determined-contributions-under

25 https://unece.org/climate-change/news/unece-kicks-second-environmental-performance-review-armenia

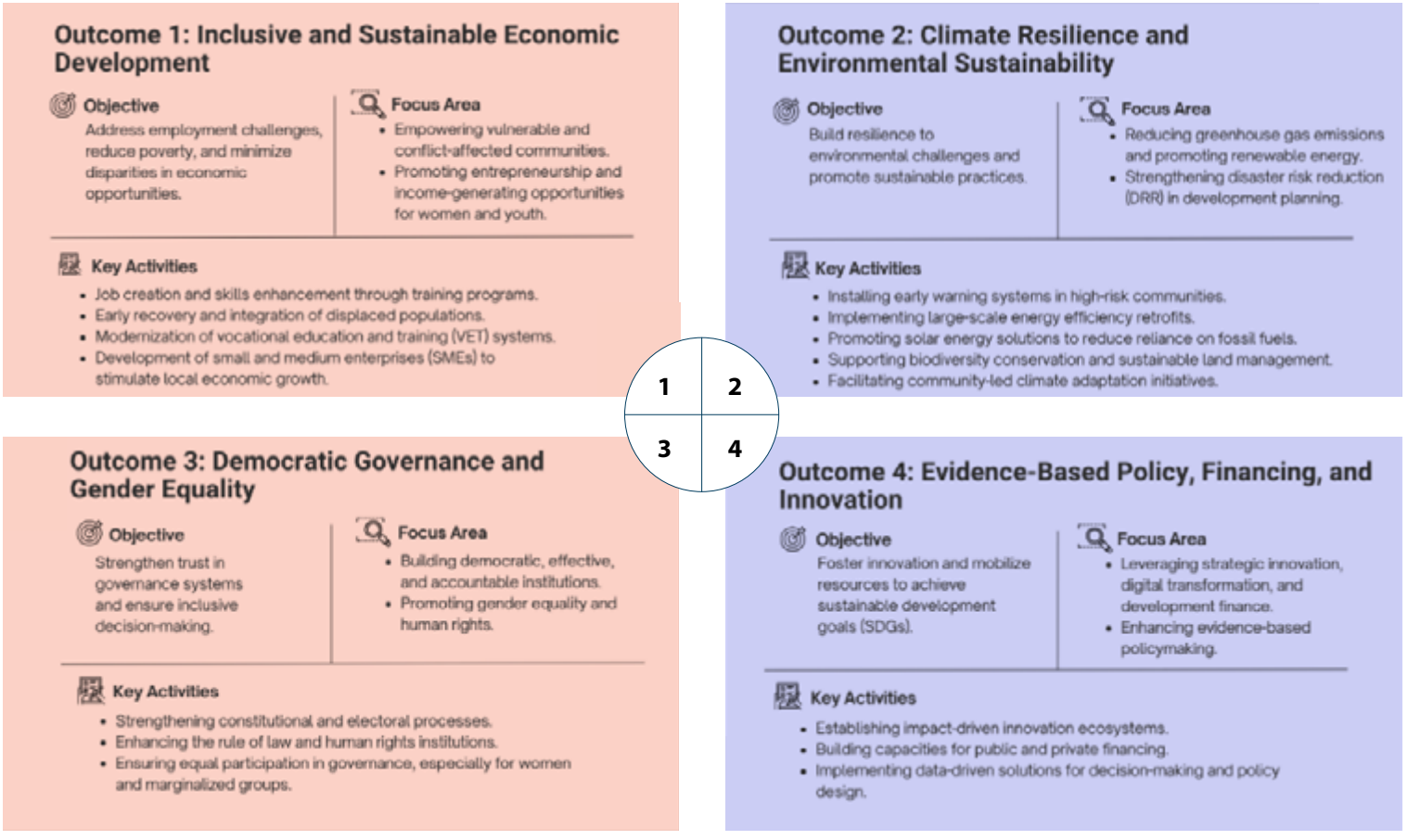
26 https://armenia.un.org/en/126055-government-approves-armenia%E2%80%99s-updated-2021-2030-nationally-determined-contributions-under

The need for improved water and land management practices, coupled with pressures on natural resources from displaced populations, created significant challenges.[27] Renewable energy represented a key opportunity given Armenia's potential for solar and hydropower development. However, transitioning to a low-carbon economy required substantial investment in infrastructure and policy frameworks. Disaster risk reduction was also a pressing concern, as the country experiences frequent floods, earthquakes and landslides, necessitating stronger resilience-building measures.[28]

1.5 UNDP in Armenia and country programme under review

UNDP Armenia's Country Programme 2021–2025 was embedded in the Armenia–UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for the same period. UNDP contributed to seven out of eight UNSDCF outcomes. These outcomes were integrated into four key strategic areas (outcomes): (1) sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development; (2) environmental sustainability and resilience; (3) democratic governance and gender equality; and (4) evidence-based, human-centric policymaking and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-aligned policies supported by diversified financing, innovation and partnerships. Figure 1 summarizes these strategic areas and the respective activities under UNDP's work in Armenia.

FIGURE 1. UNDP Armenia Country Programme: Key Focus Areas and Activities



[27] https://www.undp.org/armenia/publications/national-adaptation-plan-republic-armenia
[28] https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/disaster-risk-management-national-strategy-and-action-plan-republic-armenia

In its CPD, UNDP estimated a total budget of $75.83 million, with $2.13 million (3 percent) expected from core resources (Table 1).[29] Between 2021 and 2024, the programme benefited from a budget allocation of approximately $99.66 million, exceeding its five-year target by 131 percent. Significant budget increases occurred between 2022 and 2024, peaking at $28.20 million in 2023 (Figure 2). These increases were driven by urgent humanitarian and socio-economic needs, as UNDP Armenia scaled up crisis response, resilience-building and renewable energy efforts in alignment with national recovery priorities.[30]

TABLE 1. Planned Budget and Core Resources, Actual Budget and percentage Mobilized Resources (US$)

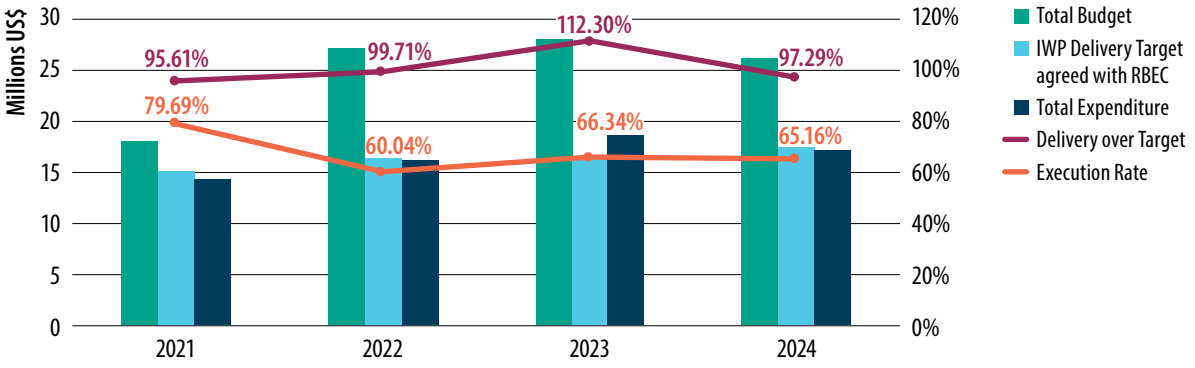
Planned Budget (2021–2025)	Core Resources (2021–2025)	Actual Budget (2021–2024)	Percentage Mobilized Resources (2021–2024)
$75,829,299	$2,132,000	$99,659,207	131%

Data Source for Planned Budget and Core Resources: Armenia CPD (2021–2025), Annex: Results and Resources Framework for Armenia.
Data Source for Actual Budget and percentage Mobilized Resources: PowerBi/Atlas and Quantum as of December 2024

During the evaluation period, UNDP Armenia executed 66.74 percent of the total budget (Figure 2 and Table 2). Notably, the CO achieved an overall execution rate of 101.32 percent for the 2021–2024 period, based on annual delivery targets set in the Integrated Work Plan (IWP) and agreed with RBEC, surpassing the 2023 target by approximately 12 percent.[31]

The expenditure trend was influenced by several contextual and operational challenges, including the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which constrained financial resources and disrupted project implementation. Further complications arose from the transition to new systems, such as Quantum, and from a shrinking donor base, which affected overall resource availability.[32]

FIGURE 2. Total Budget, Delivery, Expenditure, Execution, and Delivery over Target (2021–2024)



Source: PowerBi/Atlas and Quantum as of December 2024. IWP delivery targets agreed with RBEC provided by the Armenia CO

[29] Of the $75.83 million planned budget for the CPD, only 3 percent ($2.13 million) was expected to come from regular resources. Data source: Armenia Country Programme Document (2021–2025), Annex: Results and resources framework for Armenia.

[30] UNDP ROARs 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and IWP 2022, 2023, 2024.

[31] RBEC annual programme spending targets for 2021–2024 were provided by UNDP Armenia CO. These targets do not differentiate between projects initiated during the current or previous CPD cycles. Any project with expenditures in a given year is counted toward that year's delivery target, regardless of when the project was initiated.

[32] IWPs 2021–2023, UNDP Strategy Notes 2021–2023

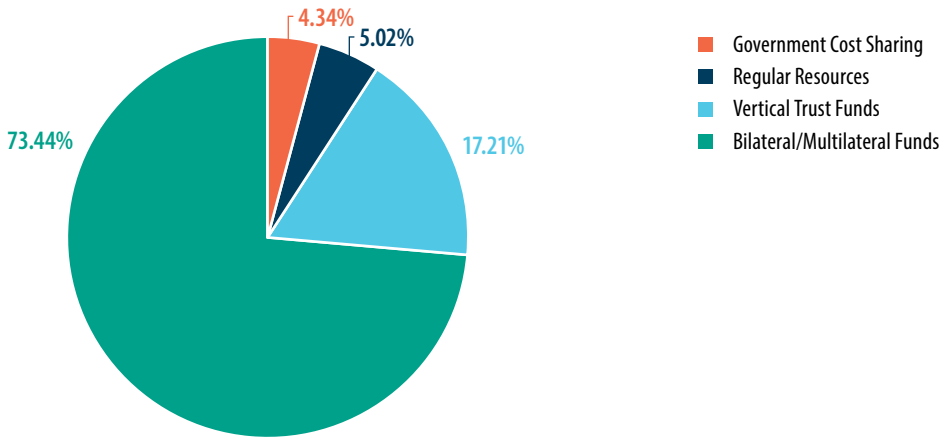
TABLE 2. Total Budget, Delivery Target, Expenditure, Execution and Delivery over Target

	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Total Budget	$18,101,474	$27,128,686	$28,196,367	$26,232,679	$99,659,207
IWP Delivery Target agreed with RBEC	$15,086,703	$16,334,648	$16,654,828	$17,568,315	$65,644,494
Total Expenditure	$14,424,643	$16,287,627	$18,704,123	$17,092,688	$66,509,081
Execution Rate (Total Expenditure/Total Budget)	79.69%	60.04%	66.34%	65.16%	66.74%
Delivery over Target (Total Expenditure/IWP Delivery Target agreed with RBEC)	95.61%	99.71%	112.30%	97.29%	101.32%

Source: PowerBi/Atlas and Quantum as of December 2024. RBEC IWP delivery targets agreed with RBEC provided by the Armenia CO

The majority of funds came from bilateral and multilateral sources (73.44 percent), followed by vertical funds (17.21 percent), regular resources (5.02 percent) and government cost-sharing (4.34 percent), as illustrated in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3. Expenditure by Fund Category, 2021–2024



Source: PowerBi/Atlas and Quantum as of December 2024

CHAPTER 2
FINDINGS

This chapter presents an assessment of UNDP's strategic and programmatic offer in Armenia, the results achieved under each area of work, including the integration and contribution to cross-cutting issues and factors influencing UNDP's performance and overall contributions during this cycle. The assessment was based on analysis of the correlation between the results of projects and non-project activities, their contribution to the expected outputs under each outcome and, consequently, to the overall objectives of the CPD.

2.1 UNDP strategic and programmatic offer

Finding 1. Alignment with national priorities and needs. UNDP continued to serve as a trusted strategic partner in Armenia, demonstrating strong alignment with national priorities and effectiveness in translating international frameworks into actionable policies. However, resource constraints limited engagement in critical areas such as crisis response and refugee integration, anti-corruption and constitutional reform.

The evaluation found that UNDP's strategic positioning in Armenia had both depth and breadth. UNDP's status as a trusted partner was evident through its extensive engagement with government institutions and consistent alignment with key national strategic documents, particularly the 'Programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia 2021–2026' and Armenia's Transformation Strategy 2050. The programme design reflected a sound understanding of the country's development context, balancing immediate crisis response with longer-term resilience and sustainable growth. This integrated approach enabled UNDP to address urgent needs while also advancing systemic improvements, including green solutions, employment opportunities and institutional capacity-building, ultimately contributing to human-centred development and poverty reduction.

Government stakeholders particularly valued UNDP's role in strengthening Armenia's compliance with international commitments through strategically targeted technical assistance. Partners highlighted key contributions such as support for the preparation of Armenia's updated Nationally Determined Contribution and the formulation of a Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy to achieve carbon neutrality by mid-century. UNDP's support for disaster risk reduction led to the development of Armenia's National Strategy on Disaster Risk Management, aligning with the Sendai Framework and enhancing national resilience. In the areas of human rights and gender equality, initiatives such as Women in Politics and institutional support to the Human Rights Defender's Office advanced Armenia's implementation of commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), particularly in promoting women's political participation and protecting marginalized groups. These multi-layered efforts reflected UNDP's capacity to translate international frameworks into actionable national policies and institutional mechanisms.

Stakeholder feedback also pointed to untapped potential in some thematic areas where UNDP's established expertise and credibility could have been applied more effectively. Despite overall resource constraints, the CO achieved notable results in crisis response, mobilizing resources and delivering support to refugees and host communities. With additional resources, UNDP could have expanded its reach to benefit more individuals. Within the governance portfolios, stakeholders saw room for UNDP to have exercised its facilitator role more actively to advance constitutional reforms and anti-corruption agendas. UNDP consistently promoted and streamlined green energy solutions and played a key role in Armenia's green transition at the policy level (such as by spearheading the Green Platform in collaboration with the World Bank and the EU, facilitating high-level policy dialogue chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister), through implementation and via legislative reform. UNDP also made substantial contributions to improving energy efficiency.

Finding 2. Adaptability and crisis response. UNDP demonstrated significant adaptability in responding to multiple crises, particularly in supporting displaced populations. It rapidly repurposed resources and aligned interventions with the humanitarian–development nexus approach. This adaptability also underpinned UNDP's work on climate change and environmental resilience.

A crucial and unexpected theme during the programme cycle was the response to the crisis that emerged when more than 115,000[33] people fled to Armenia following the escalation in September 2023.[34] In response to the urgent needs of these refugees, UNDP combined direct emergency support with interventions aimed at building resilience, enhancing social cohesion and supporting upstream policy work.[35] It swiftly mobilized resources to meet immediate needs and facilitate long-term integration, including access to housing, health care and psychosocial services.

UNDP effectively operationalized the humanitarian–development nexus approach in its crisis response, focusing on social cohesion, shelter, infrastructure, green energy and water management. The Resilience for All project exemplified this integration, combining emergency assistance with sustainable economic development to benefit both displaced populations and host communities. In Gegharkunik and Syunik, UNDP implemented comprehensive projects that merged emergency support with local economic development initiatives, ensuring equitable access to employment and social services.

UNDP's adaptive capacity was further evident in its response to environmental and climate-related challenges. It supported the conduct of rapid post-disaster needs assessments, contributing to national resilience efforts. UNDP also supported the development of early warning systems in disaster-prone regions, led community-based biodiversity conservation initiatives, introduced large-scale energy efficiency measures and promoted renewable energy models. In partnership with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, UNDP helped strengthen search-and-rescue capacities.

Finding 3. Prioritization of marginalized and vulnerable groups. UNDP prioritized social inclusion through a comprehensive approach that included crisis support, gender equality initiatives, human rights integration and youth empowerment. Digital transformation of public services represented a key modernization effort, but accessibility barriers for older people and remote communities were found to have required greater attention.

As observed throughout this report, UNDP's programme placed significant emphasis on social inclusion, operating across multiple dimensions of vulnerability and disadvantage. Stakeholders generally agreed that UNDP effectively combined crisis support with development programming for displaced populations (explored further in this report). As described in Finding 4, the programme also made substantive contributions to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, deploying several targeted governance and economic empowerment initiatives under a dedicated portfolio.

UNDP integrated human rights principles into governance processes through strategic policy support and institutional capacity-building. These efforts resulted in important legal reforms, including the modernization of the Human Rights Action Plan and the establishment of an anti-discrimination framework. UNDP also addressed youth vulnerability through a combined focus on economic empowerment and civic engagement, particularly in skills development and employability initiatives. Partners considered this multi-dimensional approach to appropriately address interconnected challenges while promoting social

[33] UNDP Armenia Refugee Crisis Response_26 Print FINAL

[34] Ibid.

[35] https://armenia.un.org/en/132322-nagorno-karabakh-crisis-response

inclusion outcomes. The evaluation found that UNDP's social inclusion efforts could be further strengthened by aligning more closely with the government's social development policies, placing greater emphasis on human rights and engagement with communities facing unique vulnerabilities and challenges.

Finding 4. Gender equality and women's rights. UNDP demonstrated institutional commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, as reflected in the establishment of a dedicated Gender Equality Portfolio, leadership roles in key coordination bodies and progress towards gender parity among staff. The organization contributed to key legislative reforms and improvements in women's representation in politics and public administration. Strategic capacity-building and research supported both national institutions and local communities, while downstream efforts, including electoral leadership schools and economic empowerment initiatives, benefited thousands of women. The achievement of more transformative results in gender equality requires a fundamental cultural transformation and long-term behavioural change.

Building on the foundations of the previous programme cycle, UNDP Armenia continued to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in line with the country's national priorities and international commitments.

Organizational and Operational Aspects

The CO demonstrated strong institutional leadership in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through strategic partnerships and coordination mechanisms. UNDP co-chaired the Normative Gender Theme Group with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the World Bank and also co-chaired the Interagency Gender Theme Group with other UN agencies.[36] Through these leadership roles and participation in the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Coordination Group, UNDP contributed to a unified gender equality agenda aligned with national priorities and the SDGs.[37]

UNDP Armenia institutionalized its commitment to gender equality through key organizational structures and practices. The creation of a dedicated Gender Equality Portfolio, supported by Gender Focal Teams across operational units, ensured the systematic integration of gender perspectives across the programme cycle.[38] This commitment was reflected in the achievement of overall staff gender parity (approximately 50 percent female).[39] During the programme cycle, women held 52 percent of fixed-term appointments, highlighting the CO's focus on gender-balanced hiring.[40]

The CO strengthened its institutional approach through the Gender Equality Seal certification, which offered a structured methodology for enhancing gender-responsive policies and tracking mechanisms. It also integrated gender-responsive procurement practices under the Business Operations Strategy, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming.[41] The CO could further benefit from formalizing its strategic vision for gender through a dedicated strategy or plan. To this end, the CO invested considerable effort in the development of such a strategy, which the government adopted in April 2025 through a formal decree.[42]

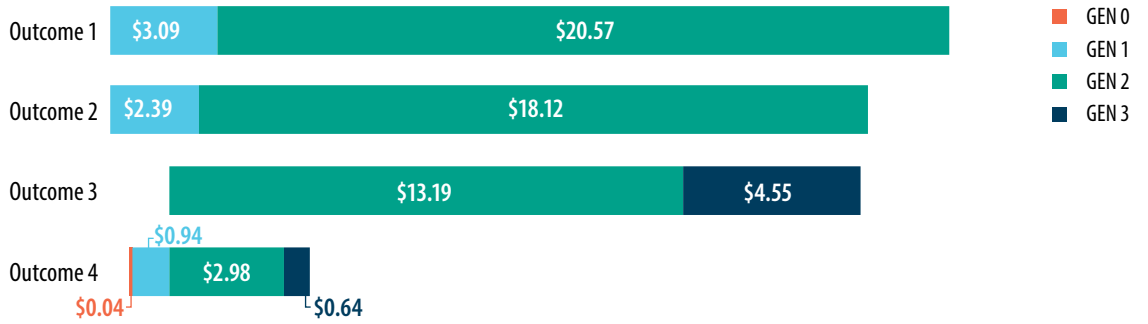
[36] Armenia Integrated Work Plan (IWP) 2022; ROAR 2021.
[37] ICPE Armenia Pre-Mission Questionnaire.
[38] Armenia UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard.
[39] UNDP Armenia Gender Executive Snapshot: https://atlas-snapshot.undp.org/index.cfm?report=hr_gender_distribution&unit=ARM
[40] Women with Fixed Term Positions (FTA) = 11/21 = 52.38 percent.
[41] UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard Annual Progress Assessment Report and Action Plan United Nations Country Team in Armenia 2023.
[42] Republic of Armenia Government Decree No. 482-L "On Approving the Strategy and Action Plan for the Implementation of Gender Policy in the Republic of Armenia for 2025–2028".

UNDP Armenia applied gender-oriented approaches to resource management and performance tracking. It implemented a dedicated resource mobilization plan that elevated gender equality as a primary objective (GEN3) across projects,[43] although resource constraints continued to limit the expansion of specialized gender programming.[44] Additional funding would further support tailored, gender-responsive interventions suited to Armenia's unique socio-economic and conflict-related context. The CO also used gender-sensitive monitoring frameworks with dedicated markers to track financial allocations and expenditures.[45] Analysis of these markers for the 2021–2024 programme cycle showed that most expenditures were directed toward outputs with significant or primary focus on gender equality,[46] demonstrating substantial financial commitment in relative terms, despite resource limitations.

FIGURE 4. Expenditure by Gender Marker, 2021–2024 (Millions US$)

Source: UNDP PowerBI/Atlas as of December 2024

FIGURE 5. Expenditure by Gender Marker and Outcome, 2021–2024 (Millions US$)



Source: UNDP PowerBI/Atlas as of December 2024

[43] Armenia Gender Seal Action Plan.

[44] Ibid.

[45] During the current CPD cycle, UNDP Armenia implemented a total of 69 projects encompassing 96 outputs. A substantial portion—71 outputs, or 73.96 percent—were classified as GEN2, reflecting a significant contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). Additionally, 15 outputs (15.63 percent) were categorized as GEN1, indicating some contribution to GEWE. Nine outputs (9.38 percent) fell under GEN3, representing the highest level of contribution to GEWE, while one output (1.04 percent) was classified as GEN0, with no expected contribution to GEWE.

[46] Approximately 78.55 percent of programme expenditures ($22.54 million) corresponded to project outputs that had gender equality as a significant objective (GEN2); 15.43 percent ($4.43 million) to outputs that had gender equality as the main objective (GEN3); 6.02 percent ($1.73 million) to outputs expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way (GEN1); and 0.13 percent ($0.04 million) to outputs that were not expected to contribute to gender equality.

Programmatic Aspects

UNDP's advocacy and technical expertise contributed to several significant policy changes that improved women's political representation. First, UNDP supported amendments to the Electoral Code, the Law on Local Self-Governance and the Law on Political Parties, which introduced a 30 percent local gender quota for communities with more than 4,000 residents.[47] The application of this quota during the 2021–2022 elections increased women's representation in local councils from 7 percent to 30 percent in 71 communities[48] and raised parliamentary representation from 24 percent to 38 percent.[49]

Second, UNDP contributed to the drafting of the Public Administration Reform Strategy, which set public-sector priorities through 2030 and integrated gender considerations. Third, UNDP piloted the Gender Equality Seal Award methodology in public institutions such as the Human Rights Defender's Office,[50] Civil Service Office, Ministry of Justice and Yerevan Municipality.

UNDP also supported the National Assembly in developing its first Gender Equality Plan, helped establish a civic space for gender equality dialogue in Parliament and supported the National Police in increasing women's enrolment. Additionally, UNDP institutionalized participatory gender planning and budgeting in 30 enlarged municipalities, strengthening local governance frameworks to systematically integrate gender.[51]

UNDP strengthened national institutional capacities for gender equality through systematic interventions in policy development, research and training. In partnership with the Civil Service Office, UNDP developed a comprehensive gender-sensitive competency framework for civil servants, which according to stakeholders led to the inclusion of gender provisions and competencies on gender equality in public administration standards.[52] UNDP's Gender Portfolio also generated evidence through research and knowledge products, including the Unified Gender Glossary, studies on women's advancement in executive positions and national surveys on gender attitudes in public administration.

This body of work led to 141 gender-sensitive policy recommendations proposed across 16 draft laws, state strategies and programmes, with a 22 percent adoption rate by state institutions, thus demonstrating UNDP's influence on policy development.[53]

A training event was organized in November 2024 for the Human Rights Defender's Office on the Gender Equality Seal process, covering strategic directions and gender considerations in public institutions' activities and policies.

UNDP's community-level interventions produced tangible results in women's economic and social empowerment.[54] These efforts reached more than 3,800 women and 232 youth leaders through targeted capacity development initiatives, including electoral leadership schools and community-driven projects. UNDP also supported 135 youth-led initiatives focused on local democratization and development, COVID-19 and crisis response, social innovation and policymaking across ten regions and Yerevan.[55,56]

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47 UNDP Gender Equality Portfolio Overview, 2024.

48 https://www.mtad.am/pages/armenian-communities?slug=armenian-communities

49 Out of 313 elected women to local councils in 2021, 91 were candidates supported by UNDP.

50 Armenia's Human Rights Defender's Office is the first national human rights institution to pass the evaluation for the introduction of the gender seal.

51 UNDP Gender Equality Portfolio Overview, 2024.

52 Gender Equality in Public Administration in Armenia, Final Report.

53 ROARs and pre-mission questionnaire.

54 Primarily through the "Women in Politics" projects 1 and 2.

55 Women and Youth for Innovative Local Development, Final Evaluation Report, Bajraktari, Elinor, November 2023; and Women in Local Development: Women in Politics, Final Evaluation Report, Krylova, Olena; Gasparyan, Marianna, December 2022.

56 The "I AM the Community" model is a youth leadership initiative in Armenia, aimed at empowering young people to actively participate in and contribute to their local communities by fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility through networking, advocacy and community-driven projects.

Economic empowerment efforts generated measurable outcomes: 70 female farmers and 60 female entrepreneurs reported increased incomes, while 639 women acquired new skills.[57]

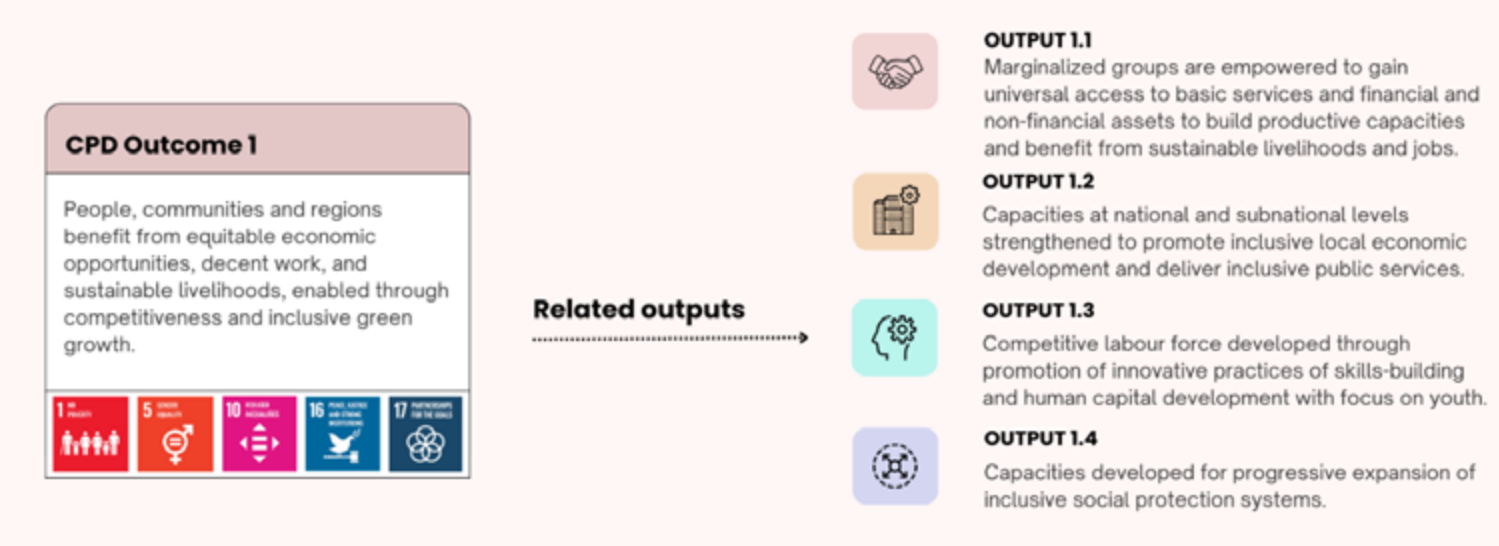
Despite successful policy reforms and capacity-building initiatives, deep-rooted structural barriers continued to impede women's full participation in political, economic and social spheres. The persistence of traditional gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices undermined the effectiveness of institutional changes, particularly in rural areas and conservative communities where cultural resistance to women's leadership remained strong. These barriers were especially evident in the limited progression of women into senior decision-making positions, despite improved representation at entry and mid-levels.

This is an inherently long-term process that required sustained, systemic and coordinated efforts from all stakeholders. UNDP implemented targeted initiatives that positively impacted thousands of women, laying a strong foundation for addressing gender inequality. The evaluation found significant potential to expand the scale and scope of these efforts to overcome the challenges inherent in whole-of-society transformation.

2.2 UNDP contributions to programme objectives

2.2.1 Outcome 1: Sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development

FIGURE 6. CPD Outcome 1 and Corresponding Outputs: Sustainable and Inclusive Socioeconomic Development



[57] UNDP Gender Equality Portfolio Overview, 2024.

FIGURE 7. Source of Expenditure by Donor in Outcome 1

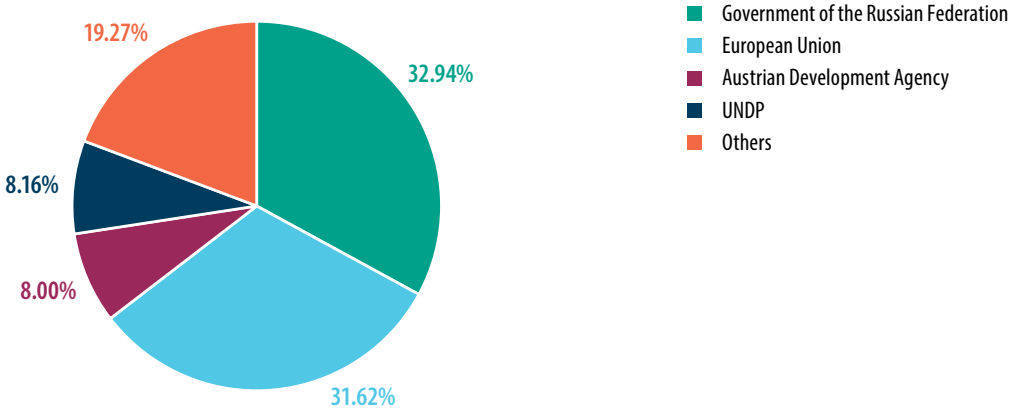
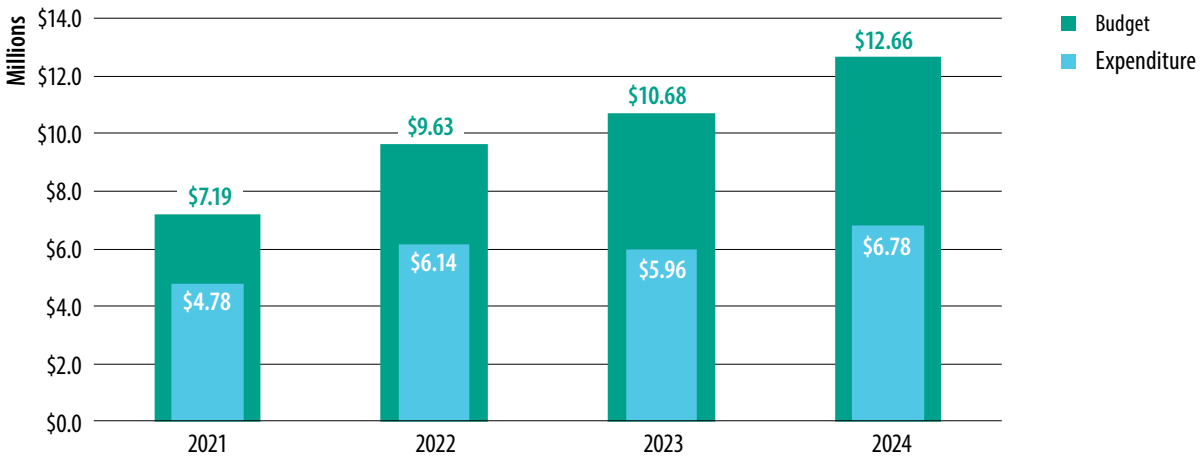


FIGURE 8. Evolution of Budget and Expenditure in Outcome 1



Source: PowerBi/Atlas and Quantum as of December 2024

During the current programme cycle, Outcome 1 focused on inclusive and sustainable economic development, addressing employment challenges, poverty reduction and disparities in economic opportunities. Outcome 1 aimed to empower vulnerable and conflict-affected communities through job creation, skills development and entrepreneurship support.

UNDP implemented 16 projects with 23 project outputs under this outcome, with a total budget of $40.16 million (against an estimate of $20.45 million at the start of the cycle) and expenditure of $23.66 million (see Figure 8 for a year-by-year breakdown). The delivery rate reached 58.90 percent over the first four years of the programme. Nine projects (32.05 percent of expenditure) were implemented directly by UNDP, while eight (67.95 percent of expenditure) were nationally implemented.

Approximately 86.93 percent of programme expenditure under Outcome 1 ($20.57 million) was allocated to outputs with gender equality as a significant objective (GEN2), while 13.07 percent ($3.09 million) supported outputs expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way (GEN1).[58] The Government of Russia was the main funding source for this outcome ($7.79 million, 32.94 percent of expenditure), followed by the European Union (31.62 percent), UNDP (8.16 percent) and the Austrian Development Agency (8.00 percent).

Finding 5. Education and employment. UNDP supported Armenia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system through infrastructure improvements, digital modernization and targeted employment initiatives. UNDP's comprehensive approach included establishing innovative educational spaces, developing online learning platforms and tailoring training programmes to local needs. However, despite these achievements, systemic labour market reform remained challenging due to resource limitations and competing government priorities.

UNDP contributed to reforming the VET system through efforts focused on improving the quality of education and the employability of students. These interventions helped strengthen graduates' knowledge, skills and qualifications, ultimately increasing their employability.[59]

According to CO data,[60] between 2021 and 2023, UNDP supported job transitions for approximately 3,000 youth, contributing to a 2 percent reduction in the NEET youth rate.[61] UNDP initiatives supported 1,843 economic actors (50 percent women), resulting in the creation of 687 jobs, 66 percent of which were filled by women.

UNDP's interventions helped enhance the attractiveness and status of VET initiatives. According to partners, the improvement of training conditions, both soft aspects (training content, curricula, etc.) and hard aspects (equipment and furnishings), resulted in a positive shift in public perceptions of VET. For example, UNDP supported the development of a data-driven methodology to match VET enrolment with labour market demand; trained more than 620 VET teachers and 100 career counsellors; and provided 152 youth with web development and digital design skills.[62]

UNDP collaborated with all VET institutions to provide soft support and capital investments to 12 colleges with the greatest needs. These efforts included developing training programmes in partnership with private companies to ensure alignment between the skills taught and labour market demands. UNDP also supported the creation of a functional online learning platform to deliver essential vocational knowledge and skills to VET students, teachers and adult learners, with a particular focus on solar power system installation and maintenance. A three-hour pilot course attracted interest from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, which, at the time of the evaluation, was considering scaling up the initiative to improve digital education and youth employability.[63] UNDP further tailored training content to the needs of the Lori and Tavush regions, enabling youth and adults to acquire skills relevant to the local economy.[64]

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58 Under Outcome 1, 21 project outputs (91.30 percent) were classified as GEN2, and 2 project outputs (8.70 percent) as GEN1.

59 For example, the "Future Skills and Jobs for Youth" project exemplified UNDP's contribution in this area, supporting 13 innovative, future-driven startups and renovating four regional VET colleges to host modern educational spaces. The project provided rapid reskilling opportunities to over 50 participants and launched a digital platform for promoting freelance employment that reached more than 10,000 users.

60 UNDP Armenia, Results Oriented Annual Report 2003.

61 Transition refers to the transition from school to work for youth through non-formal education (entrepreneurship, digital and 21st-century soft skills); deployment of Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) instruments (on-the-job training and internships); and support to youth-led MSEs.

62 This was achieved through the "Unleashing Employment" project.

63 UNDP, "Unleashing Employment and Income Generating Opportunities for Youth in the Regions of Armenia" Project, Annual Report, Yerevan 2023.

64 This included training community coaches, managers and assistants of local activity groups (LAGs), as well as providing capacity-building for residents on various aspects of local economic and social development and planning.

Stakeholders reported that UNDP's support helped improve the public image of VET institutions and increase demand for their services, resulting in substantial growth in applicant and student numbers. However, resource limitations restricted the scale of interventions, and the government's focus on crisis response delayed the development of comprehensive labour market strategies (the Strategic Employment Programme for 2025–2031 had only recently been approved).

The evaluation also found that improved coordination among actors in this field was needed to maximize impacts and ensure the long-term sustainability of outcomes. The Strategic Employment Programme for 2025–2031, developed with UNDP support, is expected to address key structural challenges in the employment sector, including the need for systemic labour market reforms. This strategy aims to generate outcomes such as human capital development, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, balanced regional development, poverty reduction, improved quality of life and a reduction in mismatches between labour supply and demand. UNDP's continued engagement and support in implementing the strategy presents an opportunity to further advance transformative change in Armenia's employment and labour market.

Finding 6. Private sector development. UNDP contributed to private sector development through targeted support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with particular emphasis on women-led businesses and rural enterprises. Its integrated approach, which combined green technology adoption, entrepreneurship development and skills training, strengthened business competitiveness in rural areas and created sustainable economic opportunities.

In the area of private sector development, UNDP addressed the economic challenges faced by female entrepreneurs, particularly challenges relating to COVID-19. UNDP business development initiatives engaged 167 participants (41 percent women) in capacity-building workshops[65] and created income-generating opportunities for 497 people, of whom 329 were women.[66] Stakeholders noted that this gender-responsive approach was effective in supporting women's economic empowerment while also helping to strengthen local business ecosystems.

In the agricultural sector, UNDP's interventions focused on promoting sustainable business practices and enhancing market competitiveness. The EU Green Agriculture Initiative supported 56 SMEs in adopting green technologies[67] and provided assistance to 400 businesses, including 140 women-led enterprises. The programme delivered comprehensive training to 600 farmers, with 170 women participants gaining expertise in production methods and financial management. UNDP continued supporting SMEs by leveraging previously developed business models[68] that focused on creating income-generating opportunities. These packaged solutions offered beneficiaries detailed guidance on how to set up and operate a business.

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65 Local Action Groups (LAGs) in Armenia are community-based partnerships that unite local public authorities, private sector entities and civil society organizations to promote rural development. Established under the EU's LEADER methodology, these groups focus on integrated development by creating and implementing local strategies tailored to their specific regional needs. (https://www.undp.org/armenia/press-releases/partnership-and-action-rural-prosperity-armenia?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

66 UNDP, "Unleashing Employment and Income Generating Opportunities for Youth in the Regions of Armenia" Project, Annual Report, Yerevan 2023.

67 EU/ADA, EU Green Agriculture Initiative in Armenia Project, Final Evaluation, AGT International, Yerevan 2024.

68 These included models such as "Honey Money," "I Can," "Sweet House," "Chir" and "Mushroom." For example, the "Honey Money" model, designed in 2021, aimed to strengthen existing beekeeping practices and create new income-generating opportunities for people interested in beekeeping. The project introduced innovative polyurethane beehives, which have several advantages, such as being lightweight, heat-retentive and moisture-resistant, and not requiring mandatory entry in winter. As part of the "Honey Money" project, 137 beehives were distributed to 82 beneficiaries (49 women, 33 men) in the Chambarak and Vardenis settlements of the Gegharkunik region. Each beehive has the potential to produce 12 kg of honey annually, meaning the 137 distributed beehives could produce 1,644 kg of honey, providing a valuable income-generating opportunity for the beneficiaries. The project also organized three training sessions, attended by 146 people (84 women, 62 men), focusing on beekeeping techniques, bee health and raising queen honeybees.

UNDP established partnerships with public and private stakeholders to ensure programme sustainability. Collaboration with organizations such as Green Lane and ICARE enhanced the quality and relevance of training courses,[69] while engagement with agricultural service providers strengthened value chains. According to partners, this multi-stakeholder approach, combined with technical assistance and skills development, contributed to building more resilient local economies, particularly benefiting women entrepreneurs and rural communities.

Finding 7. Community-driven development. UNDP strengthened community-driven development through the implementation of Local Action Groups (LAGs), which empowered communities to design and execute their own development strategies. This participatory approach empowered local authorities and organizations to drive their own development agendas, resulting in stronger institutional capacities to secure funding and contribute to socio-economic development.

UNDP achieved notable success in implementing community-led development initiatives, particularly through the EU LEAD project in the Lori and Tavush regions.[70] The establishment of five Local Action Groups (comprising official local authorities, business sector representatives and CSOs) in these locations created effective partnerships between local authorities, businesses and civil society organizations. These LAGs managed grant schemes that funded 110 local initiatives valued at approximately $1.2 million, including local co-financing.[71] The project's comprehensive capacity-building approach trained 1,300 local actors in strategy development, with 870 becoming active LAG members.

UNDP support enabled local communities and authorities to develop their own development agendas and secure funding from diverse sources, including government allocations. Local institutions, including businesses, cooperatives, agricultural farms and value chain operators, reported improved operational capabilities and increased contributions to community development. This institutional strengthening was achieved through targeted public hearings, awareness-raising activities and complementary small grants programmes. According to LAG members, the participatory approach strengthened local governance structures and enhanced community ownership of development processes. Public hearings, awareness-raising activities, training sessions and complementary small grants were conducted in close consultation with the communities, ensuring that their specific needs and priorities were addressed. UNDP placed particular emphasis on empowering vulnerable border communities by involving them in local decision-making processes and giving them a stronger voice in community planning and access to resources.

The CO reported that as a result of UNDP interventions, 92,277 people (47,500 women and 44,777 men) increased their economic activity through local production and processing schemes and rehabilitated infrastructure.[72] UNDP also strengthened community resilience to climate change in border communities by providing uninterrupted solar energy systems. In collaboration with experts and local administrations, UNDP equipped more than 10 communities in the Syunik, Vayots Dzor and Gegharkunik regions with 10 kW photovoltaic panels and 5 kW accumulating batteries. Overall, stakeholders expressed high satisfaction with the results of UNDP's interventions in this area.

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[69] Core interventions included strengthening the capacities of agribusinesses to adopt green technologies and effective agricultural practices through demonstration sites and partnerships with regional extension services; facilitating better access for agribusinesses to local, national and international markets; supporting value chain development and enhancing competitiveness; providing assistance to private agribusinesses involved in organic farming, including branding, certification and market access initiatives; and involving the private sector in promoting and implementing green technologies.

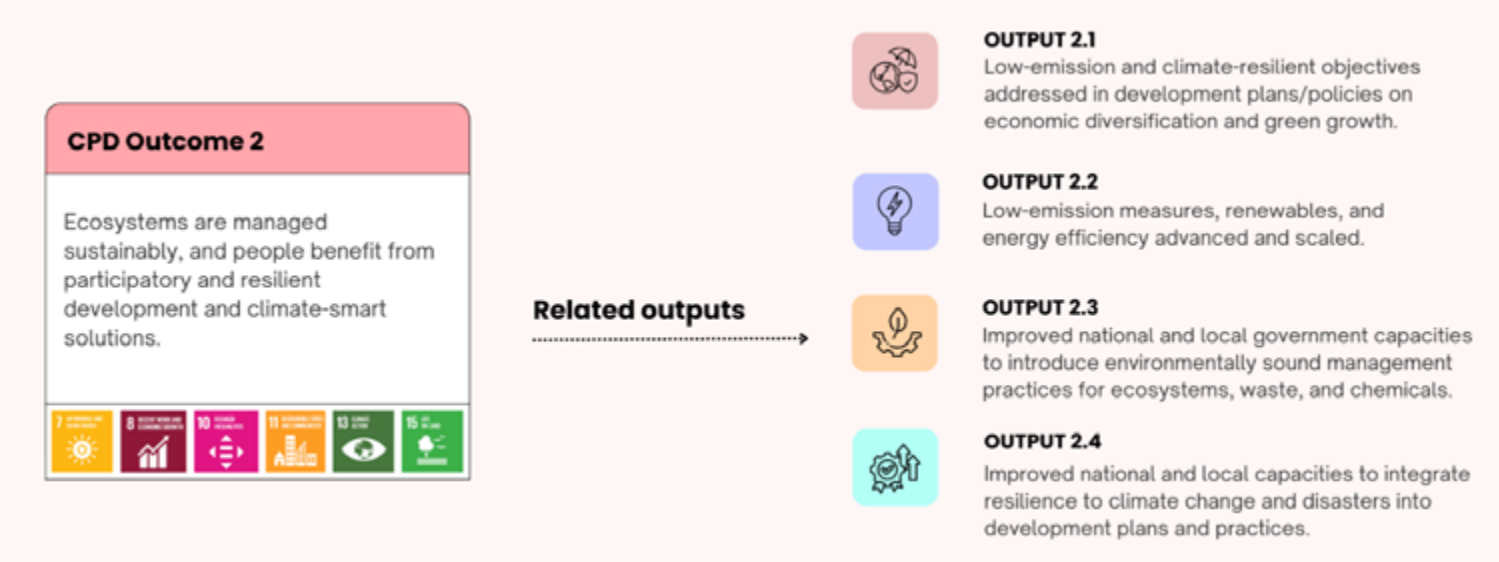
[70] https://www.aeidl.eu/news/news/arm-lag-armenian-national-network-of-local-action-groups-officially-established-first-workshops-completed/

[71] These interventions were diverse, ranging from the revitalization of a guesthouse in Tavush (Ditavan), to establishing a seed sorting facility in Lori (Urut), and supporting a beekeeping centre in Lori (Alaverdi). Other projects included the development of the "Ambar" grain value chain and flour mill in Gegharkunik (Chambarak), the "Sweet House" dry fruit production project in Vayots Dzor (Zaritap), and a seed production and farm mechanization service provider in Spitak.

[72] Ibid.

2.2.2 Outcome 2: Environmental sustainability and resilience

FIGURE 9. CPD Outcome 2 and Corresponding Outputs: Environmental Sustainability and Resilience

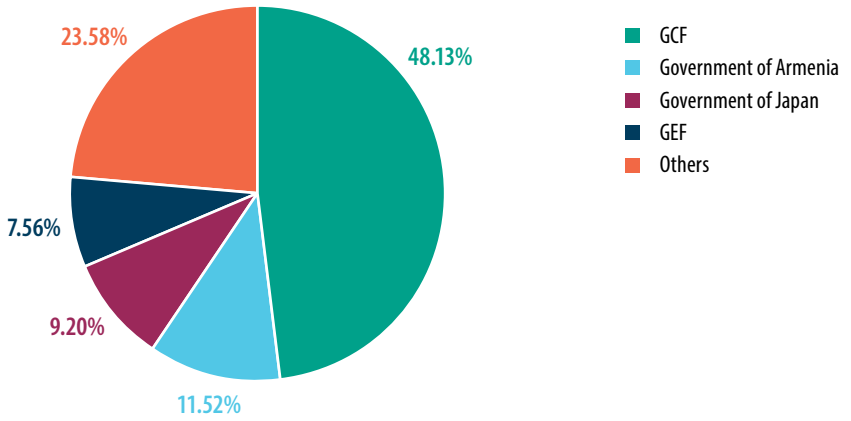


During this programme cycle, Outcome 2 aimed to enhance climate resilience and environmental sustainability, in alignment with Armenia's international climate commitments. This Outcome emphasized renewable energy, energy efficiency, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity conservation. A total of 21 projects and 28 project outputs were implemented under Outcome 2, with a budget of $31.68 million (below the estimated $37.12 million initially planned in the CPD) and expenditure of $20.51 million, reflecting a 64.74 percent execution rate (see Figure 11 for a breakdown by year). Fifteen projects (57.65 percent of expenditure) were nationally implemented by UNDP and seven (42.35 percent) were directly implemented.

Of the total expenditure, 88.34 percent ($18.12 million) was allocated to outputs designed to promote gender in a significant way (GEN2) and 11.66 percent ($2.39 million) to outputs expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way (GEN1).[73] This portfolio was funded primarily by the Green Climate Fund ($9.87 million, 48.13 percent of expenditure), followed by the Government of Armenia (11.52 percent), the Government of Japan (9.20 percent) and the Global Environment Facility (7.56 percent).

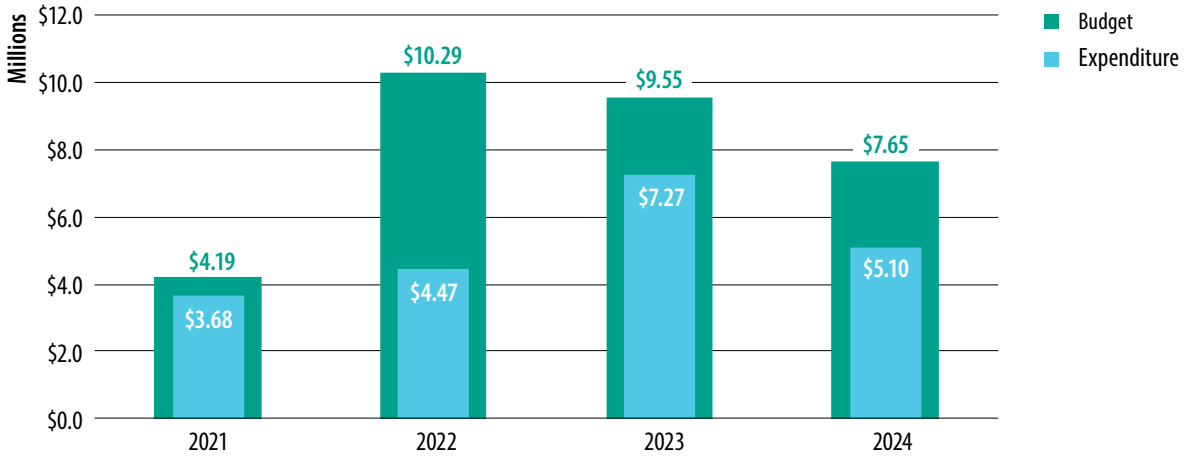
[73] Under Outcome 2, 19 project outputs (82.61 percent) were classified as GEN2 and 9 project outputs (39.13 percent) as GEN1.

FIGURE 10. Source of Expenditure by Donor in Outcome 2



Source: PowerBi/Atlas and Quantum as of December 2024

FIGURE 11. Evolution of Budget and Expenditure in Outcome 2



Finding 8. Climate change mitigation. UNDP made substantial contributions to Armenia's climate change mitigation efforts through policy development and practical interventions, reducing emissions by 18,943 tCO_2 annually. It strengthened climate governance and implemented energy efficiency measures reaching 46,000 beneficiaries. However, implementation effectiveness in the regions would have benefited from enhanced local capacities and tailored knowledge transfer mechanisms.

UNDP contributed to strengthening Armenia's climate governance through two key achievements. First, it supported the establishment of the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification system, which mandated systematic greenhouse gas data collection through an online platform beginning in 2025. This ensured Armenia's compliance with the Paris Agreement and provided a foundation for data-driven climate policymaking.

Second, UNDP facilitated Armenia's alignment with EU climate policies and international commitments by supporting the development of the country's second Nationally Determined Contributions plan, Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies and the Programme on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for 2022–2030. Stakeholders noted that by developing the capacity to systematically track emissions and report the country's climate policy implementation progress through greenhouse gas inventories, Biennial Reports and National Communications, Armenia complied with its commitments under the UNFCCC[74] and fulfilled its reporting obligations under the Paris Agreement. They also noted that the alignment of Armenia's standards and policies with EU climate policies[75] strengthened the country's partnership with European institutions, paving the way for a consistent long-term climate agenda and policy coherence.

UNDP demonstrated significant impact in emissions reduction through targeted infrastructure improvements. Between 2017 and 2023, it supported the retrofitting of 152 multi-apartment buildings and 69 public buildings, benefiting approximately 46,000 people, with women and girls representing over 50 percent of beneficiaries.[76] UNDP estimated that these interventions achieved annual emission reductions of 18,943 tCO_2, projecting a total of 378,860 tCO_2 over their 20-year lifetime. Additional achievements included the installation of grid-tied PV micro-stations and upgrades to street lighting systems in over 10 communities.

UNDP established a comprehensive approach to building technical capacities in renewable energy.[77] It supported the creation of six Low-Carbon Energy Education Centres across four regions through the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, developed a focused curriculum leading to a new three-year vocational specialization in renewable energy and implemented community micro-projects to provide practical experience. An additional centre was operational in Alaverdi. UNDP also supported the establishment of youth resource centres, which organized classes for college students on renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies.[78]

Further, UNDP facilitated the deployment of more than 50 mobile hybrid solar stations across communities in the Gegharkunik, Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions. These interventions contributed to national energy security by reducing dependence on external fuel sources and mitigating the impact of energy costs, which disproportionately affected Armenia's most vulnerable populations.

Despite making progress in this area, UNDP encountered operational challenges in implementing climate change mitigation initiatives. Construction firms' limited technical capacities posed a major challenge, particularly in the regions. This led to delays and required the UNDP team to make additional efforts to ensure adequate retrofitting quality. Stakeholders also highlighted gaps in knowledge transfer and insufficient capacity-building, underscoring the need for greater focus and investment in local construction firm capacities. To address these challenges at a systemic level, UNDP provided technical assistance to design firms and community representatives, delivered training to contractors and conducted quality control missions for building retrofits.

[74] Armenia's three consecutive Biennial Update Reports and accompanying National Inventory Reports have undergone international consultations and analysis. The technical analysis of Armenia's third Biennial Update Report stated that the information reported is mostly consistent.

[75] UNDP, EU4Climate Project, Terminal Evaluation Report (Yerevan 2023).

[76] UNDP, De-risking and Scaling-up Investment in Energy Efficient Building Retrofits in Armenia Project, Annual Performance Report (Yerevan 2017–2023).

[77] UNDP, Supporting Nationally Determined Contributions, Project Document, Yerevan 2022.

[78] UNDP, De-risking and Scaling-up Investment in Energy Efficient Building Retrofits in Armenia Project, Annual Performance Reports (Yerevan 2022, 2023).

Finding 9. Climate change adaptation. UNDP strengthened Armenia's climate change adaptation capabilities through strategic policy support and practical interventions. Its approach combined three pillars: 1) policy development, resulting in the National Adaptation Plan 2021–2025, the Water Sector Adaptation Plan 2022–2026 and the development of adaptation measures for the agriculture, health, energy and tourism sectors; 2) community empowerment, with initiatives reaching multiple regions through sustainable agriculture practices; and 3) technological advancement, including the installation of 11 automatic weather stations. Going forward, there remains an opportunity to further enhance institutional capacities at national and local levels to ensure sustainable impact.

During the current programme cycle, UNDP provided crucial support for the implementation of Armenia's Nationally Determined Contributions (2021–2030) and National Adaptation Plan. Significant achievements included the adoption of the Water Sector Adaptation Plan 2022–2026, which strengthened agricultural productivity and improved water management practices. UNDP also promoted strategic partnerships with key institutions, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Armenian National Agrarian University and the Centre for Agricultural Research and Certification, to promote sustainable agriculture as an adaptation strategy. This, for example, resulted in the Ensuring Food Security in Gndevaz Settlement (of Jermuk Community in the Vayots Dzor region) through Sustainable Resource Management small grants programme (SGP),[79] which introduced drip irrigation systems, reduced water use and demonstrated the value of sustainable water management practices, encouraging similar efforts in neighbouring communities.

UNDP supported community-based environmental initiatives that demonstrated measurable impacts. In the Lori region, sustainable reforestation improved soil stability and biodiversity.[80] In the village of Lernavan, an irrigation reservoir project yielded significant ecological benefits.[81] UNDP strengthened local capacity through targeted training programmes on climate adaptation and water management, with particular attention to gender considerations.[82] The development of a geographic information system-based data management system for Water Users Associations further strengthened local agricultural resilience.

UNDP contributed to improved weather observation and forecasting, ensuring timely and user-friendly access to information for local stakeholders. According to stakeholders, the installation of 11 automatic weather stations in targeted regions improved the accuracy of weather monitoring and forecasting. Partners highly appreciated UNDP's contributions to the revival and upgrade of Armenia's early warning system through continuous establishment and enhancement of automatic weather station infrastructure, which supported the country's compliance with international commitments.[83]

UNDP advanced climate change adaptation efforts and built a solid foundation to extend its impact. Key priorities included strengthening national and regional water management frameworks (a multi-agency working group was developing a new water management strategy) and empowering local farmers through training and support in climate-smart agriculture. Building the capacities of local communities and institutions to prioritize and invest in climate adaptation also remained crucial. Continued collaboration with partners to strengthen the Water Committee of the MTAI and regional Water Users Associations will be key to maximizing impacts.

[79] UNDP, SGP, https://sgp.am/en/pages/projects/169

[80] The community-led "Reviving Lori's Forest Ecosystems" initiative under the Small Grants Programme (SGP).

[81] UNDP, Small Grants Programme, Demonstrating sustainable resource management for arable land conservation and increased crop productivity in Lernavan and Shenavan settlements project, https://sgp.am/en/pages/projects/159

[82] UNDP, Transition to low carbon irrigation technologies for increased productivity, food security and enhanced livelihoods in Lori and Shirak regions of Armenia Project, Final Report, Yerevan 2024.

[83] E.g. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030).

Finding 10. Biodiversity and resource management. UNDP strengthened Armenia's biodiversity conservation and resource management through systematic interventions that covered over 166,000 hectares of land. UNDP's integrated approach combined data-driven forest management, community-led conservation initiatives and policy alignment with EU standards, resulting in measurable improvements in ecosystem stability and carbon sequestration capacity.

UNDP's approach to biodiversity conservation evolved significantly since 2009, transitioning from localized interventions to comprehensive ecosystem management.[84] In the current programme cycle, UNDP implemented several community-driven initiatives that combined reforestation with sustainable livelihood development. These efforts yielded concrete results through policy changes such as restrictions on agricultural waste burning and the introduction of alternative livelihood options. The programme demonstrated notable results in the Lori region, where native species reforestation improved soil stability and enhanced local biodiversity. Legislative changes, such as banning agricultural waste burning near forests and capacity-building in forest fire suppression, helped reduce fire incidents, while alternative livelihoods, such as agroforestry and energy-efficient solutions, helped reduce pressures on forest ecosystems.

UNDP supported the establishment of systems for sustainable forest management through evidence-based interventions.[85] The development of new-generation forest management plans for six forest enterprises in the Lori and Tavush regions provided comprehensive coverage of 166,000 hectares, including 113,159 hectares of managed forests and 53,645 hectares of protected forests. These plans, which became national standards, integrated advanced methodologies for ecosystem services and carbon accounting. Implementation resulted in the restoration of 5,682 hectares of degraded forests and achieved significant reductions in unsustainable practices, with a 25 to 30 percent decrease in firewood collection areas and a 5 to 20 percent reduction in unsustainable grazing across target regions. According to Country Office estimates, this work resulted in a sequestration capacity of 141,566 metric tons of CO_2 over a decade. Additionally, 510,161 metric tons of avoided carbon emissions were estimated for four forest enterprises and Dilijan National Park.

UNDP strengthened Armenia's alignment with international standards through strategic policy support and capacity-building. It supported studies exploring sustainable forestry potential and facilitated Armenia's integration with EU biodiversity approaches.[86] This policy work extended to climate mainstreaming across national sectors, enhancing technical and analytical capacities for environmental management. Stakeholder feedback, particularly from the Ministry of Environment and regional authorities, confirmed the effectiveness of these capacity-building initiatives in improving strategic planning in the agriculture, forestry, water resources and infrastructure sectors.

Finding 11. Disaster Risk Management. UNDP provided critical support for the development of Armenia's disaster risk reduction/management (DRR/M) policy framework. Key contributions included the establishment of early warning systems, the strengthening of local capacities and the alignment of the country's Disaster Risk Management (DRM) framework with international frameworks and standards.

UNDP further consolidated its position as a key driver of disaster risk management in Armenia through nearly two decades of consistent engagement. Its approach integrated legislative development, capacity-building and scientific assessments to align with international frameworks such as the 2005–2015 Hyogo Framework for Action and the 2015–2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Starting with a comprehensive

[84] UNDP, Small Grants Programme, www.sgp.am

[85] UNDP, Building Armenia's national transparency framework under Paris Agreement Project, Project Implementation Report, Yerevan 2023.

[86] UNDP, EU4Climate, Climate Mainstreaming Activities in EaP Countries: Summary of sectoral mainstreaming studies and experiences made in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, Technical Document, 2023.

risk assessment in 2007, UNDP supported the development of all three DRR/M strategies (2012, 2017, 2023)[87] and a 2023–2026 Action Plan. These strategies were periodically updated to address emerging challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2024 floods in the Lori and Tavush regions. Another major contribution was UNDP's support for drafting a comprehensive Disaster Risk Management and Population Protection law, which, at the time of this ICPE, was under parliamentary review.[88]

In collaboration with Armenia's National Academy of Sciences, UNDP localized global earthquake modelling techniques to assess seismic risks across ten cities. These assessments, which also evaluated domino effects such as landslides, provided comprehensive 'city scenarios' that informed disaster preparedness and response. In Syunik, UNDP piloted the establishment of local emergency response teams equipped with early warning systems to manage natural disasters, benefiting over 400 participants, including representatives from state agencies, health care facilities and educational institutions.

UNDP supported the upgrade of 23 automated meteorological stations and the installation of 11 new ones in regions such as Syunik and Tavush. These improvements strengthened the Hydro-Meteorological Centre's ability to manage environmental data and support disaster risk reduction.[89] UNDP also partnered with the Hydro-Meteorological Centre to build technical capacities, enhance personnel skills and establish a centralized information system for seamless data sharing among state agencies, private enterprises and international centres.[90]

Furthermore, following the merger of the Ministry of Emergency Situations into the newly established Ministry of Internal Affairs, UNDP provided strategic support to the Ministry of Internal Affairs Rescue Service by offering policy guidance and facilitating the integration of DRM functions into Armenia's broader governance frameworks. This initiative aimed to address gaps in municipal capacity, improve institutional coordination and embed DRM principles into community development planning, promoting a more resilient and proactive approach to disaster preparedness and response.

Capacity-building initiatives were integral to UNDP's DRM efforts.[91] Training programmes reached over 400 participants in the water sector and 100 representatives from local communities. In Syunik, UNDP introduced the human security approach and its principles into regional and community planning processes, establishing more comprehensive, context-specific, people-centred and prevention-oriented regulations. Based on close collaboration with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, this approach will be further integrated into the national Community Development Planning Methodology and codified within the new edition of the Republic of Armenia Law on Local Self-Government.[92]

According to stakeholders, the long-term effects of UNDP's interventions were evident in the enhanced institutional capacities and strengthened legal frameworks for DRM in Armenia. Capacity development support led to the creation of an action plan that focused on core organizational capacities, technical capacities and community engagement. As a result, Armenia acquired improved systems for data collection (e.g. upgraded meteorological and hydro-meteorological stations), more adequate emergency response protocols (e.g. local rapid-response teams) and better institutionalized gender mechanisms.

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87 The strategy for 2012 was a Disaster Risk Reduction strategy, not a management one. The 2023–2030 strategy was not specified as a national one. While it is applied at the national level, it was not officially designated as national.

88 See https://www.e-draft.am/en/projects/6963

89 These stations record data every 10 minutes, a significant improvement from the previous three-hour intervals, enabling real-time monitoring of climate variables like temperature and precipitation.

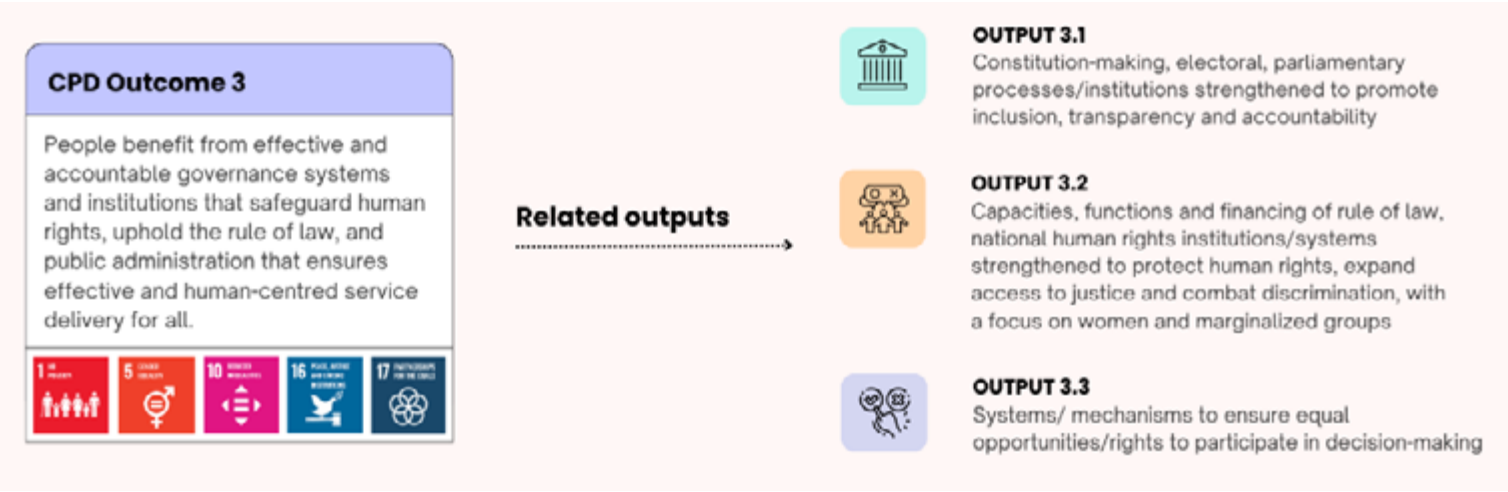
90 This system enables automated analysis and provides public access to meteorological data through the HMC website, improving transparency and usability.

91 Statement by the Head of DRR National Platform of Armenia.

92 Ibid.

2.2.3 Outcome 3: Democratic governance and gender equality

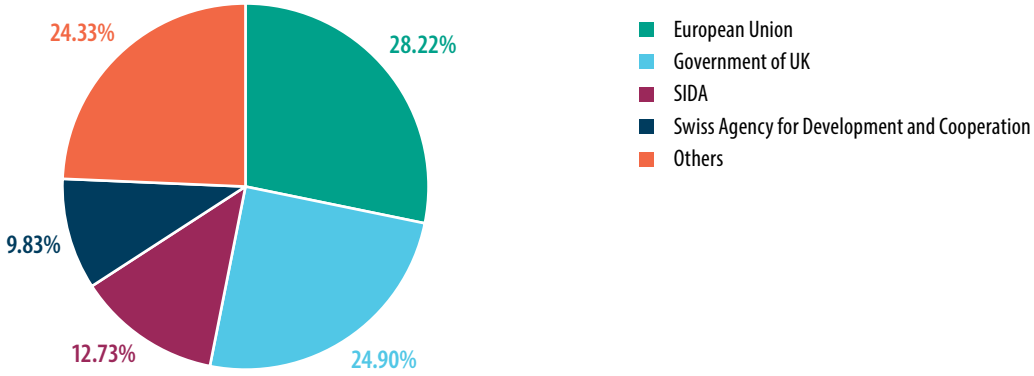
FIGURE 12. CPD Outcome 3 and Corresponding Outputs: Democratic Governance and Gender Equality



Under Outcome 3, UNDP implemented 14 projects and 20 project outputs, with a budget of $20.61 million during the first four years (this placed it in a position to surpass the $13.78 million initially estimated for the full cycle) and expenditure of $17.74 million (see Figure 14 for a breakdown by year). The delivery rate was 86.07 percent. Ten projects (75.64 percent of expenditure) were directly implemented, while four were nationally implemented (24.36 percent of expenditure).

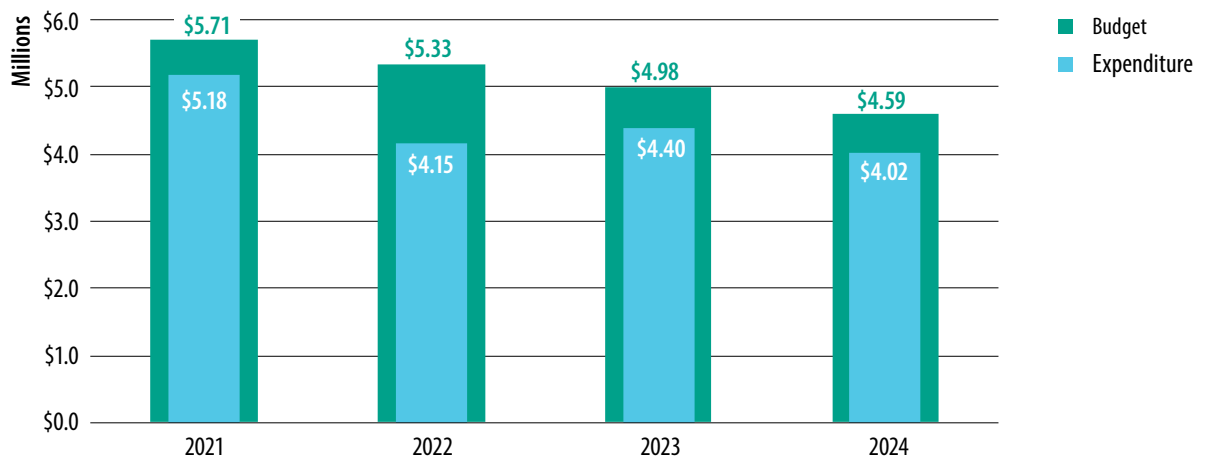
Outcome 3 accounted for the largest GEN3 portfolio, comprising 25.65 percent of programme expenditure ($4.55 million), with gender equality as the principal objective. GEN2 outputs, which made significant contributions to gender equality, represented the remaining 74.35 percent of expenditure ($13.19 million).[93] This portfolio was funded by the European Union ($5.00 million, 28.22 percent), followed by the Government of the United Kingdom (24.90 percent), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (12.73 percent) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (9.83 percent).

FIGURE 13. Source of Expenditure by Donor in Outcome 3



[93] Outcome 3 included 14 project outputs tagged as GEN2 (70.00 percent) and 6 project outputs tagged as GEN3 (30.00 percent).

FIGURE 14. Evolution of Budget and Expenditure in Outcome 3



Source: PowerBi/Atlas and Quantum as of December 2024

Finding 12. Elections, parliamentary development and constitutional reform. Through capacity-building initiatives, institutional support and technological enhancements, UNDP contributed to more transparent and inclusive elections. In parliamentary development, UNDP remained a key development partner, strengthening the capacity and transparency of the National Assembly. In the area of constitutional reform, UNDP facilitated technical support and public engagement, laying foundations for continued collaboration with national institutions.

Election Management

Building on its engagement with Armenia's electoral processes since 2016,[94] UNDP continued supporting the conduct of transparent, fair and inclusive elections. To enhance the Central Electoral Commission's (CEC) public outreach and transparency, UNDP supported development of a modern, user-friendly website featuring a results management dashboard. This enabled the CEC to present election results quickly and accurately in an accessible format.[95] As a result, the CEC was able to provide a wide range of information in a timely and accurate manner, contributing to greater transparency and public trust in the process. The site's popularity, with over 230,000 unique visitors during the 2021 elections, highlighted its role in promoting credibility.[96] UNDP also supported upgrades to the electoral IT infrastructure, including candidate and observer management modules, which enabled online registration and accreditation. The successful deployment of these systems during the 2021 parliamentary and local elections demonstrated their utility.

[94] In the last seven years, UNDP has been a key contributor towards the organization of elections and building trust in the electoral process in Armenia through the Electoral Support Projects. Since 2016–2017, UNDP's electoral assistance focused on the introduction of the voter authentication process, voter education, logistics planning, training and other activities related to the introduction of new technologies. UNDP supported the early 2018 parliamentary elections, triggered by the popular uprising and subsequent resignation of the previous government, focusing on institutional and operational support, public outreach, electoral dispute resolution, women's participation and coordination of electoral assistance, and extended this support to 2019–2020.

[95] https://www.elections.am

[96] Electoral Support Project in Armenia – 3, Final Report to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, UNDP, February 2022.

Capacity-building for electoral stakeholders was another major area of support. An updated e-learning portal[97] with interactive modules was instrumental in increasing the knowledge and skills of election officials, proxies and observers.[98] To reinforce electoral integrity, UNDP supported improvements to the Election Dispute Resolution system, increasing transparency in complaint adjudication for over 1,600 users.[99,100] UNDP also supported the CEC in modernizing electoral technologies, focusing on voter authentication and cybersecurity. The introduction of Voter Authentication Devices (VADs) upheld the "one voter, one vote" principle, with full deployment across polling stations supported by training, technical assistance and real-time support.

In recognition of digitalization's growing importance, UNDP helped develop an ICT and cybersecurity strategy that equipped the CEC with updated systems and a long-term resilience roadmap. These efforts, validated by national stakeholders, strengthened Armenia's electoral framework in line with international best practices.

The impact of these efforts was evident in the snap parliamentary elections held in June 2021. UNDP's assistance—including the provision of informational materials, the establishment of electoral schools[101] for underrepresented groups to increase local-level voter education and awareness and support for COVID-19 safety measures—contributed meaningfully to the process's credibility. The positive assessment by international observers, including the OSCE/ODIHR mission, highlighted UNDP's role in promoting democratic norms and practices under difficult conditions.[102]

Parliamentary Development

UNDP played an important role in strengthening the institutional capacity, transparency and effectiveness of the National Assembly of Armenia, supporting its transformation into a more modern, responsive and citizen-oriented legislative body. Support focused on capacity development, responsiveness and transparency. UNDP delivered a range of training programmes, workshops and coaching sessions on topics such as gender-responsive budgeting, the SDGs, communication strategies and financial principles. These initiatives helped improve operational efficiency, transparency and public engagement.[103]

97 https://www.elections.am/PageFor/Professional%20Training

98 This platform allows users to understand the legal framework of local and parliamentary elections in Armenia, familiarize themselves with international best practices, recognize the duties, responsibilities and rights of proxies and observers, learn about the voter authentication process and serve as VAD operators, understand the principles of PEC member responsibilities and learn the main rules of secure and safe online behaviour for election officials. It was redesigned to be more interactive and user-friendly, with new modules including podcasts, game-like quizzes, images and videos. These features were added to change learning methods and keep learners' attention to ensure the effectiveness of online education.

99 https://www.elections.am/CEC/Notification

100 This is a searchable database of electoral appeals, searchable by the name of the appealer and the notification ID, or filterable by date range.

101 Ahead of local elections in October–December 2021, the project organized ten Electoral Schools across all regions of Armenia. The target audience included people living in rural and remote areas, national minorities, women, people with disabilities and youth. Each school was a two-day intensive, collaborative workshop providing information on international standards for democratic elections, with explicit attention to inclusiveness and women's participation. It covered electoral types and systems from an international perspective, the roles of electoral stakeholders and stages of the electoral cycle and detailed information on local elections in the participants' respective communities. Participants were trained to exercise their electoral rights and contribute effectively to local decision-making. The course covered key legal aspects of national and local elections and how they are practically implemented. Special emphasis was placed on how laws, rules and procedures affect the participation of underrepresented groups, including women and men, youth, national minorities and people with disabilities.

102 OSCE ODIHR election observation mission assessed the snap parliamentary elections overall positively: "The 20 June 2021 early parliamentary elections in the Republic of Armenia were competitive and generally well-managed within a short timeframe. However, they were characterized by intense polarization and marred by increasingly inflammatory rhetoric among key contestants. The legal framework is generally comprehensive, but the fact that amendments were adopted so close to the elections caused some legal uncertainty. The election administration conducted its work in a transparent, collegial and professional manner and enjoyed electoral stakeholders' confidence. Election day, including the vote count, was assessed positively overall." (https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/3/490307_0.pdf)

103 Final Evaluation of Modern Parliament in Modern Armenia — MAP Project, Bajraktari, Elinor, July 2023.

UNDP's interventions also influenced the legislative process by facilitating discussion of 22 laws, culminating in the successful amendment of 14.[104] Another core element of its assistance was the digitalization of the Assembly's operations, which included upgrading the Document Management System, establishing an e-learning platform,[105] expanding wireless systems to interconnect equipment and digital services, developing an e-session management system for standing committee meetings, assessing ICT infrastructure[106] and strengthening cybersecurity.

UNDP's support contributed to a substantial improvement in the quality of legislative oversight and policymaking.[107] Transparency and accountability indicators for the National Assembly increased from 38 percent in 2020 to 50.9 percent in 2022, although a slight decline to 45.5 percent was recorded in 2023. Similarly, legislative responsiveness, inclusivity and participatory approaches improved, rising from 10 percent in 2020 to 33.4 percent in 2022, before dipping to 29.2 percent in 2023.[108] Citizen satisfaction with the accountability and transparency of the National Assembly rose moderately, from 30 percent to 33.3 percent. Nonetheless, public trust in the institution remained relatively low, suggesting that while reform initiatives had a positive effect on perceptions, further efforts were needed to improve accountability, transparency and public confidence.

Recognizing the importance of a structured and forward-looking reform agenda, UNDP worked closely with the National Assembly to transition from demand-driven technical assistance towards a more strategic and systematic approach to parliamentary development. The first phase of UNDP's engagement focused on meeting immediate institutional needs—introducing digital solutions, strengthening legislative oversight and enhancing public engagement. Lessons learned underscored the value of a long-term parliamentary reform strategy.[109] Accordingly, in 2024, UNDP began supporting the development of a Parliamentary Reform Strategy and Roadmap, aligned with international best practices and national priorities. This phase aimed to institutionalize key governance reforms, increase legislative impact and ensure the National Assembly remained resilient, inclusive and adaptive amid evolving governance challenges.[110]

Constitutional Reform

In the area of constitutional reform, UNDP facilitated consultations and dialogue among key actors involved in the process. It provided technical assistance for comprehensive analyses, including 17 specific subject matter research studies, and facilitated 20 sessions of the Constitutional Reform Council. These efforts fostered a participatory and inclusive approach to reform processes.

UNDP also supported the Constitutional Reform Council in conducting a comprehensive constitutional review. This included support for capacity building, public outreach and the development of operational procedures, which resulted in Council Decision N3 (31 May 2022), establishing a Work Plan for the Commission. The plan outlined reform directions, operational procedures and public communication strategies, ensuring a structured and transparent process.

104 Ibid.

105 http://ealearning.parliament.am

106 The cybersecurity assessment evaluated the status of hardware, software, network infrastructure and personnel knowledge within the CEC information systems, identifying risks and vulnerabilities. It proposed a strategy, roadmap and action plan for improving ICT and cybersecurity in Armenia.

107 Results of the public opinion poll conducted by the MAP project.

108 Ibid.

109 Final Evaluation of Modern Parliament in Modern Armenia – MAP Project, Bajraktari, Elinor, July 2023.

110 https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=20483

A notable example of UNDP assistance was the facilitation of strategic planning and outreach workshops.[111] These capacity-building efforts culminated in the completion of a draft concept paper outlining the proposed reforms. The December 2023 submission of the document to the Prime Minister's Office marked a key milestone, setting the stage for drafting constitutional amendments. While the paper's approval remained pending, stakeholders emphasized its importance as a foundation for future reform.

In addition to supporting key institutions, UNDP promoted public awareness and participation in the constitutional reform process. A notable example was UNDP's facilitation of a December 2023 conference on constitutional provisions related to direct democratic instruments and local self-government.[112,113] This initiative contributed to building NGO capacities to engage meaningfully in reform processes.[114] UNDP also supported the Ministry of Justice in developing and modernizing digital tools to enhance public engagement, including the creation of two online platforms[115] designed to increase public awareness and facilitate participation in the reform initiative.

UNDP played a key role in laying the groundwork for constitutional reform in Armenia by providing technical assistance, facilitating dialogue and strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders. The pace of reform shaped opportunities for engagement, and UNDP remained responsive to evolving needs. As the process moves forward, it will be important for UNDP to continue to identify areas where its expertise can add value and support successful reform implementation.

Finding 13. Police reform, judiciary reform and access to justice and anti-corruption. UNDP's police reform support yielded transformational results by expanding the patrol police, enhancing operational capacities and improving public satisfaction with law enforcement. UNDP's judiciary reform efforts contributed to merit-based judicial selection, e-justice tools and access to free legal aid, though stronger evidence was needed to demonstrate tangible results. By contrast, while participatory models and monitoring tools were introduced under anti-corruption reform, the scope of work remained limited.

Police Reform

UNDP's support for police reform in Armenia focused on the nationwide expansion and capacitation of the new patrol police.[116] UNDP provided expert policy advice and shared best practices from international contexts.[117,118] It also supported the development of a new Police Reform Strategy and 2024–2026 Action Plan and conducted a functional review of the police force to identify gaps and needs.

To strengthen the capacities of the Police Academy, UNDP supported the development of a teaching methodology, standard operating procedures and the use of state-of-the-art virtual reality equipment. It also helped develop advanced data analytics tools[119] and streamlined digital forms to enhance police

111 Accountable Institutions & Human Rights Protection in Armenia, Consolidated Final Narrative Report, 20 May 2021 – 29 February 2024.

112 This event, held in Tsaghkadzor on 23–24 December 2023, featured participation from civil society and political party representatives across various regions. Attendees included three Council members, two Commission members, sixteen civil society representatives and two political parties. The conference provided a platform to address substantive issues, refine relevant provisions and establish a model for similar future discussions.

113 The event brought together representatives from civil society and political parties and members of the Constitutional Reform Council and Commission, offering a forum to address substantive issues and refine related legal provisions.

114 Accountable Institutions & Human Rights Protection in Armenia, Consolidated Final Narrative Report, 20 May 2021 – 29 February 2024.

115 www.datairav.am and www.e-draft.am

116 UNDP supported police reform through two projects: Accountable Institutions and Support to Armenia's Rule of Law and Justice Reform.

117 For example, during a study tour to Spain, representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs learned from the Spanish Civil Guard (Guardia Civil) about human resource and education process management; the Spanish law enforcement model and the Guardia Civil's role within the overall architecture of the security system; the institutional setup of Guardia Civil staff management; the modus operandi of different layers; and the overall educational system and models of cadre preparation.

118 Accountable Institutions and Human Rights Protection in Armenia, Final Report, May 2022 – February 2024.

119 To strengthen the operational capacities of the police, UNDP's SDG Lab helped develop big data analytical instruments for the police and the broader security system—an AI-based platform that collects and analyses police data to produce situation analyses, integrating six databases.

operational effectiveness.[120] Gender equality and inclusivity were embedded throughout the reform process, from launching gender-responsive policies to facilitating policy dialogues and recruitment campaigns that increased the number of women in the police force. In addition, UNDP helped institutionalize a DRM framework within the police to improve crisis preparedness and response.[121] In parallel, UNDP was credited with providing critical support for the establishment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2023, helping shape its institutional and policy framework.[122]

The impacts of these reforms were reflected in increased public satisfaction with the police, which rose from 45.5 percent in 2018 to 62 percent in 2024,[123] second only to the highly regarded Armenian Apostolic Church, according to surveys conducted by the International Republican Institute.[124]

In this context, UNDP's role in the expansion and capacity building of the patrol police was seen as a major factor contributing to increased public trust and satisfaction with law enforcement. According to primary and secondary sources, the results facilitated by UNDP were considered transformational, contributing to a modern, accountable and service-oriented police force that was aligned with Armenia's national priorities and international commitments.

Judiciary Reform and Access to Justice

UNDP supported several aspects of the judiciary reform process in Armenia. Key initiatives included the introduction of a merit-based selection mechanism for judges, implemented by the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council, featuring a psychological testing platform to assess candidates' characteristics, traits and behaviours.[125,126] UNDP also assisted in the automation of court processes and the development of e-justice components, including e-recruitment and e-court management systems. To promote alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, UNDP supported the establishment of the Arbitration and Mediation Centre in Armenia (AMCA) and sponsored a study of AMCA's financial and management model to strengthen its operational viability.[127]

To expand access to justice for vulnerable populations, UNDP supported national communication and awareness campaigns about the availability of free legal aid. It also supported the Public Defender's Office in developing a communication strategy to raise awareness of its activities and services.[128] In parallel, UNDP

[120] UNDP supported the development of a digitalized form-builder that streamlined over 100 existing forms used by the police into one standardized form, usable by any state agency collecting administrative data.

[121] Initiated in 2022, the framework was piloted with the newly established Patrol Service and subsequently approved. It improved the police's crisis preparedness and response. The creation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which unified the police, rescue service and migration service, enabled collaborative SOP development and improved operational coordination. This coordination is expected to contribute to a more resilient disaster risk management and response and a more effective police force.

[122] Stakeholder interviews.

[123] https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/ARM-24-NS-01-Slide-Deck_English10.18.2024.pdf

[124] Public opinion surveys conducted by the Centre for Insights in Survey and research of the International Republican Institute between 2021–2023. The survey was conducted on behalf of the International Republican Institute's Centre for Insights in Survey Research by CRRC-Armenia. Data were collected via computer-assisted telephone interviews throughout Armenia between 10 and 21 June 2022, using automated random digit dialling stratified by mobile operator market share. Although numbers were drawn at random, settlement quotas were based on the 2011 Armenia census. Soft quotas for mobile operators were added midway through fieldwork. The sample included 1,499 Armenian residents aged 18 and older with mobile phone access. The response rate was 22 percent and the margin of error did not exceed ±2.5 percentage points.

[125] The psychological testing platform for the selection of judges is described by UNDP as a ground-breaking solution to assess the key characteristics and behavioural parameters of candidates, not only in Armenia but globally.

[126] The merit-based selection mechanism represents a significant shift from traditional appointment processes by introducing objective criteria and psychological evaluation tools. This dual-purpose reform aims to: (a) prevent corruption and undue influence in judicial appointments through transparent selection standards; and (b) ensure the selection of judges with appropriate psychological and behavioural competencies for judicial decision-making.

[127] The study offered policy recommendations for AMCA's business model and budget, including detailed budget lines, potential financial sources and a remuneration system for arbitrators.

[128] UNDP provided support to the Chamber of Advocates of the Public Defender's Office in developing an efficient, sustainable communication strategy to raise awareness of its activities, increase traffic to its website and inform the public about the high quality of its services.

sponsored an assessment of Armenia's free legal aid system,[129] expected to inform the Ministry of Justice's institutional roadmap for its development. A comprehensive study was also conducted in the Syunik and Tavush regions that measured public awareness of state-guaranteed free legal aid mechanisms.[130]

Despite these efforts, Armenia's rule of law performance declined slightly, according to international indicators. The World Bank Governance Indicators showed a drop from -0.13 in 2020 to -0.17 in 2022 (ICPE Annex 7). Similarly, Freedom House indicators for Armenia showed regression from 6 to 5 points between 2020 and 2024. These trends suggested that, while UNDP supported important structural reforms in judicial selection and access to justice, they had not yet translated into measurable improvements in broader rule of law outcomes.

Anti-corruption Reform

After the anti-corruption output was cancelled under the previous CPD due to the absence of projects,[131] UNDP reintroduced anti-corruption as a core area of work and implemented several initiatives. These included the development of a monitoring tool (Mshtaditak) by the Armavir Development Centre to assess the transparency and effectiveness of public programmes and expenditures[132,133] and the preparation of a study that identified key anti-corruption programmes.[134]

UNDP also implemented the Integrity Islands model in four communities to promote participatory decision-making and reduce corruption at the local level. As a result of this work, Integrity Action Plans were prepared by the women-led communities of Ejmiatsin (Armavir region) and Amasia (Shirak region), which focused on reducing corruption in the municipalities, increasing efficiency, improving the responsiveness and accountability of municipal service delivery, increasing public trust in local governments and introducing Codes of Conduct for local government officials. Additionally, UNDP provided training to new patrol police officers to enhance the anti-corruption ecosystem and promote zero tolerance towards corruption and introduced an online anti-corruption platform to monitor the implementation of activities outlined in the Anti-Corruption Strategy.

However, the scope of UNDP's anti-corruption efforts remained more limited than what was needed to effectuate the change pathway described in the CPD. There was no clear evidence to indicate that these interventions led to significant impacts in corruption levels. This is corroborated by the World Bank Governance Indicators and Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, which indicated that for the period in question (2020–2024), there was no significant decline in corruption levels (ICPE Annex 7). Evaluation stakeholders expressed that while Armenia made some progress in modernizing its anti-corruption infrastructure, stronger support from the UN and stronger UNDP leadership could be provided in the future.

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129 UNDP Armenia, Assessment of Free Legal Aid in Armenia.

130 The study focused on: (a) measuring public awareness of state-guaranteed free legal aid (FLA) mechanisms; (b) assessing public perceptions of the Public Defender's Office; and (c) analysing the experiences of identified target groups (FLA beneficiaries) in applying for and receiving FLA to identify challenges and make recommendations for improving the FLA system, with special attention to gender dimensions.

131 Independent Country Programme Evaluation Armenia: UNDP, March 2020.

132 This work was based on the principles of Development Check, which include: transparency, accountability, integrity, due diligence, conflict of interest management, whistleblower protection, robust internal controls, regular risk assessments, ethical conduct training and independent oversight.

133 The tool, named Mshtaditak, was designed for Android smartphones and tablets. It allows administrators to create queries, register monitors and assign tasks. Armavir Development Centre recruited and trained a cohort of specialists to monitor the quality of public programmes and collect citizen feedback on the transparency, participation and effectiveness of budget execution, disbursements and expenditures on COVID-19-related stimulus measures, safety net packages, public procurement and sectoral budgets, costs and spending.

134 Provincial administration in Armenia functions as an intermediary between the central government and local populations.

Finding 14. Human rights. UNDP contributed to strengthening Armenia's human rights machinery by providing training and technical support to key institutions, including the Ministry of Justice and the Human Rights Defender's Office, while also enhancing government coordination capabilities. A major achievement was the development of the Human Rights Action Plan (2023–2025), supported by public consultations and a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. Additional support was provided for the establishment of the Human Rights Defender's Office regional office in Lori, enabling the institution to expand its services.

In the area of human rights, UNDP focused on building the capacities of key human rights institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice and the Human Rights Defender's Office, by providing specialized training, methodologies and tools. These efforts targeted the protection of the rights to physical integrity and dignity, including prohibitions on torture, discrimination and domestic violence as well as ensuring fair trials and privacy.

A major achievement was the development of the Human Rights Action Plan (HRAP) 2023–2025,[135] a comprehensive and inclusive framework shaped through public consultations and civil society input via multi-stakeholder dialogues. UNDP supported the HRAP's implementation by establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework with baseline data and measurable indicators, ensuring transparency and accountability through the HRAP Coordinating Council and its Secretariat. More broadly, UNDP strengthened national coordination mechanisms through inter-agency training, technical expertise and enhancements to programming, budgeting and monitoring capacities. It also provided targeted technical assistance to improve anti-discrimination policies, strengthen the National Prevention Mechanisms against torture and advance institutional reforms contributing to Armenia's human rights progress.

UNDP supported the Human Rights Defender's Office, in its capacity as the National Preventive Mechanism, to organize a two-day training course commemorating the Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The course was attended by representatives of various government bodies and covered topics including the mandate of the National Preventive Mechanism, torture concepts in domestic and international law, prevention criteria, court judgments and protocols for medical examinations and managing hunger strikes in detention facilities.

UNDP also supported the organization of a workshop to enhance the Office's capabilities in conducting fact-finding activities, with emphasis on methodology, key features and practical application. Support was likewise provided for the Human Rights Defender's Office 'Winter School', which brought together law students from multiple universities to discuss core human rights topics such as eliminating discrimination, protecting rights in the business sector, the impact of social networks on rights and limitations during states of emergency.

With UNDP support, the Human Rights Defender's Office expanded its operations by establishing a regional office in Lori, where staff capacity was increased and facilities were renovated. The Lori office demonstrated high demand, handling over 300 human rights cases since July 2023. UNDP also strengthened the capacities of both the Human Rights Defender's Office and the Office of the State Representative on International Legal Matters through targeted training, workshops and knowledge products focused on human rights standards, legislative review and international legal mechanisms.

[135] This support was provided through the joint UNDP/UNICEF/UNFPA project Accountable Institutions and Human Rights Protection in Armenia.

Finding 15. Mine action. UNDP played a significant role in modernizing Armenia's mine action framework, aligning it with international standards through the development of strategies, operational plans and a national coordination platform. It significantly enhanced demining capacity and improved emergency preparedness by renovating shelters and integrating explosive ordnance risk education into schools and communities.

UNDP played a key role in updating Armenia's legal and operational mine action framework in line with international standards.[136] UNDP's support was instrumental to the development and approval of the Mine Action Strategy and Operational Plan for 2023–2027, in compliance with the International Mine Action Standards.[137] UNDP also supported the development of national mine action standards in coordination with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. UNDP supported the update of the Information Management System for Mine Action and the National Victim Assistance Information System, enabling higher-quality, disaggregated data for improved service delivery and policy formulation.[138]

UNDP also played an instrumental role in establishing the National Mine Action Coordination Platform, which brought together key government agencies to coordinate Armenia's mine action efforts.[139] The platform was officially launched in November 2023 with broad stakeholder participation, demonstrating strong commitment to government–partner dialogue and coordination.[140]

To strengthen the operational capabilities of the Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE), UNDP provided modern explosive ordnance disposal, detection and protection equipment, including metal detectors, magnetic locators and medical trauma kits. As a result, CHDE's annual clearance capacity rose from 50,000 m^2 in 2022 to 1,000,000 m^2 in 2024. Between 2022 and 2023, 166,264 m^2 of contaminated territory was cleared.[141,142] UNDP also invested in first aid and medical emergency response[143] training and supported the refurbishment and equipping of the CHDE Training Facility to provide an improved learning environment.

UNDP implemented a two-track approach to emergency preparedness and protection in conflict-affected regions, focusing on both practical infrastructure improvements and awareness-raising. One track involved conducting a systematic assessment of border communities, resulting in the renovation of five priority emergency shelters from a pool of 18 identified facilities. The other reached over 10,000 beneficiaries (53 percent women) through comprehensive risk education initiatives, successfully mainstreaming explosive ordnance awareness into formal education systems and community outreach programmes.[144]

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136 UNDP's work in this area was channelled through the project Strengthening National Mine Action Capacities in Armenia.

137 The operational plans laid a foundation for clearance and land release operations, identifying at least 1,350,000 m^2 of contaminated land to be cleared by 2027.

138 Interview with CHDE.

139 The National Mine Action Coordination Platform functions through four technical-level working groups (Explosive Ordnance Risk Education, Victim Assistance, Clearance and Land Release, and Emergency Preparedness and Protection), focusing on key mine action pillars in Armenia. Three specific working groups concentrate on Land Release and Clearance, Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) and Victim Assistance, co-chaired by CHDE. Additionally, an Emergency Preparedness and Protection working group, co-chaired by the RA Rescue Service, addresses coordinated actions for emergency scenarios. Regular monthly meetings facilitate stakeholder convergence, intervention coordination and result evaluation within mine action pillars and emergency protection. This structured approach ensures comprehensive coordination and effectiveness in addressing mine action challenges in Armenia.

140 Strengthening National Mine Action Capacities in Armenia; Progress Report to the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (EC FPI), January 2024.

141 A total of 42,165,966 m^2 of Armenian territory is contaminated by anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, explosive ordnance and cluster munitions. Some 26,438 individuals live in affected communities, and there have been 805 mine victims in Armenia between 1991 and 2024.

142 Project infographic, Strengthening Mine Action Capacities in Armenia Project Report, CHDE, August 2024. (Unpublished internal document.)

143 Training was provided to 11 CHDE personnel (30 percent women) on Explosive Ordnance Disposal Levels 2 and 3, and 20 CHDE personnel (50 percent women) received other relevant instruction.

144 Video tutorials with sign language interpretation were developed for nine groups: minors (with puppetry elements), children, adolescents, adults, herders, farmers, road construction workers, urban residents and tourists. A bilingual summary guide was also created to support EORE trainers and CHDE operators, in alignment with International Mine Action Standards.

UNDP's work on mine action exemplified the transformative potential of targeted, evidence-based support. By supporting the modernization of the national legal and institutional framework, strengthening local capacities, enhancing emergency preparedness and promoting risk education, UNDP contributed tangibly to the safety and resilience of conflict-affected communities. According to the Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise, UNDP's support was indispensable in ensuring that, for the first time in 30 years, Armenia recorded zero victims of explosive ordnance and landmines. This outcome underscores UNDP's pivotal role in modernizing the mine action framework, which included formal education outreach to over 31,000 teachers and 400,000 students nationwide.[145]

Finding 16. Participatory governance. UNDP strengthened participatory governance by establishing Women and Youth Advisory Councils and organizing youth leadership camps. UNDP strengthened local capacities and services by developing standardized training modules for local councils. It also conducted outreach to refugees and applied the Social Innovation Lab modality to transform municipal services. These and other UNDP initiatives supported women's economic and political leadership in local governance and decentralization processes.

To promote participatory governance, UNDP implemented several key initiatives. It supported the establishment of Women and Youth Advisory Councils,[146] enabling over 200 women and youth to participate in local decision-making processes across multiple regions. UNDP also organized youth leadership camps, which built leadership skills for 232 participants and led to the implementation of 130 community initiatives.[147] In addition, it provided grants for women leaders to carry out empowerment initiatives and trained 624 participants (mostly women) on gender analysis, leadership, communication and local governance.[148]

As part of its efforts to enhance local capacities and services, UNDP developed standardized training modules for local councils to improve public engagement and participation. Outreach efforts targeted 6,000 refugees to promote awareness and involvement in local governance. In 2024 alone, the initiative reached 1,507 community council members and municipal staff.[149] Additionally, interventions developed with the Social Innovation Lab sought to tailor municipal services to the needs of refugee and host communities.[150]

UNDP also contributed valuable research on local governance and decentralization. This included an assessment of local self-government vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic and a study[151] identifying potential service innovations to strengthen municipal resilience and improve delivery. Study findings laid a strong foundation for designing and implementing future interventions to address challenges and leverage identified opportunities.

While UNDP's contributions to decentralization and local governance continue to evolve, significant progress has been made, laying the groundwork for expanded cooperation in this area.

145 https://emis.am

146 Women and Youth Advisory Councils are advisory bodies attached to the Head of Community, established by community council decision upon the Head's suggestion. They offer dedicated platforms for discussing, conceptualizing and bringing solutions to inequality, inclusion and other related structural concerns.

147 Women and Youth for Innovative Local Development, Final Evaluation Report, Bajraktari, Elinor, November 2023; and Women in Local Development: Women in Politics, Final Evaluation Report, Krylova, Olena; Gasparyan, Marianna, December 2022.

148 Women and Youth for Innovative Local Development, Final Evaluation Report, Bajraktari, Elinor, November 2023.

149 Resilience for All, Final Report.

150 This included mobile farmers' markets, water supply-repairing mobile workshops, etc., applying systems design and agile decision-making practices.

151 Study titled Fifteen Ways to Innovate Municipal Services in Armenia.

2.2.4 Outcome 4: Evidence-based policy, financing and innovation aligned to SDGs

FIGURE 15. CPD Outcome 4 and Corresponding Outputs: Evidence-based Policy, Financing and Innovation Aligned to SDGs

Outcome 4 emphasized evidence-based policymaking, financing and innovation to accelerate SDG progress, prioritizing strategic innovation, digital transformation and development finance to drive sustainable development solutions.

Outcome 4 was the smallest in the portfolio, encompassing 11 projects and 15 project outputs. The total budget reached $7.21 million, exceeding the estimated $4.47 million for the full cycle (see Figure 17 for year-by-year breakdown). The Country Office spent $4.60 million between 2021 and 2024, reflecting a delivery rate of 63.86 percent.

All 11 projects (100 percent of expenditure) were directly implemented. Approximately 64.83 percent ($2.98 million) was allocated to outputs with gender equality as a significant objective (GEN2), 20.50 percent ($0.94 million) to those expected to contribute in a limited way (GEN1), 13.85 percent ($0.64 million) to those with gender equality as the main objective (GEN3) and 0.81 percent ($0.04 million) to outputs not expected to contribute to gender equality (GEN0).[152] Outcome 4's primary funding source was the European Union ($1.59 million, 34.46 percent), followed by UNDP (15.32 percent), the Multi-Partner Trust Fund – Joint SDGs Fund (11.62 percent) and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund – UN Road Safety Trust Fund (8.76 percent).

[152] Under Outcome 4, 10 project outputs (66.67 percent) were tagged as GEN2, 2 outputs (13.33 percent) as GEN1, 2 outputs (13.33 percent) as GEN3 and 1 output (6.67 percent) as GEN0.

FIGURE 16. Source of Expenditure by Donor in Outcome 4

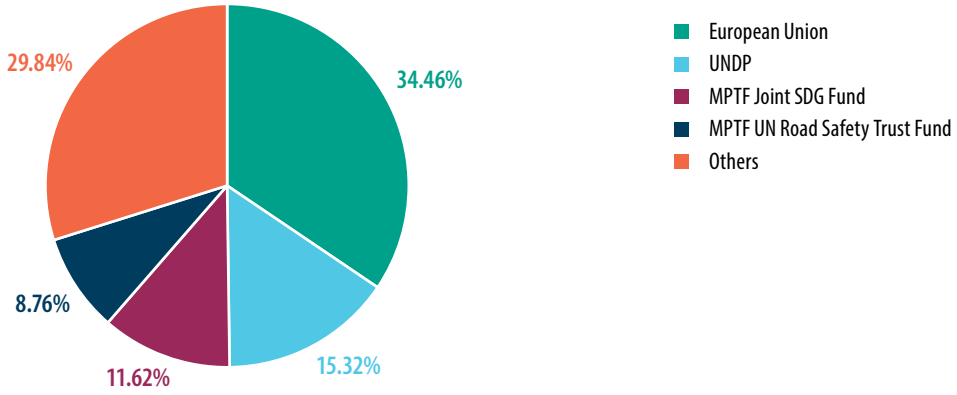
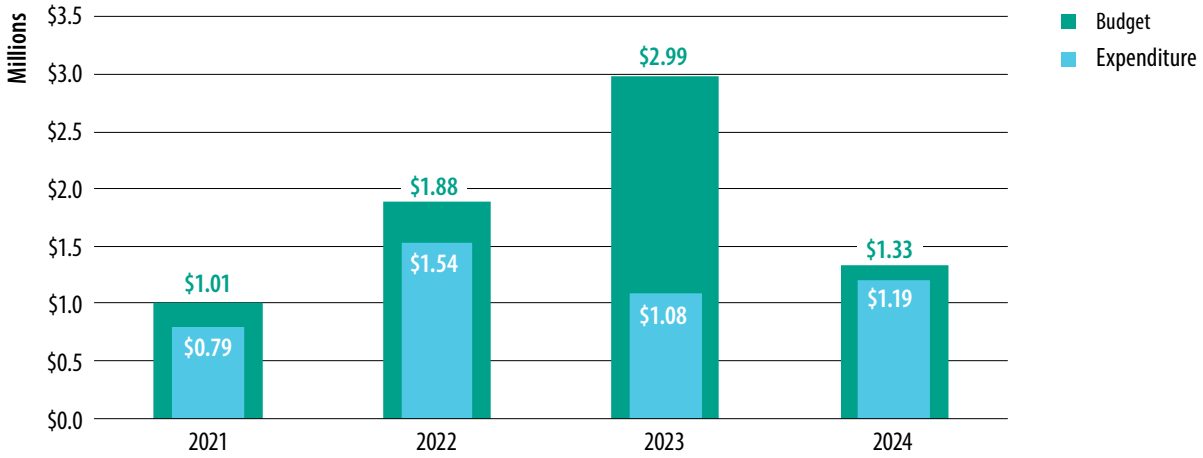


FIGURE 17. Evolution of Budget and Expenditure in Outcome 4



Source: PowerBi/Atlas and Quantum as of December 2024

Finding 17. Innovations. UNDP promoted innovation through a multidisciplinary approach, including the use of behavioural science in policymaking, digital transformation in the public sector and implementing local transformation portfolios using the Portfolio Approach. Through its Innovation Portfolio, UNDP catalyzed policy-level changes and introduced reforms such as the adoption of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health standards, positioning itself to lead future institutional transformation.

A notable area of contribution was the application of behavioural science to inform policymaking. Acknowledging that individual decision-making is shaped by more than rational analysis, UNDP's SDG Innovation Lab conducted several behavioural experiments using randomized controlled trials.

These experiments focused on critical issues such as increasing women's uptake of preventive cancer screening, improving tax compliance in partnership with the State Revenue Committee and encouraging community participation in local governance. Results were promising. As a result of the behavioural

experiment, screening visits increased by 461 percent among women who received invitation letters and by 667 percent among those who received both letters and reminders.[153] The State Revenue Committee reported an increase of between $6 million and $7 million in annual tax revenue and an improved tax-to-GDP ratio, which it attributed to enhanced tax discipline. The community participation trials resulted in an 8.5 percent increase in engagement per 1,000 households among those who received informational leaflets.[154]

UNDP played a key role in supporting the development of strategic and institutional frameworks for digital transformation in Armenia's public sector. It facilitated several initiatives, such as the development of Travelinsights.ai, an AI-powered online data analytics tool for the tourism industry with the support of the Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economy, and the SDG Monitor, an interactive platform that tracks progress towards SDG 16 targets and indicators.[155] UNDP also supported the first Digital Readiness Assessment in Armenia and the region,[156] laying the foundation for the digitalization of municipal services in Yerevan[157,158] and the development of a Digital Transformation Roadmap for the police, which requires continued support for integration with other police databases.[159]

Other areas of UNDP work involved strengthening tax administration, improving tax and fiscal policies and mobilizing finance for the SDGs. It supported state agencies in designing finance instruments and identifying ways to finance development strategies by augmenting domestic resource mobilization and aligning tax policies with the SDGs. Key achievements included the establishment of the Data Forensics Lab within the State Revenue Committee, the introduction of excise taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages and high-sugar foods and the preparation of an SDG budget tagging methodology.

UNDP also initiated development of a Tobacco Tax Revenue Modelling tool to support increased excise taxes on tobacco consumption. These efforts, including the pioneering SDG Taxation Framework and technical assistance, laid the groundwork for improving tax policy in support of better health outcomes.

During the period under review, UNDP Armenia continued to use innovation as a key instrument for policy-level change, promoting evidence-based and human-centred decision-making across sectors. This was particularly evident in the support provided for social protection reform, including the implementation of International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health standards, which promised substantial improvements in service delivery systems. Through the SDG Innovation Lab, UNDP helped strengthen the Unified Social Services and informed key policy documents, including the draft Labour and Social Protection Strategy presented to the Deputy Prime Minister in June 2023.

153 Calculated based on the number of letters received and compared to the control group (2.1 percent participation).

154 SDG Innovation Lab Journey Report 2017–2022.

155 Respective websites: https://www.travelinsights.ai, https://sdgmonitor.live/#section=section_1&sub=content

156 The results of the Digital Readiness Assessment demonstrated that Armenia stands at the "Systematic" stage of digital readiness, with a number of recommendations set forth by the CDO on advancing different pillars of digital maturity in Armenia.

157 Yerevan 2.0: Towards More Inclusive and Greener Recovery project.

158 As part of this support, UNDP developed a digital transformation strategic roadmap for Yerevan Municipality and redesigned and digitalized two sectoral municipal services, facilitating the process of obtaining commercial permits and addresses through the https://dimum.yerevan.am/ online platform. The full cycle of service redesign, from needs identification to co-designing with users and service managers, resulted in business process optimization, higher citizen satisfaction and cost-savings. Building on the success of this platform, the municipal administrations automated the renewal of commercial permits, reaching over 5,000 businesses before 2023. As a result of UNDP's support, Yerevan Municipality became the first local self-government body in Armenia to use evidence collected through a behavioural intervention to develop its communication strategy with citizens and businesses. Following the intervention, the use of digitalized services increased by 4.4 percent between the end of 2021 and July 2022.

159 The SDG Innovation Lab developed the Digital Transformation Roadmap for the police, which laid the basis for the digitalization of the police force with UNDP's continued support. UNDP helped design the analytical tool for criminal and patrol police that significantly reduced the time needed to analyse crime statistics (15 minutes instead of two to three days). UNDP also raised funds to support the implementation of the Human Rights Management System, which is included in the Roadmap.

Additionally, collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs led to the development of the comprehensive Employment Strategy of Armenia 2023–2030.[160] UNDP was engaged in operationalizing the strategy on the ground and served as MoLSA's key partner in testing the results-based Active Labour Market Policy model, which will be scaled nationwide based on its evaluated learnings. UNDP also pioneered the development of a comprehensive financing strategy, a key component of the Integrated National Financing Framework,as an integral part of the Employment Strategy.

UNDP also provided analytical and technical support to the Ministry of Finance for the drafting of mid-term expenditure framework guidelines and methodological instructions, implementation of SDG budgeting and tagging exercises and the execution of the Development Finance Assessment. These multidimensional interventions aimed to address capacity gaps among national counterparts and to support the design of more efficient development policies and financing strategies that are aligned with Armenia's long-term priorities. They also helped the Government of Armenia establish clearer links between policy, planning and budgeting processes and enabled it to evaluate the financing gap for development policies.

Through this work, UNDP supported the alignment of 170 state budget programmes with the SDGs, a significant result given that Armenia does not yet have national SDG indicators and targets. UNDP's ImpactAIM initiative advances the SDGs by leveraging innovation and technology to strengthen the impact ecosystem. As a regional leader, it fosters collaboration among policy institutions, donors, accelerators and startups, driving synergy for resilient growth. ImpactAIM empowered incubators and developed impact measurement tools, co-founded the Tech4SDGs Impact Investment Fund (which raised $4 million) and built a portfolio of 210 potential impact ventures.[161]

2.3 Overall performance and cross-cutting issues

The following findings provide an assessment of the Country Office's overall performance, highlighting cross-cutting aspects (including implementation modalities, partnerships and interagency coordination), along with key factors that positively influenced—or posed ongoing challenges to—achievement of results.

Finding 18. Inter-agency collaboration and donor coordination. UNDP demonstrated effective collaboration with UN agencies through strategic coordination mechanisms and joint programming initiatives that enhanced development impact across multiple sectors. While the Country Office showed particular effectiveness in crisis response coordination, there remain opportunities for UNDP to further strengthen its support for development effectiveness in Armenia.

UNDP contributed to coordination within Armenia's UN Country Team through strategic alignment and active leadership. It chaired two UNSDCF[162] outcome groups (Governance and Environment) and co-chaired two others (Economy and Gender), while also leading the UN Operations Management Team. This leadership extended to operational coordination through implementation of the Business Operations Strategy and participation in the UN Contingency Plan for the displacement response.

UNDP effectively contributed to refugee crisis response efforts through a humanitarian–development nexus approach. It played an instrumental role in the Armenia Inter-Agency Response Plan, led by UNHCR and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, addressing the needs of 90,000 displaced individuals.[163] Collaborative

[160] The strategy was approved through Government Decree No. 2083-L dated 27 December 2024, as the 2025–2031 Employment Strategic Programme.

[161] https://jointsdgfund.org/article/joint-sdg-fund-collaboration-un-support-transformative-change-armenia; https://www.granatusventures.com/global-approach; https://yerevan.impacthub.net/impactaim-venture-accelerator/

[162] Armenia–UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

[163] https://armenia.un.org/en/196325-united-nations-launched-final-report-humanitarian-inter-agency-response-nagorno-karabakh

efforts with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration addressed the governance dimensions of displacement, including local integration strategies and access to justice for displaced populations. This coordination extended beyond the immediate crisis response through strategic partnerships with multiple agencies: UNICEF and the World Food Programme on social protection integration, UN Women on gender-responsive governance, UNEP on environmental initiatives and with the Food and Agriculture Organization on climate-smart agriculture.[164,165] These collaborations enabled the integration of diverse expertise and resources, resulting in comprehensive approaches to complex challenges, including social protection, gender equality and climate change adaptation.

A challenge identified by stakeholders, particularly those in central government institutions, was the need for stronger coordination among development actors, including international donors, UN agencies and government counterparts[166]. Although UNDP made efforts to align its programmes with national priorities and collaborate with other entities, stakeholders reported overlaps and gaps in programming due to limitations in existing coordination mechanisms. For example, while UNDP collaborated with partners such as the EU, USAID and the World Bank on projects involving refugee integration, energy efficiency and climate resilience, there was no overarching framework to ensure complementarity across all initiatives.[167]

The overlapping focus of multiple actors on anti-corruption efforts further illustrated this fragmentation. While UNDP's work focused on e-justice systems and strengthening the anti-corruption ecosystem, parallel EU and USAID initiatives operated independently, leading to a fragmented approach. The donor ecosystem lacked a central mechanism to harmonize these efforts.

Although some coordination took place under frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) or government-led sectoral platforms, most stakeholders considered these mechanisms insufficiently robust to coordinate the broad spectrum of donor activities. The EU's LEADER approach, implemented in collaboration with UNDP, provided a model for coordinated, community-driven development by fostering partnerships between local governments, private actors and civil society, but remained limited in thematic scope and geography. In light of these issues, several stakeholders raised the possibility of UNDP providing more sustained support to government entities in the area of development effectiveness and coordination.

Finding 19. Programme resources, delivery and implementation. Despite a robust $60 million pipeline, the programme faced resource constraints across critical intervention areas. Limited core funding and challenges in accessing alternative funding sources restricted UNDP's ability to further scale successful initiatives and respond more extensively to emerging needs. Operational challenges in the recruitment of experts, procurement and systems transition affected implementation efficiency.

[164] For example, through the Resilient Social Protection Systems project, UNDP integrated humanitarian, development and social protection dimensions into a unified framework in partnership with UNICEF and the World Food Programme. The Stronger Services for Equal Participation project, a $3 million joint initiative between UNDP and UNICEF, achieved significant systemic reforms in disability services through the implementation of new legislation, development of an e-disability information system and enhanced capacity building of social and health care professionals, effectively leveraging both organizations' complementary expertise. Through joint programming with UN Women, UNDP advanced gender-responsive governance, ensuring women's participation in political and economic decision-making.

[165] The development of Armenia's National Adaptation Plan involved coordination with UNEP and UNFCCC focal points to align technical assistance and policy support. UNDP partnered with the Food and Agriculture Organization to implement climate-smart agriculture projects, integrating environmental sustainability into rural development while addressing food security challenges.

[166] Donor fragmentation was reported by several national stakeholders as a persistent issue, with multiple organizations—including UN agencies, international financial institutions, bilateral donors and NGOs—operating independently or with limited alignment to each other's strategies.

[167] Stakeholders mentioned that programmes aimed at agricultural value chains or vocational training often operated in the same geographic areas, but adopted different methodologies, performance metrics and timelines. This sometimes resulted in confusion among beneficiaries, inefficiencies in implementation and limited scalability of successful initiatives. The lack of standardized approaches and shared frameworks complicated the evaluation and monitoring of collective progress.

At the time of the evaluation, UNDP's robust pipeline of $60 million, including $14 million in confirmed commitments, reflected strong engagement across diverse development priorities. However, some key intervention areas identified by partners presented opportunities for further resource mobilization.[168] These included advancing resilience efforts for refugee integration, enhancing mine action programming and supporting police reform initiatives.[169] Public administration reform, anti-corruption, green transition and renewable energy also represented strategic areas where the availability of additional resources could enable broader scaling and impact. Similarly, community engagement plans revealed the potential to expand outreach and benefit more individuals, underscoring the need to mobilize further support to maximize impact across all programmatic streams.

In the absence of robust core funding, UNDP relied heavily on donor contributions, which presented additional challenges. The discontinuation or shifting priorities of some funding sources[170] created challenges in key areas.

With a strategic focus on diversifying its funding base, UNDP has successfully secured contributions from nine new partners since 2023, including Canada, CERF, EBRD, France, INL, the National Assembly, Norway, OECD and Serbia. However, local funding alternatives remained insufficient. Both government co-financing and private-sector partnerships were limited in size. Local governments consistently contributed modest co-financing to support activities in their communities, either directly to UNDP or through parallel funding. This partnership model proved effective in enhancing local ownership, scaling activities and strengthening local institutional capacities, and offers a sound basis for further expansion. Nevertheless, local partners still require significant capacity-building support to implement development initiatives effectively. Private-sector engagement also remained largely project-specific, with limited interest in long-term initiatives or those offering uncertain returns.[171]

The Country Office maintained a well-structured organizational structure, focusing on five key programmatic areas[172] and supported by specialized operational units for finance, human resources, ICT, procurement and administration. While the staffing strategy prioritized local expertise and flexible contracts, Armenia's limited availability of specialized expertise posed challenges to recruiting highly specialized professionals, particularly for digital transformation, climate resilience and governance reforms. Procurement challenges, exacerbated by COVID-19 supply chain disruptions and complex partner regulations, caused delays and increased the effort required to achieve results.[173] Additionally, the transition to the Quantum procurement system introduced further implementation difficulties.[174]

168 UNDP Armenia, Strategy Note, 2024.

169 The police reform offered a high-impact area for expansion, with increased funding enabling capacity-building, digital transformation and community-centred policing models to foster public trust and institutional accountability.

170 The EU's "Team Europe" approach prioritized direct budget support.

171 For example, partnerships with telecommunications companies supported digital tools for health care, but did not expand to other critical areas.

172 Programmatic areas were structured around five key themes: four teams corresponding to the four CPD outcome areas (Democratic Governance; Socio-Economic Development; Climate, Environment and Resilience; and Innovation and SDG Finance) and one team dedicated to Gender Equality. Each thematic area was led by a team leader, ensuring focused delivery of programmatic objectives.

173 For instance, the Support to Post-Conflict Recovery project faced delays in fodder procurement due to limited supplier availability and reduced market capacity. Similarly, the EU–GAIA project experienced challenges in importing specialized agricultural equipment, affecting the establishment of demonstration sites and training facilities.

174 The transition to Quantum caused significant implementation challenges, especially the migration of project budgets from ATLAS, which affected project delivery. These Quantum-related challenges were noted by several national partners, who observed changes in the pattern of UNDP processes, especially with regard to procurement. Several partners noted complex procurement procedures, vendor qualification issues and the need to comply with multiple layers of approval.

Finding 20. Monitoring and evaluation, learning and knowledge management. UNDP strengthened its monitoring and evaluation systems during the programme cycle through integrated data platforms and enhanced tracking tools. These improvements enabled better cross-sectoral analysis and results measurement, particularly in gender equality initiatives. However, challenges remained in outcome-level monitoring, impact measurement and systematic documentation of transformative changes. Data disaggregation efforts also required further enhancement.

The current programme cycle was marked by improvements in M&E systems. The Country Office made efforts to capture both quantitative and qualitative data across multiple sectors, including socio-economic development, governance, climate resilience and gender equality. The integrated data platform (UNINFO and the Country Framework's annual planning and reporting processes, developed in collaboration with other UN agencies) enabled data to be aggregated for cross-sectoral analysis and more unified tracking of progress, particularly in poverty reduction and climate action. Emphasis was placed on collecting disaggregated data to better tailor interventions for vulnerable groups such as displaced populations and women. The Gender Portfolio introduced a data tool that proved valuable for tracking results at the outcome level. Projects such as parliamentary support and police reform used perception surveys and pre- and post-surveys, providing deeper insights into UNDP's contributions beyond activity implementation. The Innovation Team developed specific instruments such as learning logs and evaluation frameworks for design thinking. Knowledge management improved through regular documentation and dissemination of lessons learned via analytical reports, policy briefs and knowledge-sharing events.

Despite these advances, challenges persisted. Monitoring practices often remained process-oriented, focusing on outputs rather than transformative change at the outcome level.[175] Limited evidence was available to measure the impacts of initiatives such as alternative dispute resolution services or judicial efficiency improvements through e-justice tools. Similarly, public awareness campaigns lacked strong evidence of uptake, for instance in free legal aid services.[176]

Progress reports tended to emphasize activity completion over substantive outcomes. The decentralized evaluation plan prioritized project-level assessments over outcome-level evaluations, limiting the ability to comprehensively assess strategic impacts. Additionally, the evaluation encountered difficulties in securing complete documentation, indicating gaps in the Country Office's system for organizing and sharing project information.

Although the Innovation Team used internal tracking tools, a systematic framework to monitor the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of Outcome 4 innovations was lacking.[177] While resource constraints and the experimental nature of the portfolio explained some of these gaps, the absence of systematic impact measurement hindered assessment of innovations' transformative potential. Further enhancement of data disaggregation is also needed to capture intersectionality across demographics and regions.

[175] For example, while the Future Skills and Jobs for Youth project effectively tracked immediate outputs such as the number of startups supported (13) and participants trained (50), stakeholders noted difficulties in measuring longer-term employment outcomes and the sustainability of created job opportunities.

[176] For example, data was scarce on the increased utilization of alternative dispute resolution services or measurable improvements in judicial efficiency following the introduction of e-justice tools. Similarly, while public awareness campaigns were conducted, their impact on the actual uptake of free legal aid services remained uncertain due to the lack of strong evidence.

[177] The Innovation Team developed tailored monitoring instruments to log progress and learning within its interventions, such as the learning log for the Stepanavan portfolio, which was structured to record learning for each of the portfolio options and a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework for design thinking.

Finding 21. Sustainability and replication. While UNDP successfully institutionalized several upstream policy initiatives, three key factors remained essential to ensure long-term sustainability: strengthened institutional capacity to sustain initiatives, diversified funding sources and a culture open to innovation. Strengthening institutional ownership, building technical capacities and establishing sustainable financing mechanisms were identified as critical for sustaining impacts.

Since the last programme cycle, UNDP advanced the sustainability of its interventions. Key partners reported that UNDP's upstream policy work was generally sustainable. This was evident in the institutionalization of several key achievements, including the modernization of Armenia's legal framework and the adoption of international standards in humanitarian mine action, contributing to safer communities and sustainable development. UNDP's support for police reform and the nationwide introduction of a new patrol police force had a transformative effect on the policing and security sector. The strengthening of institutional capacities and frameworks within the human rights machinery is expected to further advance Armenia's human rights agenda and the protection of rights.

Some achievements demonstrated sustainability potential but required continued UNDP support. For example, although the Employment Strategy, specifically the Active Labour Market Policy, was adopted late in 2024, its application in Armenia remained in the early stages. Stakeholders expressed the need for UNDP's ongoing technical guidance to support full operationalization of the broader National Employment Strategy. Similarly, although the Travelinsights platform was transferred to the Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry continued to depend on UNDP funding and technical support to sustain its operations and promote private sector collaboration.

Two major barriers constrained programme sustainability. First, heavy reliance on donor funding limited the scaling potential of successful pilots, such as the SDG Innovation Lab and renewable energy initiatives. The absence of sustainable financing mechanisms, such as government funding, public–private partnerships or blended finance, created uncertainty around the initiatives' long-term viability.[178] Second, integrating modern approaches into governance systems required time and adaptation as institutions transitioned to innovative methodologies. For example, uptake of novel methodologies such as design thinking and data science in policymaking remained limited. Stakeholders emphasized the need for targeted capacity-building initiatives and institutional change management strategies to further equip public officials with technical expertise and foster a culture of innovation.

[178] An example of this was the Innovative Solutions for SDG Implementation in Armenia project, in which the lack of dedicated government co-financing and continued dependence on external donors created uncertainty about long-term financial sustainability, ultimately preventing the transition of successful pilots into broader systemic reforms. In these cases, a systemic issue was the lack of a clear financial model to sustain operations once external funding ended. For example, although UNDP successfully supported the establishment of five LAGs that managed grant schemes worth $1.2 million, concerns were expressed by stakeholders about their long-term viability without continued external support.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

This chapter presents the conclusions of the evaluation on UNDP's performance and UNDP contributions to development results in Armenia. It also presents the way forward, recommendations and the Country Office's management response.

3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. UNDP maintained its position as a trusted and strategic development partner in Armenia, with opportunities for greater engagement in key sectors.

In the current programme cycle, UNDP maintained its role as a trusted strategic partner by aligning its programming with national priorities, combining immediate crisis response with longer-term structural reforms and advancing social inclusion and gender equality. It demonstrated adaptability in responding to crises and environmental challenges. Targeted initiatives supported the inclusion of vulnerable groups and promoted women's representation and economic empowerment.

However, resource limitations constrained the scaling of successful initiatives in critical areas such as crisis response, constitutional reform, the anti-corruption agenda and renewable energy. Additional resources would allow for better addressing the needs of vulnerable and remote populations. While UNDP established a strong foundation in gender equality programming, opportunities remained to address deeper social norms and structural barriers.

Conclusion 2. UNDP's multi-dimensional interventions contributed significantly to key sectors, despite a complex development context and limited resources.

UNDP's interventions were multi-dimensional and helped advance several key reforms across Armenia's development landscape, including promoting the green transition and climate action, supporting socio-economic development, upgrading vocational education and training, empowering local communities and strengthening climate resilience, governance, the rule of law and human rights. UNDP also provided essential assistance during multiple crises. Notable contributions were made in police reform, mine action, parliamentary support and climate change mitigation.

However, several challenges limited the full potential of these contributions. First, resource constraints restricted the scale and sustainability of successful programmes, particularly in critical areas like labour market reform and anti-corruption. Second, shifting government priorities complicated the implementation of long-term development strategies. Third, coordination gaps among stakeholders hindered the development of coherent, systemic approaches, especially in vocational education and water resource management. Deeper institutional engagement, stronger partnerships and sustained political commitment will be essential for further progress.

Conclusion 3. UNDP demonstrated strong leadership in crisis response and contributed to the institutionalization of key policy reforms. However, limited coordination mechanisms, resource constraints and varying levels of acceptance of innovative approaches constrained effectiveness.

UNDP made strong contributions to UN coordination and crisis response, led by UNHCR and the Resident Coordinator's Office, especially in its effective support of displaced populations from Nagorno-Karabakh and in host communities. UNDP built a substantial project pipeline and achieved notable success in institutionalizing key policy initiatives, particularly in modernizing the legal framework and police reform. These outcomes underscored UNDP's ability to deliver large-scale programmes while maintaining strong institutional partnerships.

Nonetheless, structural challenges limited the achievement of greater impacts. Stronger coordination mechanisms would help harmonize development efforts and unlock greater opportunities for programmatic synergy. Resource constraints restricted the scaling of successful initiatives and substantive engagement in strategic areas such as public administration reform and anti-corruption. Sustainability was also challenged in some cases due to capacity gaps, reliance on external funding and institutional resistance to adopting new approaches. These factors highlight the need for operational improvements in development coordination, operational efficiency, results tracking and financing models.

Conclusion 4. Compared to the 2016–2019 cycle, UNDP evolved into a more capable organization, demonstrating enhanced crisis response capabilities, deeper programmatic integration and greater innovation, despite ongoing challenges related to funding and sustainability.

Compared to the previous programme cycle, UNDP Armenia demonstrated notable growth in institutional capabilities and programmatic sophistication. The organization evolved from primarily implementing discrete projects to adopting integrated approaches that address complex development challenges. This was particularly evident in its application of the humanitarian–development nexus during crisis response.

UNDP also markedly improved its use of innovation and technology. While the 2016–2019 period saw early experiments, the 2021–2024 cycle featured an institutional approach to mainstreaming behavioural science, digital transformation and data analytics across sectors. This evolution demonstrated a more mature organization capable of deploying innovative approaches to development challenges.

Whereas the 2016–2019 ICPE cited siloed interventions, the current period saw more integrated programming. This was especially apparent in areas like climate action, where UNDP combined policy support, technical assistance and community-level activities in a cohesive manner. Gender mainstreaming was also strengthened, moving from fragmented initiatives to a more comprehensive approach anchored in a dedicated portfolio.

Since the last ICPE, UNDP Armenia further strengthened its adaptive capacity. In the current cycle, UNDP was able to pivot resources and programming to address emerging crises while maintaining long-term development objectives. This marked a notable improvement over the 2016–2019 period, when crisis response capabilities were less developed.

Despite this progress, several challenges persisted. In both cycles, the need to secure sustainable funding sources continued to be a key external factor influencing the long-term viability of the programme. In the 2021–2024 period, the need for more diverse funding streams and stronger resource mobilization was even more pronounced, particularly given the shifting priorities of key donors.

While tangible improvements were noted in M&E practices during the current cycle, particularly in gender-responsive monitoring,challenges remained in tracking transformative change and sustainable impact.

Overall, the evolution of UNDP Armenia from 2016–2019 to 2021–2024 indicates a positive trajectory in institutional sophistication and programmatic effectiveness, though with clear areas requiring continued attention and improvement.

3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Focusing on High-Impact Initiatives

Maintain the current momentum and explore further opportunities to expand programming in key areas such as crisis response and refugee integration, mine action, police reform, constitutional reform, public administration reform, anti-corruption and digital transformation. Pursue partnerships and co-financing arrangements more proactively with both traditional and non-traditional donors. For each thematic area, create tailored partnership and funding proposals that align national partner expectations with UNDP's technical expertise and prospective donors' goals.

Recommendation 2. Strengthening Social Inclusion

In line with the government's social development policies, further strengthen social inclusion efforts and expand partnerships with local advocacy groups and community-based organizations that work with communities experiencing specific vulnerabilities and unique challenges, addressing the unique challenges faced by this group.

Recommendation 3. Addressing Gender-Based Structural Barriers

Maintain and accelerate support for gender equality and women's empowerment, including through career mentorships, sponsorship schemes and networking for women at mid-level management, to support their progression to senior positions. Engage in policy dialogue with national and local authorities to earmark funding specifically for sustaining women's leadership programmes. Launch dialogue platforms at the community level that engage male community leaders more intensively as champions for gender equality.

Recommendation 4. Enhancing Learning and Results Tracking

Provide training and continuous user support (e.g. helpdesk, on-demand tutorials) to project staff and implementing partners on Quantum's functionalities.

Pay greater attention to the capacities of private-sector actors in key activity areas, particularly the construction sector. Establish a practice of pre-assessing private-sector capabilities and contingency planning in areas where substantial engagement with private firms is expected.

Continue efforts to integrate clear outcome-level indicators (including baselines and targets) into project designs and progress reports. Intensify capacity-building for project staff and partners on outcome-level data collection and analysis. Strengthen the centralized digital repository of all project documentation. Embed stronger requirements for gender, age, location and, where feasible, other demographic variables (e.g. disability, ethnicity) in data-gathering processes across all projects. Redesign the results framework tailored to experimental or pilot initiatives under Outcome 4, specifying qualitative and quantitative impact indicators.

Recommendation 5. Strengthening Contribution to Development Effectiveness

Explore, in cooperation with the UN Resident Coordinator Office and relevant central government entities (e.g. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs), opportunities for UNDP to support coordination of development effectiveness in key sectors.

Assess opportunities to provide technical assistance to government agencies responsible for maintaining the database of completed, ongoing and planned development cooperation projects.

Recommendation 6. Establishing Sustainable Financing and Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Innovation

Advocate more proactively to high-level policymakers and relevant ministries for embedded funding of proven initiatives and pilots (e.g. energy efficiency retrofits, renewable energy pilots, community-scale services and infrastructure, data-driven SDG projects) within national, local and sectoral budgets. Develop structured change management strategies (e.g. leadership coaching, champion networks) to facilitate the adoption of innovative methodologies (e.g. design thinking, data science) within government agencies. Re-establish the process with relevant government institutions to introduce the Integrated National Financing Framework.

Provide more targeted capacity-building programmes (both in person and online) on design thinking, data analysis and agile project management for civil servants, potentially in partnership with local universities or research institutes.

Advance discussions with the Ministry of Finance and other relevant authorities on a sustainable and predictable funding model for UNDP in the next programme cycle.

3.3 Key recommendations and management response

RECOMMENDATION 1: Focusing on High-Impact Initiatives

Maintain the current momentum and explore further opportunities to expand programming in key areas such as crisis response and refugee integration, mine action, police reform, constitutional reform, public administration reform, anti-corruption and digital transformation. Pursue partnerships and co-financing arrangements more proactively with both traditional and non-traditional donors. For each thematic area, create tailored partnership and funding proposals that align national partner expectations with UNDP's technical expertise and prospective donors' goals.

Management response: Accepted.

Expanding the programme remains one of the highest priorities for the Country Office. In this regard, the CO will strategically prioritize key partnerships—including the EU, vertical funds, bilateral donors and IFIs. Resource mobilization efforts will be aligned with Armenia's national priorities and international commitments, donor priorities and UNDP's comparative advantages.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, Completed or No due date)
1.1 **Mine Action Sector:** Maintaining momentum and expanding programming on landmine clearance and victim assistance by engaging in structured dialogue and proposal development with the EU FPI. Developing and implementing a comprehensive, donor-tailored proposal for mine action, highlighting alignment with humanitarian and security objectives and including a victim assistance component.	By January 2026	Governance Portfolio	A new Mine Action programme to be started by January 2026	Initiated
1.2 **Police Reform:** Engaging strategically with EU and USA INL to address complementary priorities and funding opportunities for advancing effective democratic policing and accountability mechanisms.	By January 2026	Governance Portfolio	New strategic Police Support initiatives to be started by January 2026	Initiated
1.3 **Constitutional Reform:** Extend engagement with key national stakeholders and sustain the UNDP position as a technical partner for ongoing constitutional support.	By mid-2027	Governance Portfolio	RPA with MOJ aligning EU goals with potential constitutional reform trajectories developed under ongoing ATHENA project	Initiated
1.4 **Public Administration Reform:** Strengthen partnership with the PMO and DPMOs on civil service modernization, performance-based management reform and other strategic dimensions of the Public Administration Reform.	By 2027	Governance Portfolio	Support Public Administration Reform through respective ongoing initiatives (PERSEUS) and mobilize resources for additional support	Initiated

Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, Completed or No due date)
1.5 **Anti-Corruption:** Strengthen current partnerships and seek co-financing for integrity and oversight functions, focusing on Audit Chamber–Parliament linkage and digital tools for transparency.	By 2028	Governance Portfolio	Under the ongoing MAP 2.0: FORSETI project on support to the National Assembly's capacities	Initiated
1.6 **Crisis Response and Refugee Integration:** Refugee integration is mainstreamed across the new CPD 2026–2030. The Inclusive Livelihoods National Framework for Refugees and Host Communities developed with UNDP support.	By December 2025	All CO Portfolios	The framework is to be officially launched by the Government by December 2025	Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 2: Strengthening Social Inclusion

In line with the government's social development policies, further strengthen social inclusion efforts and expand partnerships with local advocacy groups and community-based organizations that work with communities experiencing specific vulnerabilities and unique challenges, addressing the unique challenges faced by this group.

Management response: Partially accepted.

The Country Office will expand relevant partnerships and continue to design new initiatives in an inclusive manner, in line with the universal principle of leaving no one behind, ensuring that diverse and disadvantaged groups benefit from its interventions.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, Completed or No due date)
2.1 Expand partnerships with local advocacy groups and community-based organizations	Continuously, by 2030	CO all portfolios	CO engages in respective forums and events	Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 3: Addressing Gender-Based Structural Barriers

Maintain and accelerate support for gender equality and women's empowerment, including through career mentorships, sponsorship schemes and networking for women at mid-level management, to support their progression to senior positions. Engage in policy dialogue with national and local authorities to earmark funding specifically for sustaining women's leadership programmes. Launch dialogue platforms at the community level that engage male community leaders more intensively as champions for gender equality.

Management response: Partially accepted.

UNDP will further advance its women's leadership scheme adapting the COM-B model (capability, opportunity, motivation for behavioural change). UNDP will continue advocating for introducing more sustainable funding opportunities for sustaining women's leadership programmes and introducing new dialogue platforms at the local level to engage all duty bearers for gender equality promotion.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, Completed or No due date)
3.1 Systematic review of the CO pipeline to ensure gradual increase of the proportion of GEN2 and GEN3 projects.	Annually	GE Portfolio	All CO portfolios to contribute	Initiated
3.2 COM-B model will be fully integrated into the leadership advancement intervention for 100 mid-career women in public administration, local self-government and the private sector	December 2025	GE Portfolio		Initiated
3.3 UNDP will ensure co-funding from five local self-governments for gender-sensitive and inclusive municipal sectoral service pilots with broad engagement of women	December 2025	GE Portfolio		Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 4: Enhancing Learning and Results Tracking

- Provide training and continuous user support (e.g. helpdesk, on-demand tutorials) to project staff and implementing partners on Quantum's functionalities.
- Pay greater attention to the capacities of private-sector actors in key activity areas, particularly the construction sector. Establish a practice of pre-assessing private-sector capabilities and contingency planning in areas where substantial engagement with private firms is expected.

Continue efforts to integrate clear outcome-level indicators (including baselines and targets) into project designs and progress reports. Intensify capacity-building for project staff and partners on outcome-level data collection and analysis. Strengthen the centralized digital repository of all project documentation. Embed stronger requirements for gender, age, location and, where feasible, other demographic variables (e.g. disability, ethnicity) in data-gathering processes across all projects. Redesign the results framework tailored to experimental or pilot initiatives under Outcome 4, specifying qualitative and quantitative impact indicators.

Management response: Partially accepted.

Country Office staff have received comprehensive training on Quantum functionalities throughout the transition from Atlas to Quantum. Regular trainings, webinars and other support mechanisms have been in place to assist teams in adapting to the new system, resulting in continuous improvements in effectiveness and efficiency since the early stages of implementation. The CO will maintain a pragmatic approach to private sector engagement, making use of available corporate instruments and operating in line with relevant policies and procedures. Additionally, data-gathering aspects of programming will be further strengthened.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, Completed or No due date)
4.1 Continuous training and user support will be provided to project staff on Quantum functionalities.	Regularly	Operations units	Additional ad hoc counselling is available for all project teams on non-standard issues and challenges	Initiated
4.2 Continued and proper application of relevant policies and procedures will guide private sector engagement, with particular attention to the construction sector.	Continuously	Operations units Programme portfolios	Due diligence is being conducted in close collaboration with the HQ focal points	Initiated

Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, Completed or No due date)
4.3 Following the approval of the 2026–2030 CPD, the Country Office will develop an enhanced results-tracking tool that, in addition to mapping linkages with the Strategic Plan (SP), Cooperation Framework (CF) and CPD, will strengthen the ability to trace project-level results to CPD Outcomes.	By December 2026	DRR, M&E Analyst, Programme portfolios		Initiated
4.4 Dedicated training on data-gathering aspects of programming will be conducted for all respective CO teams.	By December 2025	M&E Analyst	The CO possesses in-house capacity to conduct such an exercise	Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 5: Strengthening Contribution to Development Effectiveness

- Explore, in cooperation with the UN Resident Coordinator Office and relevant central government entities (e.g. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs), opportunities for UNDP to support coordination of development effectiveness in key sectors.
- Assess opportunities to provide technical assistance to government agencies responsible for maintaining the database of completed, ongoing and planned development cooperation projects.

Management response: Partially accepted.

Under the overall leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and the Resident Coordinator, UNDP has provided technical assistance in designing a new digitalized system to support the Government of Armenia in coordinating various streams of donor assistance. The ADAMS initiative aims to establish a unified data platform for tracking development projects in Armenia and facilitating transparent, results-oriented public reporting. It is expected to strengthen coordination among development partners, enable effective aid tracking and enhance data management—empowering stakeholders to make informed decisions based on comprehensive, up-to-date information on development assistance.

Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, Completed or No due date)
5.1 Complete and hand over the ADAMS system to a relevant body of the Government of Armenia.	December 2025	SED Portfolio	The official handover ceremony of the ADAMS platform to take place before December 2025	Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 6: Establishing Sustainable Financing and Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Innovation

- Advocate more proactively to high-level policymakers and relevant ministries for embedded funding of proven initiatives and pilots (e.g. energy efficiency retrofits, renewable energy pilots, community-scale services and infrastructure, data-driven SDG projects) within national, local and sectoral budgets. Develop structured change management strategies (e.g. leadership coaching, champion networks) to facilitate the adoption of innovative methodologies (e.g. design thinking, data science) within government agencies. Re-establish the process with relevant government institutions to introduce the Integrated National Financing Framework.
- Provide more targeted capacity-building programmes (both in person and online) on design thinking, data analysis and agile project management for civil servants, potentially in partnership with local universities or research institutes.
- Advance discussions with the Ministry of Finance and other relevant authorities on a sustainable and predictable funding model for UNDP in the next programme cycle.

Management response: Partially accepted.

UNDP is working closely with stakeholders at both national and sub-national levels to scale up proven solutions. One example is the replication of community water reservoirs—originally funded by the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme and implemented by UNDP—which has since been expanded through additional donor support and complementary public funding. Capacity building of partners remains a core priority and is an integral part of the vision for the new Country Programme Document (CPD). A strategic dialogue with the Ministry of Finance is already underway to explore innovative and predictable approaches to financing joint initiatives.

Recommendation 6 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, Completed or No due date)
6.1 Support building the community of innovation practitioners in the public sector and advocate for mainstreaming and institutionalization of innovative approaches in public administration.	2028	Innovation and SDG Finance Portfolio		Initiated
6.2 Design suitable arrangements for higher sustainability and predictability of funding for UNDP Programme in Armenia.	December 2026	CO Senior Management		Initiated

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

ANNEXES

Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/24626/

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Evaluation framework

Annex 3. Documents consulted

Annex 4. List of projects reviewed

Annex 5. Status of country programme outcome and output indicators

Annex 6. Performance rating

Annex 7. Armenia governance indicators

Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme
One UN Plaza, DC1-20th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel. +1 (646) 781 4200

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