



# INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION ZIMBABWE



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### INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: ZIMBABWE

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# Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Zimbabwe, the second country-level assessment conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP in the country. This evaluation covers the programme period 2016 to 2020.

Zimbabwe experienced significant changes in governance in November 2017, with the ousting of former President Robert Mugabe and the establishment of a new Government. This led to the design and implementation of the Transitional Stabilisation Programme for 2018—2020, guiding government action. The country's economy has experienced important shocks in recent years, including a renewed rise of inflation rates and reduced activity in key sectors of the economy. Sharp increases in food prices have driven up extreme poverty rates, and the livelihoods and food security of vulnerable people across Zimbabwe have been severely impacted by recent climatic events such as droughts and cyclones.

The evaluation found that UNDP in Zimbabwe has been able to find ways to deal with the country's multiple development challenges effectively and adapt to a rapidly evolving context. UNDP was strategic in identifying spaces for continued collaboration and maintaining a working partnership with national partners, allowing the country office to engage and advance on several sensitive areas at an opportune time, including elections and land reform. While the country office's strategy for women's empowerment was effective in the support to the electoral process, a clear strategy was lacking to address deeply engrained economic inequalities. Finally, the UNDP focus on resilience

programming has resulted in resource mobilization dividends for the country office and a rapidly growing resilience programme that targets vulnerable households while supporting national response mechanisms for livelihoods and climate change adaptation challenges.

As UNDP in Zimbabwe moves forward under a new country programme, the country office will have to choose partners within the Government and engage with civil society and citizens to develop support for inclusive growth in the long run, anchored in the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in national development frameworks. The programme will need to be built on strengthened partnerships at central and district levels for truly sustainable results. As the resilience-building programme takes an increasingly central place in its programme, UNDP will need to develop its capacity to address the complex issue of resilience effectively and take the opportunity to achieve transformative results on the issues of vulnerability and gender inequalities.

I would like to thank the Government of Zimbabwe, various national stakeholders, colleagues at the UNDP Zimbabwe country office and the Regional Bureau for Africa for their support throughout the evaluation. I am sure that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will strengthen the formulation of the next country programme strategy.



**Indran A. Naidoo**  
**Director**  
**Independent Evaluation Office**



# Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	vii
Evaluation Brief: ICPE Zimbabwe	1
<b>CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Purpose, objective and scope	4
1.2 Overview of the national development context	4
1.3 UNDP programme in Zimbabwe	6
1.4 Evaluation methodology	8
<b>CHAPTER 2. FINDINGS</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 General findings	12
2.2 Poverty reduction and inclusive livelihoods	18
2.3 Governance and human rights	20
2.4 Resilience and climate change adaptation	32
<b>CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</b>	<b>39</b>
3.1 Conclusions	40
3.2 Recommendations and management response	43
<b>ANNEXES</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>FIGURES AND TABLE</b>	
<b>Figure 1.</b> Total UNDP programme expenditures as share of total ODA, 2016-2017	6
<b>Figure 2.</b> Programme expenditure by outcome and year, 2017-2018	8
<b>Figure 3.</b> Programme expenditure by gender marker and year, 2016-2018	15
<b>Figure 4.</b> Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund, budget and expenditures, 2016-2019	33
<b>Table.</b> Activities and areas of contribution of the independent commissions through UNDP support	23



# Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil society organizations
<b>CPD</b>	Country programme document
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster risk reduction
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>ICPE</b>	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
<b>IEO</b>	Independent Evaluation Office
<b>IGSL</b>	Supporting Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Livelihoods project
<b>LPC</b>	Local Peace Committee
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NANGO</b>	National Association of NGOs
<b>NAYO</b>	National Association of Youth Organisations
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NPRC</b>	National Peace and Reconciliation Commission
<b>OAG</b>	Office of the Auditor General
<b>OAI</b>	Office of Audit and Investigations (UNDP)
<b>ODA</b>	Official development assistance
<b>PMU</b>	Programme Management Unit
<b>SADC</b>	Southern Africa Development Community
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SECA</b>	Supporting Enhanced Climate Action for Low-Carbon and Climate Resilient Development Pathway project
<b>TSP</b>	Transitional Stabilisation Programme
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>UNV</b>	United Nations Volunteers
<b>UN-Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>ZEC</b>	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
<b>ZGC</b>	Zimbabwe Gender Commission
<b>ZHRC</b>	Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission
<b>ZIM-ECO</b>	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission capacity-building project
<b>ZIMSTAT</b>	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
<b>ZIMVAC</b>	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee
<b>ZWPC</b>	Zimbabwe Women’s Parliamentary Caucus
<b>ZUNDAF</b>	Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>ZRBF</b>	Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund



# Evaluation Brief: ICPE Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's governance has undergone significant political and economic shifts in recent years. Politically, the ousting of former President Robert Mugabe led to the election of a new President and appointment of a new Cabinet in 2018. The country's economy, which had initially recovered from the 2008 economic and financial crisis, saw high rates of inflation return in 2019 and a significant increase of public debt. Meanwhile, poverty rates across the country are high, and about two thirds of the country's labour force works in the agricultural, forestry and fishing sectors, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Recent droughts have had severe food security and nutritional consequences, also impacting sanitation, hygiene and the water and energy supply.

UNDP in Zimbabwe developed a country programme for the period 2016-2020, designed to support national development priorities as informed by the 2013-2018 Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation and to advance on the achievement of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). The UNDP programme in Zimbabwe was developed around the following three pillars: (1) inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods; (2) democratic governance; and (3) climate change and resilience to climate shocks.

## Findings and conclusions

UNDP has managed to adapt to a complex political, economic and social context. The changes in the operating environment have tested its capacity for adaptation, and the country office has focused on strengthening engagement with transitional authorities. UNDP was able to establish new partnerships with government authorities, maintain a working portfolio and find new areas of work. This gave UNDP the ability to work on development opportunities that would possibly have not been addressed otherwise, given the lack of clarity of donor support to the country.

The positioning and engagement of UNDP led to key advances in sensitive areas, including land

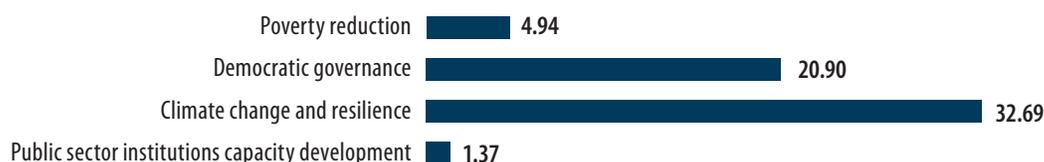
### UNDP Programme expenditure funding sources, 2016-2018

(excluding Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria)



### Programme expenditure by outcome, 2016-2018 (Million US\$)

(excluding Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria)



reform and more prominently, electoral support. Effective collaboration with technical and financial partners, as well as with non-State actors, has led to the development of key policy documents, including the Transitional Stabilisation Plan. Several projects in the area of governance were aligned to contribute to the achievement of a smooth electoral process. UNDP also increased efforts to address women's participation in democratic processes through gender-sensitive election support, with notable results.

The Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF) is becoming an increasingly important programme for UNDP in Zimbabwe, a clear result of the country office's

strategy to continue targeting vulnerable households while trying to improve national response mechanisms to the country's challenges in livelihoods and climate adaptation. The UNDP capacity to address complex challenges and in good collaboration with key stakeholders is evidenced by the design and effective implementation of the ZRBF. The complex nature and growth of the project has shifted the resources of the ZRBF office increasingly to project management, while the required technical support has sometimes been missing. The UNDP technical capacity for ZRBF will be further tested by increasing climate and economic shocks and by the project's growth.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** While UNDP has been able to address emerging challenges and navigate changes in context effectively, the implementation of the current programme has brought several issues to light that the country office will need to address in the next programme. UNDP must continue to be strategic in choosing partners within government and engage with civil society and citizens to develop frameworks that will support inclusive growth, particularly in the long run. UNDP can build on its exiting and unique position to further support SDG integration and monitoring, productive and sustainable use of land for the land reform programme, and continued citizen engagement and participation in future electoral processes.

**Recommendation 2.** The next country programme will need to be built on strengthened partnerships with the

Government of Zimbabwe and other development actors for the full achievement of its programme outcomes. Identifying the right partners, as UNDP has successfully done in implementing its democratic governance projects, can bring more effective and sustainable results. The issues that emerged from some of its upstream work need to be addressed together with government partners. At the district level, partnerships with local authorities must be strengthened to ensure a full contribution from all stakeholders, particularly for resilience outcomes.

**Recommendation 3.** UNDP should analyse the areas where it can address gender inequalities more strategically in its programme, so as to develop a response that goes beyond targeting men and women. By focusing on structural

barriers and the root causes of gender inequalities in Zimbabwe, UNDP has the opportunity to move from inclusive interventions to truly transformative results.

**Recommendation 4.** UNDP support to the livelihoods and resilience of vulnerable communities to climate and economic shocks will depend largely on its capacity to effectively approach the complex issues of resilience in Zimbabwe. While the growth in the project's scope is the result of successes in partnership and resource mobilization, it will need to build broader partnerships and more inclusion of local and central government to ensure sustainability of the approaches.

A decorative graphic consisting of a dotted white line that starts at the top left, goes down, then right, then down again, and finally right. It features several colored circles: a light orange circle at the top left, a dark blue circle on the vertical line, a light green circle at the bottom left, a light orange circle, a dark blue circle, and a light green circle on the horizontal line.

# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Purpose, objective and scope

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of the UNDP contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of the UNDP strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts for achieving development results. The purpose of an ICPE is to:

- Support the development of the next UNDP country programme
- Strengthen the accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders
- Strengthen the accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board

ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.<sup>1</sup> The IEO is independent of UNDP management and is headed by a Director who reports to the UNDP Executive Board. The responsibility of the IEO is twofold: (1) to provide the Executive Board with valid and credible information from evaluations for corporate accountability, decision-making and improvement; and (2) to enhance the independence, credibility and utility of the evaluation function, and its coherence, harmonization and alignment in support of United Nations reform and national ownership. Based on the principle of national ownership, the IEO seeks to conduct ICPEs in collaboration with national authorities where the country programme is implemented.

UNDP Zimbabwe was selected for an ICPE as its country programme is due to end in 2020. This was the second ICPE for Zimbabwe, covering the current

UNDP programme cycle for 2016-2020 and including all projects active during this period. The ICPE was conducted in 2019 to feed into the development of the new country programme starting from 2021. The previous country programme cycle was also considered when relevant to assess the sustainability of results. The ICPE was carried out in close collaboration with the Government of Zimbabwe, UNDP Zimbabwe country office and UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa.

## 1.2 Overview of the national development context

**Governance:** In 2013, Zimbabwe adopted a progressive normative framework provided for by the 2013 Constitution. Following the adoption of the framework, there have been efforts to align the country's laws and policies to the Constitution. In July 2018, a new President was elected and subsequently, a new Cabinet was appointed. The bipartisan Parliament was sworn in in September 2018.

**Economy:** Zimbabwe initially recovered from the 2008 financial and economic crisis, which was most notably marked by an episode of hyperinflation, reaching an estimated 79.6 billion percent in November 2008.<sup>2</sup> The economic growth that followed slowed after 2013, recovering only slightly in 2017. It is estimated that gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed again in 2018 (0.9 percent) and will be in recession in 2019 (-5.2 percent) and 2020 (-0.1 percent), before recovering in 2021-2023.<sup>3</sup> The overall low economic performance was mostly related to falling commodity prices, the recent 2015/2016 drought which affected agricultural production, the unsustainably growing fiscal deficit and instability in the fuel supply.<sup>4,5</sup> Public debt rose from nearly 50 percent of GDP in 2012 to 70 percent

<sup>1</sup> See UNDP Evaluation Policy: <http://www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf>. The ICPE adheres to the Norms and the Standards and the ethical Code of Conduct established by the United Nations Evaluation Group ([www.uneval.org](http://www.uneval.org)).

<sup>2</sup> Hanke and Kwok. Zimbabwe's Hyperinflation: The Correct Number Is 89 Sextillion Percent, 2009. See: <https://www.cato.org/blog/zimbabwes-hyperinflation-correct-number-89-sextillion-percent>

<sup>3</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit. Forecast summary – Zimbabwe, 2019. See: <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=257881809&Country=Zimbabwe&topic=Economy&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=Forecast+summary>

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/zimbabwe/overview>

<sup>5</sup> Recently, the country-wide shortages of fuel were exacerbated by Cyclone Idai which damaged the key petrol and natural gas supply chain from Beira (Mozambique) to Mutare (Zimbabwe). Felex Share. Zimbabwe: Cyclone Damages Fuel Control Room in Beira, 19 March 2019. See: <https://allafrica.com/stories/201903190361.html>

in 2016 after the adoption of a multicurrency system, and inflation was stabilized at around 2.5 percent between 2010 and 2017.<sup>6</sup> Recently, however, the inflation rate is again on the rise, reaching 353 percent in September 2019.<sup>7</sup> Most external debt is in arrears amounting to US\$5 billion and the domestic debt increased from \$275 million in 2012 to almost \$10 billion in 2018.

**Poverty:** The latest figures available for Zimbabwe show household poverty at 62.2 percent and extreme poverty at 16.2 percent.<sup>8</sup> Nationally-representative and up-to-date data on poverty in Zimbabwe are non-existent. A 2018 baseline survey of the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF)<sup>9</sup> gave a glimpse of the current poverty level in selected rural districts of the country. The rate of multidimensional poverty was about 50 percent in ZRBF programme areas. Three districts in the North-East and North (Binga, Kariba and Mbire) targeted by ZRBF displayed a very high rate of multidimensional poverty, estimated at 79 percent in 2018. In 2017, the country had a Human Development Index score of 0.535 and was ranked 156<sup>th</sup> out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index.<sup>10</sup> In 2014, two thirds of the country's labour force worked in the agricultural, forestry and fishing sectors.<sup>11</sup> The official unemployment estimate was 11 percent in 2016.<sup>12</sup> While this is reasonably low, 65.7 percent of employment is considered vulnerable.<sup>13</sup>

**Gender:** Zimbabwe has seen promising improvements in gender equality and women's empowerment, notably in the areas of education and health. The Gender Development Index increased by 4.5 percent between 2000 and 2017, from 0.886 to 0.923. In 2018, Zimbabwe closed 72 percent of its overall gender gap, up from 64.6 percent in 2006.

The gender gap for educational attainment and health and survival is closed, at 98.6 and 98 percent respectively in 2018. This is due to improvements in female and male access to education and the expansion of health facilities countrywide. Efforts need to be made to ensure progress for women's economic and political empowerment. The gender gap for economic participation and opportunity is closed at 73 percent in 2018, up from 60.6 percent in 2006. In 2018, men's labour-force participation and estimated earned income were 11 and 33 percent higher than for women. Women's lower income is due in part to their livelihoods, which depend on a largely vulnerable agricultural sector, while men have access to higher and more stable wages in the mining, manufacturing, public and financial sectors. Despite the substantial share of women in parliamentary and senate seats, which stood at 31.5 and 44 percent respectively in 2018, the gender gap for political empowerment is closed at 19 percent, up from 10.2 percent in 2006. Ensuring women's political and economic participation are the key challenges for Zimbabwe to close its gender gap in the decade to come.

**Health:** Among key health indicators, HIV prevalence among adults aged 15 to 49 years declined from 15 percent in 2010 to 13.3 percent in 2017 but remains one of the highest rates in the world. However, antiretroviral therapy coverage is at 75 percent in 2016 and is on track to reach 100 percent by 2030. While the incidence of malaria decreased by 18 percent globally between 2010 and 2016, progress was slower in Zimbabwe.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, the incidence of tuberculosis has decreased at a higher rate in Zimbabwe compared to global and regional rates. Tuberculosis rates were halved between 2010 and 2016 in Zimbabwe.<sup>15</sup> The health sector still faces

<sup>6</sup> Inflation, GDP deflator, World Bank Data, (2018). See: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.DEFL.KD.ZG?end=2014&locations=ZW&start=1960&view=chart>

<sup>7</sup> Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. See: <https://tradingeconomics.com/zimbabwe/inflation-cpi>

<sup>8</sup> Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT). *2011/12 Poverty Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey*, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund. *Impact evaluation baseline report*, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> UNDP Human Development Report, 2018. See: [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/ZWE.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/ZWE.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> ZIMSTAT. *2014 Labour Force Survey*, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Government of Zimbabwe and UNDP. *Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2017*, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> UNDP Human Development Report, 2018.

<sup>14</sup> African Health Observatory and World Health Organization. *Zimbabwe Factsheet of Health Statistics*, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

several constraints, notably for access to maternal and child health services and for the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases. Health sector financing continues to be low, with official data showing government expenditure at 6.5 percent in 2014 and 8.7 percent in 2015,<sup>16</sup> below regional levels and the Abuja Declaration target of 15 percent. External funding still represents a quarter of total government expenditure on health and inefficiencies in the allocation of public health spending remain a major constraint.

**Climate change** is a significant threat to Zimbabwe's economy and the well-being of Zimbabweans. Temperatures and the variability of precipitation have increased, leading to a more unreliable onset of the rainy season and increasing the frequency of dry spells. Zimbabwe was hit by a drought in 2015/2016 which had severe food security and nutritional consequences, also impacting sanitation, hygiene and the water and energy supply. The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee<sup>17</sup> estimated that 2.8 million people potentially faced food insecurity due to the droughts during the 2015/2016 agricultural season.<sup>18</sup> Flooding is also a prominent natural disaster in the northern and southern regions of Zimbabwe. The country's vulnerability to climate variability and natural disasters, combined with its heavy reliance on the drought- and flood-prone agricultural sector, ranks the country ninth

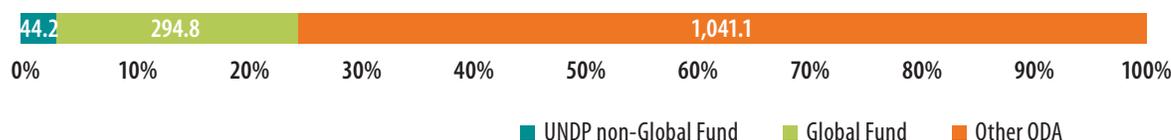
out of the 16 countries at extreme risk of climate change vulnerability<sup>19</sup> over the next 30 years. An estimated 4.2 million people will require humanitarian support due to El Niño for the period 2018 to 2019. In response to climate change, the Government of Zimbabwe considers mitigation, adaptation and resilience-building as priority issues.<sup>20</sup>

### 1.3 UNDP programme in Zimbabwe

The UNDP programme in Zimbabwe accounts for a substantial and growing share of the official development assistance (ODA) received by the country, reaching close to a quarter of total ODA in 2016. However, it must be noted that a large part of programme expenditure includes the UNDP role as a principal recipient for the grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which accounted for over 85 percent of total UNDP programme expenditure for 2016-2018 (figure 1).

Based on the country programme document (CPD) for the period under review (2016-2020), the country programme focused on four main outcome areas: (1) poverty reduction; (2) democratic governance; (3) resilience to climate change and disasters; and (4) public service delivery. These are expected to contribute to the four outcomes of the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF).

**FIGURE 1. Total UNDP programme expenditures as share of total ODA, 2016-2017 (Million US\$)**



Source: Atlas Executive Snapshot/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development data

<sup>16</sup> ZIMSTAT, Ministry of Health and Child Care, Zimbabwe Reconstruction Fund. 2017. *Zimbabwe National Health Accounts 2015*, Estimates for Zimbabwe.

<sup>17</sup> Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC). ZimVAC is a consortium of Government, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other international organisations. See: <http://fnc.org.zw/our-work/>

<sup>18</sup> UNDP Human Development Report, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Climate Change Vulnerability Index published by Maplecroft's *Climate Change Risk Atlas 2011* and cited by Government of Zimbabwe and UNDP, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Government of Zimbabwe and UNDP. *Zimbabwe Human Development Report 2017*, 2017.

The programme's **poverty reduction outcome** aimed to strengthen the country's capacity to plan, design, carry out and monitor pro-poor development policies and rural development strategies. The current portfolio includes four projects that target institutional capacity in this regard: one project, which ended in 2018, aimed to strengthen the National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) for improved evidence-based policy (\$1.4 million in expenditures for 2016-2018); one project supports SDG-based policy planning and implementation (\$1.1 million); and one project targets the country's capacity in the area of aid coordination (\$500,000). The portfolio includes a project to support national and sub-national pro-poor policy development (\$1.4 million). As a complement to these policy-level activities, an additional project implemented interventions directly targeting communities' livelihoods, through increased production capacities and access to skills, technologies and finance (\$1.7 million).

The poverty reduction portfolio also includes five projects, with three of them carried over from the previous programme period and ending in 2017, and two new projects which started in 2018, supporting the capacity development of the Ministry of Health and response and access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The main role of UNDP is the management of Global Fund grants implemented by the Ministry of Health and Child Care. As the principal recipient, UNDP is responsible for programme management, financial accountability, procurement of goods and services and monitoring and evaluation. The total expenditures of these five projects for 2016-2018 is \$410 million, which accounts for over 85 percent of total programme expenditures over the period under review. UNDP has complemented the Global Fund grants with activities funded by its regular resources, aiming to build the capacities of national partners for the overall management of health service provision.

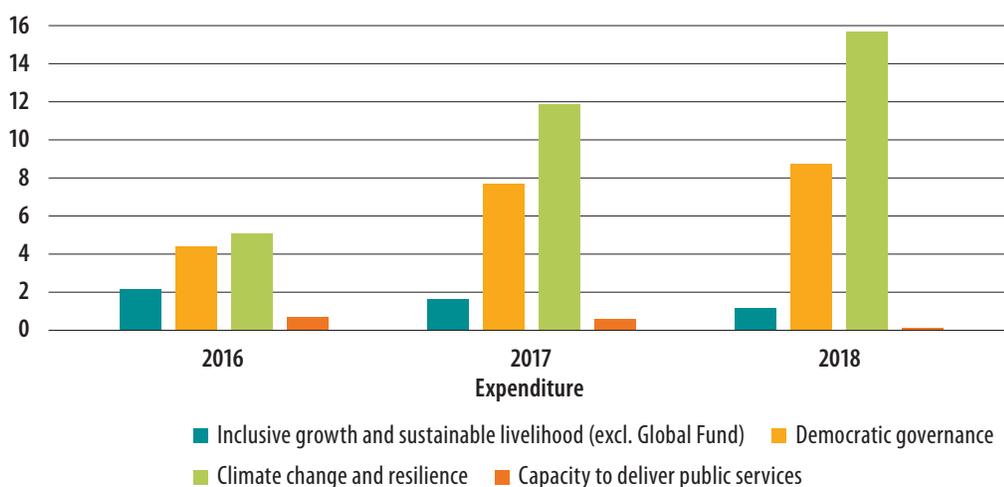
The **democratic governance outcome** was described in the CPD as consisting of three components, together supporting the consolidation of Zimbabwe's reform efforts towards good governance and aiming to create a favourable environment for re-engagement with international

financial institutions. These components include justice and human rights; peace and reconciliation; and citizen participation in key democratic processes. Financially, the largest component is on elections and democratic institutions, with two ongoing projects in 2018: one multi-donor support programme for the Parliament of Zimbabwe (\$2.7 million total expenditures for 2016-2018); and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission capacity-building project (ZIM-ECO, \$7.5 million). Projects related to justice and human rights include activities supporting the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and civil society, as well as policy support for gender equality (\$1.7 million). The three projects that are still ongoing in 2018 concern support to land inventories for resettlement and compensation of landowners (\$3 million) and two projects on access to justice services (\$900,000 and \$700,000 respectively). Finally, projects related to peace and reconciliation are focused on improving the capacity to undertake dialogue with communities at the local level, with only one financially active project in 2018 (\$1.1 million).

The **climate change and resilience outcome** aimed to strengthen the national capacity for climate change adaptation and resilience and improve access to renewable energy. At the community level, interventions targeted climate change adaptation and mitigation for vulnerable smallholder farmers. The current portfolio includes a financially important project, the ZRBF (total of \$20 million in expenditures for 2016-2018), a multi-donor fund for which UNDP acts as administrative agent and technical secretariat, as well as building evidence for disaster risk reduction (DRR) policy and working on building the capacities of local government partners on resilience. Other initiatives include projects on climate change adaptation (\$3.1 million and \$1.2 million respectively) focusing on providing sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable rural people and on improved knowledge of climate change-induced risks.

The fourth and last outcome area concerns the **country's capacity to deliver quality public services**. This outcome accounts for the lowest expenditures of the four outcomes. The only ongoing project in 2018 aims to support local

**FIGURE 2. Programme expenditure by outcome and year, 2017-2018 (Million US\$)**



Source: Atlas

government reforms and improve their technical capacity to deliver inclusive services (\$900,000).

The two largest areas of the UNDP programme, based on non-Global Fund programme expenditures, are resilience and climate change, and democratic governance (figure 2). As described above, UNDP implements several projects in these outcome areas, but a large part of the expenditures are borne by two projects: the ZIM-ECO project under democratic governance; and the ZRBF under resilience. Overall, the resilience outcome area shows the most growth in programme expenditure, followed closely by governance. Poverty reduction projects, as well as expenditures linked to public service delivery, have shrunk between 2016 and 2018 (figure 2).

## 1.4 Evaluation methodology

This evaluation methodology adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards<sup>21</sup> and the ethical Code of Conduct.<sup>22</sup> In accordance with the terms of reference (annex 1), three main questions guided this evaluation, namely:

1. What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?

2. To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
3. What factors contributed to or hindered the UNDP performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?

To address question 1, a theory of change approach was used in consultation with stakeholders, as appropriate, to better understand how and under what conditions UNDP interventions are expected to lead to good governance and sustainable development in the country. Discussions of the theory of change focused on mapping the assumptions behind the programme's desired change(s) and the causal linkages between the intervention(s) and the intended country programme outcomes. As part of this analysis, the progression of the programme over the review period was also examined. In assessing the progression of the country programme, the UNDP capacity to adapt to the changing context in Zimbabwe and respond to national development needs and priorities was looked at.

The effectiveness of the UNDP country programme was analysed in response to evaluation question 2. This included an assessment of the results achieved and the extent to which these results have

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>

<sup>22</sup> [www.uneval.org](http://www.uneval.org)

contributed to the intended country programme objectives. In this process, both positive and negative, direct and indirect as well as unintended results were identified.

To better understand the performance of UNDP, the specific factors that influenced this performance – positively or negatively – and eventually, the sustainability of results in the country, were examined in response to evaluation question 3. In addition to country-specific factors that may explain UNDP performance, other aspects that were assessed under this question include the utilization of resources to deliver results (including managerial practices), the extent to which the country office fostered partnerships and synergies with other actors (including through South-South and triangular cooperation), and the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the design and implementation of the country programme.

In line with the UNDP gender mainstreaming strategy, the ICPE examined the level of gender mainstreaming across all of UNDP Zimbabwe programmes and operations. Gender-disaggregated data were collected, where available, and assessed against the programme outcomes.

Prior to the field visit, an assessment of existing data was carried out for each outcome area to ascertain the available information, identify data constraints and determine the data-collection needs and methods. The assessment outlined the level of valuable data that is available and identified five decentralized project evaluations<sup>23</sup> undertaken during the current planning cycle. Additionally, an Assessment of Development Results was implemented in 2015. All these evaluations served as valuable inputs into the ICPE.

**Scope of the evaluation:** As a country-level evaluation of UNDP, the ICPE focused on the formal UNDP country programme approved by the Executive

Board but also considered any changes from the initial CPD during the period under review. The ICPE covered interventions funded by all sources of financing: UNDP regular resources, donor funds, government funds and others. The evaluation took into consideration aspects of the Global Fund as it pertains to UNDP core programme implementation, but does not address the Global Fund activities directly, as these are separate from the UNDP country programme.

Special attention was also given to “non-project”<sup>24</sup> activities implemented by UNDP and that may be crucial for advancing the political and social agenda of a country. Additionally, this evaluation made special efforts to capture the role and contribution of United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) undertaking joint work with UNDP. This information was used for synthesis to provide corporate-level evaluative evidence of performance of the associated fund and programme.

**Data-collection methods:** The evaluation used data from primary and secondary sources, including a desk review of documentation and information and interviews with key informants, including beneficiaries, partners and managers. An advance pre-mission questionnaire was administered to the country office before the in-country data-collection mission. A multi-stakeholder approach was followed, and interviews included government representatives, civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector representatives, United Nations agencies, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors and beneficiaries of the programme. Focus group discussions were used to consult some groups of beneficiaries as appropriate.

The evaluation team undertook field visits to selected project sites to observe the projects first-hand. The focus for field visits was in the country’s north-east, in the Gokwe South, Bulawayo and Lupane areas.<sup>25</sup> The coverage included a sample, as

<sup>23</sup> At the time of the evaluation, four of the five decentralized project evaluations had been quality assessed, with overall satisfactory ratings (three rated as moderately satisfactory and one as satisfactory).

<sup>24</sup> These are activities in which the UNDP country office may be involved in but that are not included in a specific project.

<sup>25</sup> These locations are regions where UNDP has a concentration of field projects in more than one outcome areas as well as those where critical projects are being implemented.

relevant, of both successful projects and projects reporting difficulties where lessons can be learned; both larger and smaller pilot projects; and both completed and active projects.

The following secondary data sources were reviewed, among others: background documents on the national context, documents prepared by international partners during the period under review and documents prepared by United Nations system agencies; programme plans and frameworks; progress reports; monitoring self-assessments such as the yearly UNDP results-oriented annual reports; and evaluations conducted by the country office and partners.

A participatory and transparent process was followed to engage with multiple stakeholders at all stages of the evaluation process. During the initial phase, a stakeholder analysis was conducted to identify all relevant UNDP partners, including those that may not have worked with UNDP but play a key role in the outcomes to which UNDP contributes. This stakeholder analysis served to identify key informants for interviews during the main data-collection phase of the evaluation and to examine any potential partnerships that could further improve the UNDP contribution to the country.

The evaluation used triangulation of information collected from different sources and/or by different methods to ensure that the data are valid. Progress has been made in the availability of national socio-economic and poverty data in Zimbabwe, and the evaluation has been able to use data from relatively recent national surveys, as well as from the 2016 Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the 2018 joint needs assessment papers. The ZRBF project also included efforts to produce baseline data

on poverty and resilience of target populations, and 2018 data were available for the evaluation.

Projects under the scope of this evaluation were at different stages of implementation, and therefore it was not always possible to determine the projects' contribution to results. In cases where the projects were still in their initial stages, the evaluation documented observable progress and sought to ascertain the possibility of achieving the outcome given the programme design and measures already put in place.

The preparation of this evaluation started in January 2019 and recruitment of the external consultants was finalized in March 2019. Desk review was conducted in February-March 2019. Key informant interviews were carried out during a two-week mission between 25 March and 5 April 2019, including visits to Gokwe South, Lupane and Bulawayo. An end-of-mission debriefing was conducted on the last day of the mission to share the team's preliminary findings and areas for recommendation. Outcome analysis papers were prepared and synthesized into a draft report in December 2019, which was submitted for review by IEO and a member of the IEO Evaluation Advisory Panel. The ICPE mission was conducted in parallel with the audit of the country office by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI), which provided opportunities for exchange of information ahead and during the mission in Harare. IEO and OAI staff were also able to share preliminary findings at the end of their respective missions. The revised draft was shared with the country office, the Regional Bureau for Africa and the Government for their comments and a final debriefing with results of the review virtually delivered to all stakeholders.



# CHAPTER 2

## FINDINGS

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## 2.1 General findings

**Finding 1.** UNDP is working in a difficult terrain; the context in Zimbabwe continues to be economically, politically and socially complex. The UNDP country office has manoeuvred the changing development challenges well and managed to have a working portfolio, despite significant changes in the country. Several factors have affected the areas of work that were planned in the country programme document, which have tested the adaptation capacity of UNDP.

UNDP Zimbabwe's CPD for 2016-2020 was developed in 2015 and focused on the national goals of poverty reduction and value addition, strengthened public administration, governance and performance management and food and nutrition security.

After the start of the programme period, the country context underwent important and considerable changes, with the most significant change being the ousting of former President Mugabe and the establishment of a new Government. This led to the establishment of the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP) for the years 2018-2020<sup>26</sup> and created opportunities to open dialogue on issues that were previously difficult to address. At the same time, the economic context has remained very complex, with inflation again reaching renewed high levels in late 2018 through to 2019.

After the 2018 elections, changes in ministerial roles and portfolios also forced UNDP to adapt to changes and sometimes to identify new partners in government, in order to keep the programme running. This has led to some challenges, with some members of government expressing disappointment in the declining engagement from UNDP, and with remaining ambiguities for example on the governmental unit in charge of monitoring progress on the SDGs. But despite these challenges and considering the important changes that occurred in that period, UNDP has managed to maintain a working portfolio.

The economic context in the current programme period was also marked by renewed strong depreciation of the local currency, coupled with limited access to foreign currency. This has led to financial blockages and in certain cases to stalled activities. But UNDP has engaged with its headquarters and with government partners and local financial institutions to find solutions and keep projects active, albeit with certain delays.

Another major change in the 2016-2020 programme has been the role of principle recipient of the Global Fund grant, which had been planned in the CPD to be transferred to the Government but was handed back to UNDP as a risk mitigation measure. As a result, the total country programme budget increased from under \$200 million for the entire programme period as planned in the CPD to over \$600 million for 2016-2018 in actual budgets, along with additional activities related to the continued partnership with Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health and Child Care and other health development partners. The renewed principle recipient role has implied continued action on financial management, procurement of health products and capacity development for the national health sector, as well as new initiatives in support of the programme, such as the Solar for Health project.

**Finding 2.** UNDP has managed to identify open spaces for collaboration with the Government. While bilateral agencies were reducing their direct partnerships with the Government, UNDP has continued to keep an operational space and partnership, enabling a continuation of development opportunities and support that might otherwise have closed completely. UNDP engagement has helped to ensure government commitment to key development processes such as the Transitional Stabilisation Programme, the SDGs and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and has also ensured that this commitment has been maintained. UNDP has supported the integration of the SDGs in national development plans, and the Government is proud of its work on

<sup>26</sup> Transitional Stabilisation Programme – Reforms Agenda 2018-2020, see: [https://t792ae.c2.acecdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Abridged\\_TRANSITIONAL-STABILISATION-PROGRAMME.pdf](https://t792ae.c2.acecdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Abridged_TRANSITIONAL-STABILISATION-PROGRAMME.pdf)

### the voluntary national review and of aligning laws to the Constitution.

The current UNDP country programme was developed at a time when Zimbabwe's re-engagement with the international community remained characterized by a lack of trust, hindering the country's access to lending facilities on the international markets and with some established donors reducing their bilateral support, furthering the recent decrease in ODA.<sup>27</sup> UNDP has made efforts to maintain the engagement with government partners, which helped to keep partnerships active. Effectively, UNDP leveraged its positioning as an impartial broker to work with the Government on key sensitive issues, including electoral processes, where the country has made undeniable progress.

From the perspective of key government partners, the UNDP focus on electoral support has been key for the high number of registered voters and for confidence in the process and the credibility of the results, contributing to a more peaceful and reconciled situation right after the elections, which was needed before any effective development could take place. Given that this period came after decades of contested election results, the decision to focus on registration was the right strategy by UNDP at a critical moment in time, also leading to the Peace Pledge signed by political parties ahead of the elections. The Peace Pledge was a breakaway from past experiences of electoral processes marred by political violence, and a sign of hope for building national trust, albeit with cautious optimism. By organizing platforms that included the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and other election stakeholders ahead of the elections and post-election review sessions, UNDP used a collaborative approach for the programme that proved to be central for the achievements in the governance area.

Central government partners appreciate the support provided to guide the development of national strategies, and emphasis has been put on commitments

towards international agreements. UNDP supported the establishment of the Transition Policy Think Tank, which brought together a wide range of development actors to identify barriers to sustainable development, allowing the Government of Zimbabwe to successfully develop a transition plan after the change in political power. The Government also managed to present a midterm report on the UPR to the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2019 and plans to present its second voluntary national review report during the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The development of the TSP has been accompanied by policy advice from UNDP on the integration of the SDGs in development strategies. Interviews conducted with central government partners further highlighted that governmental actors recognize and appreciate UNDP support on SDG integration, requesting further support for the development of tools to track progress on the SDGs at central government level.

**Finding 3.** UNDP has undertaken a high level of collaboration with other United Nations agencies in some of its current programmatic work. Future projects such as Spotlight and the peacebuilding work have a multi-agency structure which is further welcomed but will require increased management support due to their more complex nature. There is still room for increased collaboration across the United Nations system in implementation of some of the office's larger projects, namely the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund.

As a principle, UNDP engages with other United Nations agencies in the design of all new projects and has good collaboration with other United Nations agencies. This has recently included work with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in joint support to the 2018 elections including a gender baseline survey to ensure inclusion of women in the election process and strengthen the overall support to the ZEC and the electoral process.

<sup>27</sup> Based on data from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, ODA was above \$670 million in 2012, \$538 million in 2014 and \$473 million in 2016. Several donors significantly reduced their bilateral support in 2016/2017, including the Governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark and Norway.

A \$3.2 million Peacebuilding Fund project (2019-2020) has brought together UNDP, UN-Women and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the implementation of the "Building trust and confidence in Zimbabwe's transition" project, which is supporting the implementation of the TSP. This project, still in its initial stages, can potentially provide lessons that will help inform existing UNDP work as well as joint work in the future.

A further large project being undertaken in partnership with other United Nations agencies is the United Nations–European Union Spotlight Initiative, which has funding of \$31 million over two phases, 2019-2020 and 2021-2022, and is to be implemented in cooperation between UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF, UN-Women and the International Labour Organization to address gender-based violence across Zimbabwe. This is a highly complex and ambitious programme which will require very close collaboration between United Nations agencies as well as the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure success.

The main UNDP project, the ZRBF, was initially designed in 2015 in part based on analysis by the World Food Programme (WFP) of food security data, and collaboration with WFP for testing resilience strategies is foreseen in the UNDP CPD for the period under review. Although a predetermined inclusion of the agency in the project itself as a consortium member or implementation partner was not possible as it would go against the principle of competitive selection that the project followed, continued collaboration with WFP in some format would have brought added expertise to the programme, especially as resilience issues become more entrenched and humanitarian resources may be required to address challenges in communities. WFP lean-season assistance to several ZRBF regions and districts, which is not part of the core activities of the project, is however an indirect response

to this gap. The lean-season assistance project is a \$5 million project, financed by the United Kingdom Department for International Development, to provide cash-based food assistance to 116,000 Zimbabweans.<sup>28</sup> WFP could have also supported the ZRBF with technical guidance and support, especially as ZRBF beneficiary communities were facing growing food insecurity in 2018 and 2019, a result of longer dry seasons in both years. Equally, further collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in both the ZRBF<sup>29</sup> and Supporting Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Livelihoods project (IGSL) could have further strengthened interventions in both resilience and livelihoods work.

**Finding 4.** Significant financial resources are allocated to projects with gender equality as a central or leading objective, highlighting the country office's commitment to mainstreaming gender in its programme. This contributed to the UNDP support to women's political empowerment and to improving the national institutional framework. The strategic collaboration between UNDP and UN-Women on a set of these interventions was critical for the design and implementation of these projects.

UNDP project expenditures show an important increase in spending for GEN2 projects between 2016 and 2018, while spending in GEN1 projects declined. Excluding the Global Fund activities, GEN2 spending consists mostly of the ZIM-ECO and the ZRBF projects, and only one project has received the GEN3 marker. Over the period, GEN3 expenditures represented 1.5 percent of total programme expenditures.<sup>30</sup>

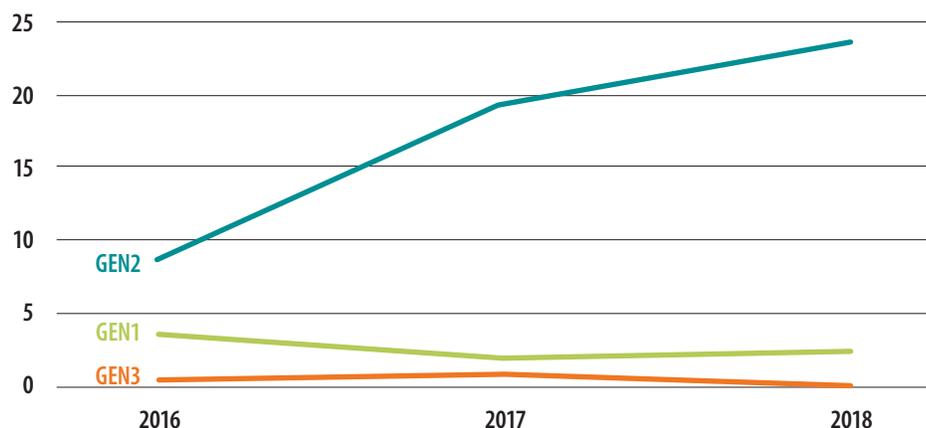
The programme interventions for women's political empowerment target the most challenging area for Zimbabwe in narrowing its gender gap. These include the ZIM-ECO project and the multi-donor support

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/news/dfid-contribution-assist-116000-wfp-supported-zimbabweans-during-hunger-season>

<sup>29</sup> Participation of a United Nations agency in the ZRBF project cannot go against the principle of competitive selection.

<sup>30</sup> The gender marker aims to sensitize programme managers on gender mainstreaming through the assignment of a rating in the UNDP programme and financial reporting system. The ratings are: GEN3 = outputs that have gender equality as the main objectives; GEN2 = outputs that have gender equality as a significant objective; GEN1 = outputs that will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly; GEN 0 = outputs that are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality.

**FIGURE 3. Programme expenditure\* by gender marker and year, 2016-2018 (Million US\$)**



\* Excludes Global Fund project expenditures

programme for the Parliament of Zimbabwe, which underline the UNDP strategic choice in supporting women’s political empowerment through capacity development of upstream institutions in the area of democratic governance.

Both interventions reflect their focus on gender mainstreaming throughout their design and implementation strategies. ZIM-ECO was set to build the capacity of the ZEC in ensuring women’s political participation both as voters and candidates. Notable outputs consist of a draft ZEC gender policy, which is still pending approval, and the strengthening of the ZEC gender focal point system. Gender mainstreaming activities were integrated into all voter education, voter registration and ZEC capacity-building processes. Key operational-level contributions relate to the implementation of baseline surveys on gender and elections to inform the development of voter education campaigns and ZEC operations during elections; the capacitation of the ZEC on gender-sensitive administration of elections, including the adoption of a gender-, youth- and disability-sensitive voter education campaign; and the capacitation of the Zimbabwe

Gender Observatory to monitor the election before, during and after from a gender perspective. The key factors that reflect the significant gender focus of this project are the cross-sectional nature of the gender mainstreaming activities and the synergies and collaborations between the electoral system and gender mainstreaming team, that counterbalanced the fact that only 1.52 percent of the planned ZIM-ECO budget was allocated to gender mainstreaming.<sup>31</sup>

Gender mainstreaming was a substantial focus of the project supporting the Parliament of Zimbabwe. Relatively significant resources have been allocated to this outcome, which represented 12 percent of the total planned budget. The project set to contribute to strengthening gender mainstreaming in the work of the Parliament by training and supporting the Parliamentary administration and its committees’ Members of Parliament (MPs). It also sought to improve the capacity of the Zimbabwe Women’s Parliamentary Caucus (ZWPC) in lobbying and advocacy for gender equality and women’s empowerment. Key results are the drafting of the Parliament gender policy<sup>32</sup> and the implementation

<sup>31</sup> Based on financial data presented in the ZIM-ECO project document.

<sup>32</sup> The Parliament gender policy is still in draft form but represents a potential for systematic gender mainstreaming in the work of the Parliament covering both MPs and the Administration of the Parliament.

of a gender mainstreaming module during the 2018 induction of MPs. The ZWPC effectively ensures gender mainstreaming in the formulation of new legislation,<sup>33</sup> the participation of female MPs in national forums<sup>34</sup> and the development of strategies to ensure the participation of women in the electoral process as both candidates and voters.<sup>35</sup> Additional outputs relate to launching women's empowerment tools<sup>36</sup> and collaboration with CSOs in the area of health.<sup>37</sup> While women's involvement in parliamentary activities increased over the project cycle, barriers to their contributions continue to exist, particularly for the acceptance of their contribution to technical matters in Parliament, when compared to contributions from their male counterparts. Women MPs have lower levels of education and their economic literacy, at 40 percent, is lower than that of male MPs (54 percent).<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, there was an increase in female MPs raising motions during parliamentary sessions, an increase in gender-related contributions in motions, reports and questions, and 31 percent of the parliament committees are chaired by female MPs from various political divides. While this positive development in women's political empowerment could also be attributed to two other projects implemented by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the contribution of the project in improving the efficiency of the ZWPC remained significant.<sup>39</sup>

A key factor which strengthened the significant focus of both ZIM-ECO and the support to Parliament on women's political empowerment has been the active involvement of UN-Women at the design and implementation stages of the project. The two organizations ensured that they

cooperated in their two areas of expertise, with UN-Women bringing gender technical expertise and UNDP ensuring technical expertise on elections and the legislative branch of government.

The programme's contribution to the national gender institutional framework was reflected through the national gender machinery project. This project supported the finalization of the Gender Policy and Gender Commission Bill and was implemented by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development. The project, which was the only project in the governance portfolio with a GEN3 marker, provided additional support to women's political empowerment. The project supported the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC), strengthening its planning capacity, which contributed to its independence. In coordination with the ZIM-ECO and Parliament projects, the ZGC worked with election observers and played an additional role in ensuring the participation of women as voters, candidates and participants in the management of elections. From the perspective of the ZGC, this has substantially contributed to establishing its role and helped to strengthen its collaboration with other governmental institutions, women's groups and UN-Women.

**Finding 5. Interventions in the area of resilience, disaster risk reduction and poverty reduction have a strong potential focus on women's economic empowerment but have lacked clearly defined strategies, which constitutes a risk for successful implementation and sustainability.**

Four interventions in the area of resilience-building, DRR and poverty reduction stood out for their potential to contribute to women's economic

<sup>33</sup> Electoral Act submitted the Ministry of Justice in 2018.

<sup>34</sup> The 2nd National Gender forum in October 2018.

<sup>35</sup> A real interest was put in negotiating for 50/50 gender parity in representation of seats in Parliament for the 2023 election and extension of the women's quota beyond 2023.

<sup>36</sup> The Women's Manifesto 2018-2023 and the electoral campaign guide.

<sup>37</sup> Demand of free sanitary wear among schools and scrapping of import duty on sanitary wear. These efforts have led to improvements in the sanitary wear supply in Zimbabwe.

<sup>38</sup> Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit 2016. Baseline Survey of Economic Literacy for the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

<sup>39</sup> The 2018 annual progress report clearly mentioned that this positive development is not solely due to the project itself but also to the contribution of other projects such as the AfDB Strengthening Institutions of Transparency and Accountability Project and the SADC project on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights which in a way complemented each other and had a significant contribution to the improved efficiency of the ZWPC.

empowerment, which is the second challenging area for Zimbabwe in closing its gender gap. These are: the ZRBF project, which accounts for about 46 percent of programme expenditure;<sup>40</sup> the Scaling Up Adaptation with Focus on Rural Livelihoods project (5 percent); the Supporting Enhanced Climate Action for Low-Carbon and Climate Resilient Development Pathway (SECA) project (2 percent); and the IGSL project (3 percent).

The ZRBF did not sufficiently outline a gender situation analysis and gender-sensitive strategy in its project document prior to their implementation. This is a major project given its financial size and wide geographical footprint, addressing poverty and vulnerability of communities and households. In its project document, only one paragraph details gender equality approaches and concerns, and consists mostly of expressing the project's commitment to support gender-sensitive programming, build gender-disaggregated evidence of challenges and opportunities for change, and ensure that any proposal funded by the project outlined how gender inequality will be addressed. This is not sufficient to reflect the significant potential focus of the project on gender equality. Furthermore, the project's management and implementation architecture do not feature as key stakeholder any organization with a gender mainstreaming mandate, and the results and resources framework did not list any outcomes, outputs and indicators that are gender-sensitive. Despite the lack of an initial strategy, the project has conducted an analysis<sup>41</sup> of linkages between gender, climate change and resilience, drawing a wide range of recommendations for the project along the absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacity dimensions of the programme's intervention strategy. The ZRBF also delivered specific gender-related outputs such as sex-disaggregated data on key indicators in the project baseline report and the targeting of female

beneficiaries, who represent 40 percent of the project beneficiaries.<sup>42</sup> However, these gender-sensitive results do not fully make up for the lack of strategy and clearly defined goals, which constitute a major risk for the project's contribution to women's economic empowerment. If not addressed, this could potentially lead to a downgrading of the ZRBF gender marker to GEN 1.

The Scaling Up Adaptation with Focus on Rural Livelihoods project did outline outcomes and outputs that are gender-sensitive but did so without outlining a gender situation analysis and strategy. The terminal evaluation of the project, however, highlighted the successful contribution of the project to women's economic empowerment and resilience by increasing women's access to resources such as land and livestock, allowing them to make decisions which affect their livelihoods directly. The implications of a lack of a situation analysis and strategy have a direct consequence on the sustainability of the project's achievements. In fact, despite these positive contributions, progress reports mentioned cultural constraints including the need of a husband's approval as key factors constraining the success of the project in empowering women, further affecting the sustainability of achievements.

An important weakness of the SECA project lies in the fact that its progress reports merely report on the number of women targeted as beneficiaries, despite the fact that the project document did outline a situation analysis, strategy and results and resource framework that are gender-sensitive.

The ISGL project presents key design and reporting elements consistent with its significant focus on women's economic empowerment. The project document clearly outlined a gender situation analysis, rationale and strategy to mainstreaming gender dimensions while addressing poverty in urban and rural areas. A significant share of

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<sup>40</sup> Percentage is based on total programme expenditure, excluding Global Fund projects.

<sup>41</sup> "Gender, Climate Change and Resilience. An overview of the linkages in Zimbabwe". Available at <http://www.zrbf.co.zw/media/publications>

<sup>42</sup> The proportion of female beneficiaries was reported in the 2018 ZRBF progress report and include females either as members or heads of households. It is not clear whether this is an explicit targeting strategy of the project, or whether this is a natural result given that the project has significant community-level components.

the planned budget was allocated to gender-sensitive outcomes and outputs (59.45 percent), and key gender-mandated institutions are involved in the targeting process such as the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development and women's and youth platforms. Progress reports reflected the strong focus of these project activities on the economic empowerment of women through the development of small businesses and saving and credit associations. While the lack of an adequate gender-sensitive monitoring framework and gender-focused indicators hampered assessing the contribution of the project to women's economic empowerment, the design reflects the significant intent of the project to address it and provides a better framework for an eventual gender-sensitive evaluation.

## 2.2 Poverty reduction and inclusive livelihoods

### → OUTCOME 1.

Key institutions are better able to formulate and implement poverty reduction strategies and programmes for improved livelihoods and reduced poverty of communities.

- **Output 1.** Strengthened capacity of key institutions at national and subnational levels to develop and implement pro-poor policies
- **Output 2.** Productive base of target communities strengthened

**Finding 6.** UNDP has provided technical assistance and policy advice for the development of national strategies such as the TSP and its reform agenda. The technical and financial support from UNDP and other development partners have also targeted research and analysis that underlined the Government's efforts to develop policies that can be more evidence-based and that target poverty and inequality issues more directly.

With UNDP support, government stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Public Service and Social Welfare and the Office of the President and Cabinet, have been empowered to undertake national programme planning, based on increased efforts to collect statistical data and evidence from the ground, for example through the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC), coordinated by the Food and Nutrition Council and supported by UNDP through the ZRBF project. ZIMVAC receives technical and financial support from a large number of donors and government partners to undertake assessments and analysis of the food and nutrition security situation in Zimbabwe. It also conducted analyses of specific situations such as the 2019 lean season. The Committee is comprised of representatives of the Government, development partners, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), technical agencies and academia.<sup>43</sup> UNDP also supported the Crop and Livestock Assessment and the Poverty, Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey, which was conducted in 2017 and published in 2019.<sup>44</sup>

This support to targeted research responds to a clear need for empirical evidence for planning in Zimbabwe and was implemented in complementarity with UNDP support to ZIMSTAT. UNDP work in this area has already strengthened the national planning efforts, for example in the TSP, which includes an implementation matrix and set milestones. The use of poverty and vulnerability-specific data in the TSP remains limited, however, and the real test

<sup>43</sup> Reports are available at [www.fnc.org.zw](http://www.fnc.org.zw).

<sup>44</sup> The survey report is available on [www.zimstat.co.zw](http://www.zimstat.co.zw)

of the Government's capacity for evidence-based planning will likely be in the National Development Strategy that will come after the TSP.

Furthermore, the TSP includes an implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework, supported by a structure responsible for the monitoring that involves government stakeholders, the private sector, academia, labour and civic organizations. The exact responsibilities of each stakeholder are not detailed in the programme document of the TSP, and it is unclear if monitoring activities have been conducted at this stage.

**Finding 7.** While many UNDP interventions are designed to combine upstream and downstream work to ensure mutual reinforcement and to realize country programme outcomes, this has not been fully realized in implementation. One of the UNDP country programme objectives under this outcome targets the productive capacity of communities, but outside of the substantially macro-oriented TSP, this area has not sufficiently been supported by targeted and specific policies.

The UNDP approach in its projects and interventions set out to reinforce upstream and downstream work, with work at the community level testing policy implementation and informing it with actual implementation experience, and upstream policy work being strengthened by downstream testing and implementation. However, upstream policy development work has often relied on technical capacity and advice, rather than being based directly on experiences emanating from work on the ground. Downstream implementation is often still occurring without a corresponding policy framework or based on unclear links with recent research work.

For example, UNDP interventions in support to livelihoods are not clearly based on an updated and comprehensive policy for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, although these are key actors for the development of market linkages for vulnerable communities that are beneficiaries of UNDP livelihoods support, particularly in rural areas.

Similarly, UNDP has supported setting up the National Livelihood Working Group, but it has remained "dormant" since its establishment and its role is for example not recognized in the TSP reform agenda. The Working Group was supported by UNDP to anchor and facilitate the strengthening of the district livelihood committees, which are potentially good structures to support the results of poverty reduction projects and are linked to other programme components and subcomponents in other areas of the programme. In the long term, the UNDP role is foreseen not only to strengthen the capacities of these structures but also to facilitate access to space to operate and become effective.

**Finding 8.** UNDP support to the strengthening of livelihoods of targeted communities is a noteworthy contribution to their economic empowerment. However, outside of the ZRBF project, the support has lacked a sufficiently strong strategic focus, and has not taken advantage of opportunities to scale up outreach to large numbers of potential beneficiaries in the targeted rural areas. The strategy has also not been supported by a sufficiently strong results-based approach or monitoring systems to inform best practice.

The two main initiatives in the ongoing UNDP programme that supports sustainable livelihood initiatives, the IGSL and SECA projects (2016-2020), are bringing valuable results for the targeted communities: the access to additional financial sources, productive assets and market linkages have resulted in increases in productivity and income for targeted communities. The focus on capacity-building and training is highly appreciated by beneficiaries, who have benefited from increased access to savings and seed capital through the establishment of registered income saving and lending groups. This increased access to financial assets allowed the beneficiaries, in some cases, to test new products and production techniques. Rural farmers met by the evaluation team showed that savings could be invested in productive assets, but also that barriers to access to local markets remained, illustrating the need for

a stronger strategic focus that would encompass all levels of the agricultural value chains.

The project teams have taken advantage of complementarities between IGSL and SECA and strengthened synergies by ensuring there is stronger cooperation between the two projects. From 2018, UNDP engaged in a process of increased cooperation and used common project UNV staff deployed in the same areas where it was feasible, which strengthened the UNDP presence in districts where the projects have ongoing interventions, thereby also pooling efforts for project monitoring and capturing of results.

More generally, UNDP has targeted the strengthening of communities' livelihoods through two main streams. On one hand, the country programme includes the ZRBF, which is the result of a clear strategy for the country office and receives considerable – and increasing – funding from partners, has clear linkages to policy-level development efforts, and is implemented based on large and complex structures for the project's management. On the other hand, the IGSL and SECA projects are more isolated approaches that in practice have lacked the necessary strategic thrust and investments that are necessary to support the achievement of their goals. Upstream work that would support the IGSL has also been negatively affected, with efforts to revise the Cooperative Policy (2005) and the development of new Cooperative Act and new Savings and Credit Cooperative Society Act being discontinued. The IGSL project has a total budget of \$5 million but had managed to mobilize and spend only around \$1.5 million from UNDP regular resources<sup>45</sup> by March 2019. In contrast with the resource gains that the ZRBF experienced, this situation may have explained the lack of traction of the project on related policy development.

## 2.3 Governance and human rights

### → OUTCOME 2.

Increased citizen participation in democratic processes in line with the provisions of the Constitution and relevant international norms and standards.

- **Output 1.** Capacity of justice and human rights institutions enabled and/or expanded to provide quality services and uphold the rule of law and redress
- **Output 2.** Functions and capacity of the national peace architecture strengthened
- **Output 3.** Citizen participation in democratic processes strengthened

**Finding 9.** The key area of UNDP parliamentary support was in the alignment of laws to the new Constitution, and the project has made important strides given the complex nature of legal reform. UNDP support to parliamentary processes has increased accountability of the Executive and entrenched people-centred law-making in Zimbabwe. The participation of citizens in legislative processes is one of the key outputs of the project, and the voices of citizens have been incorporated in legislative processes in a few documented instances. Efforts to reach remote parts of the population, which would constitute a more important contribution to citizens' participation in democratic processes, have yet to be scaled up.

<sup>45</sup> The IGSL 2016 project document forecast an allocation of \$3.7 million from regular resources and recognized a \$1.3 million funding gap.

A key project of support for UNDP and the Parliament has been the multi-donor support programme for the Parliament of Zimbabwe (2015-2018). The project had a broad scope at design and included: (1) the alignment of new laws with the Constitution and the capacity development of the legislature; (2) strengthening of parliamentary oversight, through budget consultations and support to the Auditor General; and (3) increased involvement and peoples' participation in democracy and the decision-making process; all integrating (4) gender mainstreaming. The project has seen mixed results and was impacted by the 2018 elections and the addition of new parliamentarians.

In the capacity development of legislators, UNDP support enabled a more effective system of legislative scrutiny through the entire law-making process. UNDP has supported increasing knowledge and understanding of policy proposals by MPs, giving them insight into their respective areas of focus and enabling them to contribute meaningfully to debates on new legislation.

It has also supported the democratization of the legislative processes by subjecting a number of proposed bills to public hearings, in line with the ZUNDAF and with the provisions of the Constitution. In total, 79 public hearings were held in 2016 and 27 in 2017. In addition, UNDP has advocated for and piloted more cost-effective and innovative solutions to reduce the cost of public hearings and reach large, remote parts of the population by using radio, television programmes and social media, but at the time of the evaluation the number of citizens reached through these approaches is unknown. The poor network coverage and lack of affordable services in remote areas of the country constitute an important barrier for access to Internet for rural Zimbabweans.<sup>46</sup> The project document envisaged a 25 percent increase of public participation in decision-making through

public hearings, but with overall limited data on citizen engagement, changes in participation are difficult to measure. The activities, however, show a positive trend in transparency in the legislative process that must be recognized. Key results of the support to citizen's engagement include two bills that were withdrawn by Parliament,<sup>47</sup> partly on the basis of submissions or recommendation received from citizens. In 2017, the Electoral Amendment Bill underwent a process of public consultations and public hearings that included the engagement of CSOs as well as direct engagement of citizens through written and radio submissions.

Another success of the parliamentary support project has been the support to the capacity development of the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) through organizational development and professional training which has ensured that the OAG is up to date in its submission of audited reports to Parliament. The OAG was previously three years behind schedule in its submissions to Parliament.

The project supported capacity-building of women parliamentarians through the ZWPC, but their contribution to debates remained weak. For example, the percentage of new women MPs debating the national budget remained at just 5 percent between 2014 and 2016, and they continued to experience barriers to the acceptance of their contributions to technical matters compared to contributions from their male counterparts. A review of the third session of the eighth Parliament showed that 19 motions were moved by backbenchers in the National Assembly. Five of these motions were from women MPs but three came from only one woman MP. Lower education levels of female MPs compared to their male counterparts could be a contributing factor: 52 percent of female MPs compared to 20 percent of male MPs only have primary or secondary education as their highest qualification.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> The International Telecommunications Union reported an access to Internet rate of 23 percent in 2017, with a significant rural/urban divide. See <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2017/zimbabwe>

<sup>47</sup> The National Peace and Reconciliation Bill received an adverse report from the Parliamentary Legal Committee, and Members of Parliament identified discriminatory labour practices which lead to the presidential refusal of the Special Economic Zones Bill. See Mugore JLM & Marimo N (2017) Mid-Term Review of the Multi-Donor Parliamentary Support Programme (2014-2017).

<sup>48</sup> Mugore JLM and Marimo N (2017) Mid-Term Review of the Multi-Donor Parliamentary Support Programme (2014-2017).

On the positive side, Parliament observed an increase in the number of gender-related contributions starting in 2015. This can be attributed to the various development partner interventions, which included support given by the parliamentary support project, the AfDB Strengthening Institutions of Transparency and Accountability Project and the SADC Parliamentary Forum's Sexual Reproductive Health Rights Project. These projects were complementary to each other and as a result contributed significantly to the improved efficiency of the ZWPC.<sup>49</sup>

The sustainability of the parliamentary support project is threatened by the very nature of Parliament itself where members are elected for five years without a guarantee of return. The result is that at the start of each new Parliament there is need to put aside resources to train a large contingent of new MPs, which makes the programme difficult to sustain. While capacity-building of MPs should be funded from the parliamentary budget, this has not been the case as Parliament does not have the resources and consequently all capacity-building interventions are funded by donors. The cost of capacity-building of MPs is also considerably higher as most parliamentary trainings are held at venues outside Harare, which entails daily subsistence allowance and per diem costs.

There are also areas where Parliament has not made much traction. For instance, under the parliamentary reforms, ministries are supposed to submit quarterly statutory budget implementation reports to Parliament. Despite the heavy lobbying by Parliament on the need for ministries to submit the reports, Parliament only received a total of five statutory reports out of a possible 84 reports in 2018. This was a significant drop compared to 38 of 84 reports that were submitted in 2017.<sup>50</sup>

The five outputs of the project have been criticized as being too broad, and although they were the result of expansive consultations with partners and stakeholders, also as trying to address too many

challenges at once, which to some was an illustration of a lack of clear prioritization. To address this, the draft proposal for the new parliamentary support project has narrowed the outcomes to only two: (1) improve parliamentary oversight on all institutions and agencies of the State and Government at every level, which will take up 60 percent of the budget; and (2) timely passage of all bills in accordance with the Constitution, which will take up 40 percent of the budget.

Since the new Constitution came into effect in 2013, significant progress has been made in aligning the laws to the Constitution. However, it is not clear how prioritization of laws is planned, especially given the new policy priorities of the TSP and the changing environment in Zimbabwe.

**Finding 10.** UNDP support to Chapter 12 commissions such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, National Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Zimbabwe Gender Commission and Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has been essential for the establishment, capacity development and initial operation of these key institutions. UNDP support to the four commissions constituted important progress towards the objectives of two of the governance outcome's objective, related to enabling justice and human rights institutions and to strengthening the national peace architecture. This support also had a key contribution to the implementation of the 2018 elections. However, sustainability remains a question as the commissions remain underfunded by the Government and remain donor-dependent for their operations.

UNDP support to the Chapter 12 commissions, in particular the ZHRC, National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) and ZGC, was mostly directed at: (1) setting up the institutions; (2) building the capacity of the commissioners to understand and implement their mandates; and (3) institutional capacity-building to enhance the ability of the institutions to deliver on their mandates. In the case of the ZEC, UNDP support focused on

<sup>49</sup> Parliament of Zimbabwe (2018) Annual Progress Report: Multi-Donor Support Programme for Parliament and Office of the Auditor General in Zimbabwe.

<sup>50</sup> Parliament of Zimbabwe (2018) Parliament of Zimbabwe Implementation Status of the Multi-Donor Support Programmes to Parliament.

strengthening the Commission’s existing capacity for electoral management processes, to meet its constitutional mandate and ensure sustainability, and capacitating the ZEC information services and voter registration departments. The simultaneous activities targeting the Chapter 12 commissions were critical for their effective functioning, contributing directly to peaceful elections in 2018. However, the Government is currently unable to fully fund the commissions, which remain partially dependent on UNDP (and their partners) to do their work.

The ZHRC has become a vocal human rights defender with investigations and reports covering areas as diverse as politicized food distribution, prison conditions and election monitoring. The ZGC has also actively championed the women’s cause and through its gender election audit, highlighted

women’s participation in the elections. Equally through UNDP support, ZEC conducted the most transparent elections in the country’s history with the highest voter turnout. UNDP support has enabled the NPRC to focus some its energies on sensitive issues, including those around Gukurahundi.

Strong collaboration among these institutions was evident in the run-up to, during and after the 2018 elections. As the table illustrates, four of the commissions worked closely together in a complimentary way to facilitate and ensure the holding of transparent and fair elections. The collaboration extended beyond the elections and has been formalized through the creation of a platform for independent commissions where they hold biannual meetings. They also collaborate in the development of the commissions’ strategic plans.

### Activities and areas of contribution of the independent commissions through UNDP support

Implementing partner	Activities supported by UNDP	Contribution to electoral processes
ZEC	Capacity-building of the ZEC secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced capacity to run and manage the electoral processes</li> </ul>
	Voter registration training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced capacity within ZEC to register voters</li> <li>Greater confidence in the voter roll</li> </ul>
	Engagement with citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased credibility of ZEC</li> </ul>
	Voter education, communication and media blitz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highest voter registration achieved of over 80 percent</li> </ul>
NPRC	Election monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peaceful elections</li> </ul>
	Peace Pledge; Peace Caravan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peaceful elections</li> </ul>
ZHRC	Electoral rights campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater awareness of individual rights in elections</li> </ul>
	Election monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peaceful elections</li> </ul>
ZGC	Election monitoring with a gender lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engendered elections</li> <li>Peaceful elections</li> </ul>
	Gender equality in electoral processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced awareness of impediments to women’s equal participation in electoral processes</li> </ul>
	Gender analysis of the electoral processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater awareness of issues facing women in elections</li> </ul>
	Targeted gender-specific voter education campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased participation of women in elections as voters</li> </ul>
	Participation of women in elections as candidates, observers and voters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of impediments to women’s participation in electoral processes</li> </ul>

Due to UNDP support, the NPRC was able to hire and deploy election monitors during the 2018 elections. UNDP also provided technical and advisory support to the NPRC to develop an engagement strategy with political parties which led to the signing of the Peace Pledge by 21 political parties, which committed them to the peaceful conduct of elections. The Peace Pledge was a big achievement and a first for Zimbabwe, where elections were often characterized by political violence. Also linked to this was the Peace Caravan, which engaged citizens nationwide on their role in safeguarding values of peace and tolerance during the elections. UNDP support to the NPRC and ZHRC before the elections was very strategic and contributed to the peaceful nature of the 2018 elections.

Although the Government is supporting the commissions financially, it is unable to fully resource them. As a result, the commissions often find themselves unable to carry out investigations or go into communities and are often supported by UNDP and other donors to do their work, which is not sustainable in the long term.

UNDP was the first partner to come on board to support the NPRC in 2017 even before the Government did. UNDP was key in facilitating the capacity-building of the commissioners to come to a common understanding of the Commission's mandate. UNDP supported a skills audit to assess the skills of the various commissioners and assisted in identifying gaps and designing various programmes to build the capacities of the commissioners. The skills audit was used to put in place an institutional framework for the NPRC to be more focused. The NPRC was able to do a conflict map and a media strategy with UNDP assistance. The NPRC was also assisted to design organizational policies.

UNDP assisted the NPRC to create a conducive environment and open up space for dialogue on sensitive issues such as Gukurahundi as part of peacebuilding initiatives. As a result, the NPRC has now gained credibility among key stakeholders across the country and is ready to conduct peace dialogues, starting with the sensitive Gukurahundi dialogues in May 2019. However, a major constraint in rolling out and

broadening its work has been inadequate resources to operationalize its strategic plan.

The NPRC developed a strategic plan through an incremental or a bottom-up approach which required consultations among different stakeholders including war veterans, churches, youth and women. The strategic plan was validated and is being disseminated. With UNDP assistance, NPRC carried out a stakeholder mapping which identified 616 organizations working directly or indirectly on peacebuilding. UNDP assisted the NPRC to identify some of the stakeholders from this long list to form various external peace committees and as a result, the NPRC has now set up the National Peace Committee and is in the process of setting up provincial and district peace committees.

Furthermore, with UNDP support, the NPRC is now in the pre-planning phase for the inter-party dialogue and is designing the framework of the national dialogue so that the dialogue can move from the statehouse and is broadened to be more inclusive. The opposition MDC Alliance has boycotted the dialogue called by President Mnangagwa, with only the smaller political parties participating. Facilitating a broader dialogue will be a delicate process that the NPRC will need to handle with astuteness once it has been given the mandate to convene the dialogues.

**Finding 11.** UNDP has supported the setting-up of an integrated peace project that brings together the Government, civil society, the commissions, the churches, traditional leaders and communities working together towards a common goal. Through UNDP support, over the past three years there has been an opening up of space between civil society and the Government that has enabled the two sides to come together to talk about conflict and historical injustices.

The UNDP CPD recognizes the need to consolidate the foundations of peace through national ownership and government leadership in peacebuilding. To ensure ownership in this regard, UNDP has identified the Office of the President and Cabinet as the implementing partner in the integrated peace

programme. From an advocacy and political perspective, it is important that the State take the lead. Situating the peace programme in the Office of the President and Cabinet will provide leadership and an anchor to the programme.

A key intervention by UNDP in the peace process has been its governance interventions in the community peacebuilding programme, titled Deepening the Foundations for Peace, Dialogue and Social Cohesion in Zimbabwe. The programme came from the realization that the majority of Zimbabweans live in rural areas and are often the direct victims of conflicts that occur in their communities, especially during volatile periods such as elections. The programme set out to strengthen and support community mechanisms for peacebuilding and alternative dispute resolution through the establishment of Local Peace Committees (LPCs).

The implementation of the programme is a collaborative effort involving the Government; the NPRC; the culture and creative arts sector, through the Culture Fund; church organizations, through the Heads of Christian Denominations; the National Association of NGOs (NANGO); and Search for Common Ground. A significant amount of work has been undertaken, with 324 LPCs established in 16 conflict-prone districts. The LPCs have been set up to solve disputes in communities, ranging from domestic issues to boundary disputes, and to mobilize for community development initiatives. The work of these LPCs was buttressed by a pool of 142 community peace facilitators who play a mediation and dialogue facilitation role.

In addition, the livelihoods or community development projects that have been supported by the UNDP project at the community level – ranging from construction of schools, clinics and bridges to

income-generating projects and social welfare interventions such as paying fees for destitute children – have fostered cohesion and collaboration around common development issues and brought together people with divergent perspectives, orientations and views.<sup>51</sup> Literature has shown that informal, community-based peace committees can effectively contribute to peacebuilding at local community level, and have the advantage of representation of all social groups in the community.<sup>52</sup>

UNDP has contributed to the strengthening of the national peace architecture by enhancing community capacities to provide alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, as well as to increase avenues for national dialogue that fosters social cohesion and builds stakeholder confidence across sectors while promoting a shared national value system.<sup>53</sup> Public hearings on Gukurahundi were expected to start at the beginning of May 2019, but while the NPRC has conducted consultations to establish a strategy in 2019<sup>54</sup> and is engaging with police and law enforcement officers on the issue,<sup>55</sup> the public hearings themselves have not taken place to date.<sup>56</sup> The hearings will provide UNDP a unique opportunity to increase its support to the NPRC to facilitate comprehensive dialogues that will bring healing and closure to the Gukurahundi issue.

**Finding 12.** UNDP was a key supporter of the 2018 elections and their peaceful implementation. UNDP took a multi-agency approach and flexibly adjusted several projects to ensure the smooth implementation of the elections from a number of approaches, including support to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission; work with the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and key stakeholders in the peace ecosystem in promoting a peaceful electoral process; and strengthening

<sup>51</sup> Government of Zimbabwe/UNDP (2016) Deepening the Foundations of Peace, Dialogue and Social Cohesion in Zimbabwe: Annual Progress Report 2016.

<sup>52</sup> See Chivasa, N., 2017, 'Efficacy of informal peace committees to peacebuilding: Evidence from Seke district, Zimbabwe', *African Evaluation Journal* 5(2), a241.

<sup>53</sup> Government of Zimbabwe and UNDP (2017) Annual Progress Report 2017.

<sup>54</sup> See "Zimbabwe: NPRC Spells Out Gukurahundi Strategy", July 2019. Accessible on <https://allafrica.com/stories/201907220135.html>

<sup>55</sup> See "NPRC To Engage Police on Gukurahundi" February 2020. Accessible on <https://www.zimeye.net/2020/02/01/nprc-to-engage-police-on-gukurahundi/>

<sup>56</sup> As of 1 February 2020.

the commissions' capacities as well as their ability to manage electoral systems, participatory consultations and voter registration, all of which hugely improved voter turnout and voting as well as the legitimacy of the electoral process in Zimbabwe at a critical time for the country.

UNDP support to the ZEC aimed at ensuring more credible and transparent electoral processes for the 2018 elections. Key areas of UNDP support were capacity-building and strengthening of the ZEC; voter registration (coming up with a credible and inclusive voter register); building confidence in the ZEC through consultations with stakeholders; and getting citizens to be engaged by registering as voters and participating in the election.

Zimbabwe still struggles with the credibility of the electoral management body, the ZEC. UNDP supported the training of the 10,000 people who were needed to roll out the voter registration. UNDP also provided support for voter education. The year 2018 was the first time that ZEC has developed a communication campaign. UNDP also worked with ZEC to ensure the involvement of civil society in the electoral process, further strengthening the credibility of the ZEC and the elections. The communications campaign involved the extensive use of radio as well as road shows to reach remote areas. As a result of the communication and media campaign, 5.7 million people were registered to vote, 80 percent of the eligible voters, the highest in the country's history.

Through the support of UNDP, the credibility of the voter roll was further enhanced. Enhancements in the electoral register meant that political actors were able to search, verify and analyse it for credibility attributes that distinguished it from the previous voter roll, and were commended by election observer missions. Confidence in the voter roll, coupled with voter education including a robust electoral rights campaign by the ZHRC and the holding of the first-ever platforms between ZEC and electoral stakeholders including CSOs, resulted in a high voter turnout of over 86 percent.<sup>57</sup>

UNDP supported the use of short message service (text messaging) to contact citizens and provide details on how to register as voters, reaching about 3.2 million people. UNDP also supported the establishment of a call centre, which was a new concept, which people could call and hear a recorded message guiding them on voter registration. A total of 100,000 people called the call centre, and this created an important interface between the public and the ZEC.

Voter registration was a new area for the ZEC, and therefore it needed a dedicated department to manage the implementation of the voter roll, the Department of Information and Communication Technology. UNDP support enhanced the technical capacity of the ZEC, enabling it to manage more sophisticated equipment and software for the finalization and maintenance of the voter role.

In the past, the credibility of elections was compromised by the selective application of the law by the police. To increase electoral credibility, UNDP supported the training of over 1,500 police officers, 50 magistrates and 80 prosecutors in electoral justice, in a partnership with UN-Women under the Police Harmonised Elections Training Programme. A draft Police Pocketbook on human rights was developed to support capacities within the police and to be used in executing their daily duties on human rights and more importantly on electoral support. Magistrates and prosecutors were also trained on the Electoral Act and how to prosecute electoral crimes. As a result, several cases of electoral crimes were heard and the magistrates applied the Electoral Act, leading to appropriate sentencing.

Towards the elections in 2018, UNDP supported ZEC to increase citizen participation in the electoral process through engagement focusing on key electoral stakeholders such as political parties, CSOs, faith-based organizations, the media and development partners. During these engagements, ZEC briefed the stakeholders on developments around the new biometric voter registration system while stakeholders raised their concerns around both the

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/240/>

new system and the electoral process in general. The stakeholder engagements were considered to have built confidence between ZEC and its electoral stakeholders and a way to ensure transparency in the electoral process.

Support to the smooth and peaceful implementation of the 2018 elections also included close collaboration with the NPRC, with key stakeholders in the peace ecosystem contributing to a peaceful electoral process in Zimbabwe through implementation of its integrated electoral peace strategy. The strategy mobilized collaborative and multi-stakeholder responses to conflict risks before, during and after the elections. UNDP also supported youth organizations to participate in the peace dialogues for violence-free elections.

Preventive responses in support of the electoral process included high-level confidence-building measures involving traditional leaders, women's groups, youth groups, victims' groups, political parties and the broader rule-of-law agencies, culminating in the National Peace Pledge which committed political parties and candidates to a peaceful, free, fair and credible election.<sup>58</sup> Besides the Peace Pledge, NPRC also reached out to communities by launching a Peace Caravan and the Building Blocks for Peace, which were effective in curbing political violence before and during the elections.

To avoid a continuation of youth-based electoral violence, as seen in past elections, UNDP supported the National Association of Youth Organisations (NAYO), working with the NPRC, to mobilize young people to raise awareness about peace in their communities. Towards the 2018 elections, UNDP provided funds for the youth organizations to sustain dialogue through to the election. UNDP provided NAYO with technical support on how to navigate the governance landscape in Zimbabwe. UNDP also supported NAYO to claim a place at the table as part of the National Peace Architecture, in

line with United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), which urged Member States to set up mechanisms to enable young people to participate meaningfully in peace processes and dispute resolution.<sup>59</sup> With UNDP support, NAYO worked with NPRC in the development of its five-year strategy by mobilizing young people to participate in national consultations that went into developing the strategy.

**Finding 13.** One of the achievements of UNDP work with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission has been the creation of an electronic case management system, which has made handling of complaints easier to track. The Commission has also increased community outreach to inform communities of its work. However, though this has increased demand for its services, it only has offices in Harare and Bulawayo and resource limitations constrain its ability to respond to this demand.

UNDP supported the ZHRC with funding for investigations to enable it to go into the field, increasing its ability to respond to issues raised. Through UNDP support, ZHRC was able to hire and deploy monitors across the country during the elections. UNDP support also enabled the Commission to handle more cases, which doubled from some 30 cases a month in 2017 to about 60 in 2018. UNDP showed leadership and flexibility when it supported salaries for eight months for staff who would otherwise have been retrenched after the end of support from the Danish Institute for Human Rights, although this raises the issue of the sustainability of ZHRC in the future.

On the downside, the ZHRC failed to improve the coverage of its services. Under its strategic plan, the Commission should have opened offices at provincial and district levels, but because of resource constraints, its operations remain confined to Harare and Bulawayo. The Commission has experienced stunted growth. Although a lot of work went

<sup>58</sup> Government of Zimbabwe/UNDP (2018) Deepening the Foundations of Peace, Dialogue and Social Cohesion in Zimbabwe: Annual Progress Report 2018.

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Security Council resolution S/RES/2250, United Nations, New York, 9 December 2015; [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2250\(2015\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2250(2015))

into promoting the visibility, mandate and accessibility of the ZHRC and the demand for its services remains high, as many stakeholders think that it is relevant and is a credible voice on issues of human rights, staffing on the ground is too limited for it to effectively respond to that demand.

Funded by UNDP regular resources, the project supporting the ZHRC is not sufficiently funded to overcome the underfunding from the Government to meet its mandate. The support project was designed with a budget of \$4.5 million, but only \$1.25 million was provided through UNDP TRAC (target for resources assignment from the core), while the rest of the budget remained unfunded. Part of the reason is that UNDP was unable to raise funds from other donors, while the Government did not meet its financial obligations to the Commission. This affected the operations of the Commission and the sustainability of results. The Commission experienced “stunted growth” because of resource limitations.

A further issue within the ZHRC has been its high rate of staff turnover as a result of the poor conditions of service. During the period under review, the Commission lost two Executive Secretaries who resigned because they were unhappy with their conditions of service. The Commission has also been affected by the blanket freeze on posts imposed by the Government as part of cost cutting. From a minimum optimal number of 103 staff as outlined in the strategic plan, the Commission currently has only 60 staff members. The situation has been compounded by the Commission taking on a dual mandate as it has now taken on the Public Protector’s role but with no additional resources. The staff complement would need to be higher if the Commission is to go ahead with its decentralization plan. As a result of the staff shortages, some of the investigations are being carried out by non-programme officers, which does not augur well for the institution’s credibility.

**Finding 14.** Under the access to justice programme, UNDP supported the justice, law and order sector in the training of 50 magistrates, 80 prosecutors and 1,500 police officers to respond to violations of the Electoral Act and to secure convictions for electoral crimes. Unlike in the past where there was

selective prosecution of electoral crimes, in the 2018 elections, convictions were secured against perpetrators of electoral crimes in a non-partisan way.

The programme also supported the training of legal officers in sign language to improve access to justice to people with hearing and speech disabilities. Other achievements included the adoption of the Citizen Perception Mapping report, which will be used as a baseline on access to justice. UNDP also built the capacity of prison officers on gender issues, with the aim to sensitize officers to the needs of women prisoners.

However, for a programme that is so central to the UNDP mandate, the access to justice programme has not performed as well as expected and appears to have skirted some of the key impediments to access to justice, particularly for the poor. Delivery of and access to justice in Zimbabwe face barriers from both the supply and demand sides. From the citizens’ perspective, barriers to accessing justice include complex court procedures that are not easily understood by most; the high costs of litigation; the limited availability of legal aid service providers; and the physical inaccessibility of formal courts located largely in urban areas.

For the delivery of judicial services, persons with disabilities face particular challenges due to the inaccessibility of courts, the lack of availability of court documents and procedures in Braille, the fact that court officials have limited use of sign language, as well as limited legal aid and awareness services for this community. The attitudes of public officials towards people with disabilities can also prevent access to justice. A sector-wide approach is required among duty bearers to improve the quality of services.

Although traditional courts adjudicate approximately 45 percent of legal disputes, capacity development on the rights in the Constitution has not been undertaken systematically. Access to justice could be enhanced by building the capacity of traditional courts in line with constitutional rights, considering the large number of disputes that are settled through traditional courts.

UNDP is aware of most of these challenges but admits that the implementation of the access to justice programme took place in a context where the demand for access to justice and justice delivery remains largely unmet. Gaps in access to justice impact largely on vulnerable and marginalized populations, while the economic decline and the shrinking fiscal space further disadvantage the poor from accessing justice. For instance, although the Government has started to decentralize the Legal Aid Directorate with eight offices established across the country, legal aid services are still not available in the smaller centres, leaving many poor people unable to access free legal aid.

**Finding 15.** The support provided by UNDP to the UPR process enabled Zimbabwe to resume reporting to Human Rights Charter-based bodies after a long break, and although the country still lags behind on reporting to treaty-based mechanisms, it is now catching up. UNDP support to the UPR also played a critical role in building cross-sectoral partnerships between government and other stakeholders, including CSOs, faith-based organizations, Parliament and independent commissions. It also opened up additional space for dialogue on sensitive human rights issues.

At the beginning of the first UPR cycle in 2011, there was absolutely no knowledge on how to report, implement and monitor human rights under the UPR process. But over the years, through the support provided, different government ministries and departments are now able to implement, monitor and report on the UPR as a result of the knowledge and skills extended. This has enabled implementation through the National Plan of Action of accepted UPR recommendations and improved human rights enjoyment by citizens.<sup>60</sup>

The process of compiling the UPR reports also involved intense capacity-building of the UPR Steering Committee, resulting in improved quality of the reports produced and also of the inclusivity of the processes.<sup>61</sup> Through the capacity-building, the Steering Committee developed the National Plan of Action with specific priority actions for implementation and drafted the UPR second cycle report.<sup>62</sup>

The second cycle UPR final report was presented in Geneva before the Human Rights Working Group on 2 November 2017 and formed the basis of the review for Zimbabwe. The report detailed the progress that the Government has made towards implementing the recommendations arising from the first review and highlighting new human rights developments in the country. The outcome of the review was that 260 recommendations were made by the UPR Working Group of the United Nations Human Rights Council with 142 recommendations enjoying the support of Zimbabwe, 100 recommendations being deferred pending Cabinet consideration and 18 being noted.<sup>63</sup>

Awareness-raising and communication activities under the UPR included the development and adoption of a communication strategy, as well as the distribution of various publications, media messages and billboards.<sup>64</sup>

Implementing the UPR processes is necessary to ensure that Zimbabwe stays up to date with global human rights standards and norms and that national laws are in line with global human rights trends. However, there is a case for focusing on raising more awareness of human rights as enshrined in the 2013 Constitution rather than on the UPR, which is a bit removed from people's everyday lives. Resources currently being used to communicate on the UPR at trade fairs and agricultural shows could be better used to raise awareness of the national

<sup>60</sup> UNDP (2017) Progress Report on the Cost-Sharing Agreement between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme Regarding Support for the Universal Periodic Review Process in Zimbabwe 2014 – 2017.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs (2016) Consolidation of Justice Delivery for Enhanced Voice and Participation: Annual Report 2016.

Constitution which is of more immediate relevance to the general population of the country. Part of the ZHRC mandate is to raise people's awareness about their human rights; however, the ZHRC remains constrained both in financial and human resources.

**Finding 16.** UNDP exercised its policy influence in its support to the development of the TSP. UNDP led the establishment of a Transition Policy Think Tank of academia, diaspora and the private sector to help the Government think through the most pressing development challenges and design policy options. UNDP was key in the United Nations/World Bank/AfDB joint needs assessments which examined priority needs and costing for key policy reforms. With UNDP support, the Government put together the TSP to steer the economy until a fully-fledged development programme is formulated. However, the fast development of the document meant that there were limited consultations, meaning that there may be limited ownership of the programme outside of government.

The newly developed TSP provides a commitment to a policy framework for economic growth and to recognizing the need for governance changes to ensure economic stability. The TSP was the first planning document to recognize the link between governance and economic growth. The Constitution also places an emphasis on peace, which is a positive development as Zimbabwe is now increasingly aware and sensitive to the need for peace in the country as a prerequisite for development.

However, while the TSP is a very well thought out document that can take the country forward socially, politically and economically, it has not been accepted in some quarters as its drafting was felt to have been non-participatory, with little public consultation. The TSP was drafted with the support of about 90 international and national experts who produced 25 sector papers that formed the basis for the TSP. There was very little public participation in the drafting of the document, including from the Government itself, raising critical questions of national ownership. From the Government's perspective, wide consultations were not possible given the urgent need to develop a transitional

plan and wider consultations will be conducted for the five-year development plan that will follow the TSP. However, for the TSP to achieve its desired impact, there is a need for a broader buy-in from key stakeholders in the country and UNDP could facilitate a process to communicate effectively on the document.

The TSP is a very ambitious programme that runs for just over two years (October 2018 – December 2020), a very short period in which to implement all the planned interventions. A further challenge is a lack of prioritization or sequencing of activities, which may impact implementation, making it less effective. There is a need for UNDP to support the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to prioritize interventions to make the most of the short implementation period and the limited resources available.

**Finding 17.** Zimbabwe's land reform programme remains a contentious issue and a stumbling block to the country's re-engagement efforts with the international community. UNDP was able to use its convening power and neutral positioning to support the issue and bring all parties to the table. UNDP supported the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement in developing inventories of improvements on acquired farms, which was necessary to determine values for the purpose of compensation.

Through UNDP support, the project made a major breakthrough when it brought former commercial farmers and the Government to the table to discuss and agree on a compensation dialogue road map. This opened up an avenue for discussion not just between the farmers and the Government but with the international community, which had previously isolated Zimbabwe because of its handling of the land issue.

Given the sensitivity of the land reform programme, UNDP was best placed to facilitate the process of engagement between the Government and the former commercial farmers because of its close relationship with the Government and donors as well as its non-partisan nature.

The project took a staged approach to the process and supported the Government in drawing up inventories of improvements on the acquired farms, which was necessary to determine the values for purposes of compensation. The valuation of improvements had to be determined accurately and fairly and was undertaken in the terms of the Land Acquisition Act, as part of the land reform programme and in the context of responsible governance of tenure.

The main objective of the project was to capacitate the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement in the management of the land sector as a prerequisite for the development of the agriculture and other land-based economic sectors. The project also supported the establishment of the Zimbabwe Land Commission which is pivotal to land issues in Zimbabwe. These interventions have been catalytic in the finalization of the outstanding issues on inventories of the improvements on the acquired farms, compensation to the former commercial farmers, base mapping and surveying of the A2 farms.<sup>65, 66</sup>

A dispute resolution framework has been agreed upon and the regulations have also been defined around the distribution of compensation. The framework defines the structures that should be put in place, to ensure decentralization of dispute resolution to district level. The land tenure system review has been carried out and the recommendations have been presented to the Ministry. The outcome of the land tenure review will feed into the new National Land Policy, which is being developed with support from FAO.

On the downside, although the Ministry is the implementing partner and UNDP was to support and complement its efforts, the Ministry is under-resourced and was unable to put any resources

up front during the project implementation, until recently when it bought 13 vehicles to be used for fieldwork. However, the importance of the land question in Zimbabwe is demonstrated by the fact that donors have pledged 5 million euros for the successor programme, which was set to start in 2019 and focus on legislative alignment, awareness and advocacy, land tenure system and dispute resolution. To date, however, the new programme has not started.<sup>67</sup>

**Finding 18.** While the local government programme has a very comprehensive programme document whose activities were well thought out, it has not taken off as expected due to issues with financing, implementing partners and changes. Rapid changes in government ministries affect ongoing legislative work as priorities change and ownership is affected. UNDP has the opportunity to address development at the local level through its other interventions and has to some degree been able to leverage synergies for localized rural development strategies.

The local governance programme has faced a number of challenges which have critically impacted the implementation of the project. Firstly, the project has not received adequate funding: in the project document, UNDP planned to contribute \$1.2 million of the \$5 million project budget, with the Government's contribution set at \$100,000, leaving a total of \$2.9 million to be mobilized. However, there were changes in the implementing partner ministries before and after the new dispensation, which saw several changes in the responsible ministers and the actual make-up of the ministries themselves. At the time of the evaluation, while UNDP has come close to spending its planned contribution (\$1.1 million as of December 2019) despite sharp reduction of TRAC resources allocated to the country office, no external resources had been mobilized for the project, which illustrates the

<sup>65</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, European Union and UNDP (2018) Annual Report: Support to the Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement 2014 to 2016 Action Plan.

<sup>66</sup> Model A2 farms are composed of individual plots of land that are classified as small-, medium- and large-scale commercial schemes. A total of 6,400 former commercial farms were acquired since 2000. The project had targeted to undertake inventories on 4,600. By 2018, the inventories of the improvements had been undertaken on 4,292 former commercial farms, of which 2,881 were done under the project, leaving a balance of 309 farms which were to be completed by 31 December 2018.

<sup>67</sup> As of 1 February 2020.

difficulties UNDP encountered in attracting donors for the expected activities. While the project document is well thought through on activities and partnerships, it did not identify potential donors for the large funding gap. The UNDP capacity to leverage additional funding was limited in some cases by donor perceptions that the Government was not committed to reform.

One of the expected outcomes of the programme was the alignment of local government laws to the Constitution, but not much was achieved on that front. UNDP supported the Government to draft the Local Authorities Bill, the Traditional Leadership Bill and the Provincial and Metropolitan Bill, but none of these bills went through. After UNDP provided support towards the drafting of the Local Government Bill, the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development was split into the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and the Ministry of Rural Development and National Heritage. In 2017, the Ministries were combined again, and the bills were consolidated into the Local Government Bill. But with the coming of the new dispensation, a new Minister of Local Government was appointed who proposed that the bills be separated again, which consequently negatively affected the adoption of one local governance bill.

Another planned deliverable was to support the development of a rural development strategy. Again, UNDP supported the work, but it was not concluded due to the unavailability of technical support and because of institutional changes. UNDP also supported the Human Settlement Policy and is getting more traction in this area due to the important legal implications that arise from resettling people. In the meantime, the Local Government Bill and the Traditional Leaders Bill are not moving as they are not being pushed through Cabinet and the Minister is not prioritizing them. Part of the reason is that in the past, traditional leaders fell under the Ministry of Local Government, but the bill provides for their autonomy, so it is no longer the responsibility of the Ministry of Local Government to push the bill through Cabinet.

In the current context, local development work remains a highly important area, and despite the funding challenges of projects at the local level, decentralized authorities continue to require support for their capacities to address growing socioeconomic challenges. While the local governance project has not been able to fully deliver on its objectives, UNDP does support local governments and district authorities through its interventions at the community level. District authorities are involved directly and indirectly in the IGSL, SECA and ZRBF projects, which contributes to the ownership in implementing development policies at the local level. For example, in some of the localities visited by the evaluation team, district authorities had received training on climate change adaptation and disaster risk management planning. Consequently, the district authorities had rolled out trainings with the communities and conducted community-based discussions to map hazards and identify adaptation solutions. The district authorities established local development committees, and while the financial and human capacities of these structures are still limited, they are an entry point for a more comprehensive effort to localize the implementation of development strategies.

## 2.4 Resilience and climate change adaptation

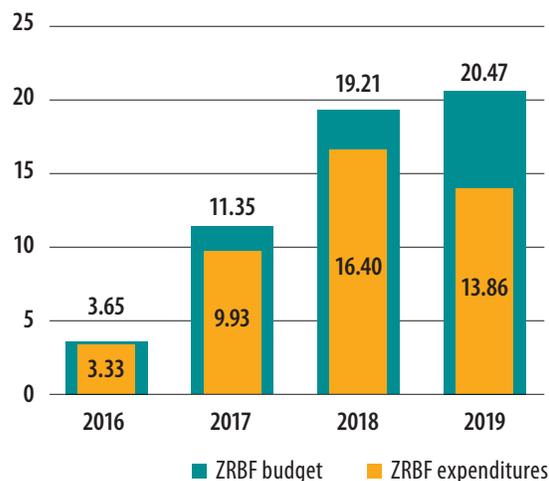
**Finding 19.** The Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund project has developed into a comprehensive and complex project to address resilience issues, having grown from an initial pilot into a large programme to address complex resilience and development challenges within at-risk communities in 18 districts across Zimbabwe. This complex structure requires solid project management capacities which UNDP has proven to have. The project has taken a central place in the UNDP programme in Zimbabwe and constitutes a clear opportunity to further integrate issues of food security, livelihoods and vulnerability to climate risks in the UNDP programme and in policy development. However, this success also brings several challenges in project management and UNDP technical support to resilience.

The ZRBF project was designed around a strong theory of change underpinned by five resilience principles guiding the project and the strategic framework for Zimbabwe,<sup>68</sup> illustrating that effective resilience must be achieved through multiple pathways. In the project design, UNDP emphasized that resilience is not a linear process, but requires layering of activities. This layering has effectively been built into the project, which engages in three distinct areas: (1) the creation of a body of evidence and data for improved project planning and policy-making; (2) direct targeting of at-risk communities through efforts to improve their absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities; and (3) the setting up of a financing mechanism to provide a coordinated and timely response to risks and shocks.

The ZRBF is financed through a multi-donor fund and managed through a Programme Management Unit (PMU) based in UNDP. The key donors include the European Union and the Governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom, with UNDP also providing regular resources to finance implementation. The 2015 project document estimated the required resources for the project at \$50 million, and to this day, total expenditures have reached \$43.5 million.<sup>69</sup> The financial size of the project has grown from \$7.7 million allocated at the project's initial phase and a budget of \$3.6 million in 2016, to \$20.5 million for 2019, showing that the project is experiencing significant growth.

The project's main implementation partner is the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement, but other ministries<sup>70</sup> and district-level partners also take part in the project. The project funds grants to seven project consortiums operating in 18 districts, whose implementation is led by international NGOs, in consortiums with around 25 local and international NGOs, community-based organizations and institutes. This complex project structure requires UNDP to focus a considerable amount of

**FIGURE 4. Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund, budget and expenditures, 2016-2019 (Million US\$)**



Source: Atlas

its efforts on administrative and project management activities. The years 2016 and 2017 saw the initial start-up of the project and disbursement of project consortium grants, which understandably saw an initial slow uptake of implementation and fund disbursement. However, some of these initial challenges, such as the impact from the complex economic situation in Zimbabwe, have continued to affect implementation in 2018 and 2019.

Such a complex structure of multiple donors, seven International NGO consortium leads and 25 partners across 18 districts, coupled with the complex nature of the issue being addressed and the structure of the project, has seen pressures placed on the project management team and the implementation and technical direction of the project. UNDP has navigated these complex relationships and implementation challenges and has mostly been able to accommodate the demands of the project's multiple donors, ensuring that all stakeholders agree on the direction of the project. This is somewhat reflected in the additional financial commitment

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.zrbf.co.zw/about/approach> (i) Focus on shock dynamics; (ii) Resilience as a multidimensional capacity; (iii) Resilience functions; (iv) Outcome-indexed capacities; and (v) Multi-level and systems-based.

<sup>69</sup> Data extracted from Atlas, February 2020.

<sup>70</sup> The Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing; the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare; the Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate; and the Food and Nutrition Council are mentioned as partners of ZRBF.

from its partners two years into the project, which has potentially brought the total resources for the project to \$75 million.

At the same time, while several local and international consortium leads and members recognize the complex nature and sometimes heavy structure of the ZRBF, consortium members appreciate the opportunity to learn and share capacities within and across projects. In addition, for local organizations, being associated with UNDP through the implementation of ZRBF grants demonstrates a certain legitimacy, which improved their engagement with communities and government partners.

Overall, UNDP has proven to have the ability to bring donors, government and non-governmental partners together on a large project that potentially supports the achievement of two of its programme outcomes,<sup>71</sup> while contributing to the national effort to enhance agricultural productivity and attain sustainable socioeconomic transformation.<sup>72</sup> The project is mobilizing a large number of staff, and the PMU has been established in response to the project's specific needs and requests from key financial partners. The PMU consisted of 17 people, including international and national staff.

However, although there has been a generally positive direction and overall implementation of the complex project, the evaluation found that despite internal efforts to share implementation experience, resilience knowledge and updates on the project's progress, the ZRBF PMU is seen as an independent unit within the country office. As a consequence, while the ZRBF has communicated on the project's activities in general,<sup>73</sup> the integration of lessons to – and from – thematically linked projects within the UNDP portfolio, such as the SECA and IGSL projects, remained limited, as does sharing within the consortiums themselves. The SECA and IGSL projects have similar and converging objectives, and

given the similarity between some of the activities involved, a stronger collaboration between rural livelihoods, climate change adaptation and resilience could have been expected.

Furthermore, the complex nature of the ZRBF project and its growth in financing and geographic coverage over a relatively short period of time, between 2016 and 2018, has meant that technical capacity and resources that were initially assigned to support and guide the project have been increasingly assigned to ensure smooth project management and implementation. This concern has been raised to varying degrees by the project's donors who questioned the capacity of UNDP, globally and within the country, to bring advanced technical guidance on resilience. The ZRBF takes a multifaceted view of resilience and as a result, consortium members use a variety of different approaches to address resilience challenges. Many of these approaches could be considered "traditional" responses to livelihoods challenges, but this is not to say that they are not appropriate. Such interventions include market and finance access support, value chain development, vocational training and agricultural extension services.

At the same time, there were concerns that the consortiums were operating individually and independently with only occasional room for collective knowledge and information-sharing. While the project does also implement knowledge-sharing through exchange visits among partners and quarterly meetings that include different consortium partners, UNDP and the PMU have increased efforts to generate and share knowledge through a shared technical adviser (with other UNDP projects) and the establishment of the resilience knowledge hub.

To a degree this is an illustration of the project being a victim of its own implementation success on one hand, and to increasing needs for support in

<sup>71</sup> ZRBF is by design directly linked to two CPD outcomes: "Key institutions are better able to formulate and implement poverty reduction strategies and programmes for improved livelihoods and reduced poverty of communities"; and "Vulnerable communities are equipped to cope with climate change and build resilience for household food and nutrition security."

<sup>72</sup> Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation 2013-2018.

<sup>73</sup> The project has an active website, which includes up-to-date progress reports and data (<http://www.zrbf.co.zw/>) as well as an active twitter account (@ZRBFZIM) which provides information on project activities.

improving resilience with limited avenues for channelling bilateral aid within the country, on the other hand. As the project has grown, resources have been focused on ensuring smooth growth and implementation, with some arguing this has been at the expense of technical support and guidance to the project itself.

The adjustments being made mid-implementation need to clearly ensure additionality and support to the complex nature of resilience in Zimbabwe and avoid the addition of further complexity. The complex nature of resilience would suggest the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing any technical gaps, which may need recognition of required adjustments within the project structure itself, which leans heavily towards monitoring and data collection to support project oversight, as well as feed the crisis modifier alert system. The sharing of UNDP technical resources does not seem to address the overriding need to support the project and guide the consortiums in adopting resilience approaches nor does it address questions of UNDP additionality.

To strengthen knowledge management, experience sharing and learning as well as support to policy development for resilience, the resilience knowledge hub was recently established in 2019, under the ZRBF and led by Mercy Corps with the Institute of Environment Studies and TANGO International. Working across the ZRBF project with consortiums, PMU and the Government, the resilience knowledge hub has a mandate to: (1) generate knowledge through research and learning; (2) improve effectiveness through capacity-building; and (3) amplify impact through policy and influence. While this reiteration of a focus on the use of project experience to both inform itself and support and inform policy is positive, it also constitutes a further layer of complexity and structure within an already complex project. At the time of the evaluation, it was not possible to see the effectiveness of this additional structure and its benefit to the project, but clearly the structure will need to be carefully established to ensure that

the hub does not only communicate findings and experiences externally but also communicates and shares experience within the project and between the numerous consortium members to capture synergies, experience sharing and ensure that the project is strengthened through the large volumes of data and experience being produced.

In response to severe food insecurity, WFP has doubled its commitment to Zimbabwe and has committed to assist over 4 million people with humanitarian food support.<sup>74</sup> Given the WFP commitment to resilience in the country, the ZRBF could have taken better advantage of this and expand the partnership with WFP.

At the time of the evaluation, UNDP, the project and some donors were also examining the possibility of further expanding the project into other resilience needs areas within Zimbabwe, notably urban resilience. Clearly, this is somewhat of a transition or redirection for the current project and will require some careful consideration and phased expansion. The addition of urban resilience would require different technical support and direction from that which the project is currently implementing and would also require partnerships with different government and NGO actors who have mandates and experience in these areas. Overall, this is a considerable shift which may justify a separate and additional PMU and technical support structure, particularly to avoid any further delays in implementation of the ZRBF as well as distraction from its mandate, focus and implementation, especially given that rural resilience needs have grown during 2019 and are showing no sign of reducing.

**Finding 20.** While targeted individuals and communities have been shown to benefit from support through the ZRBF, recent climate events have shown that the livelihoods of many Zimbabweans remain fragile. Their resilience to future shocks requires continuous support and engagement from UNDP and its partners, and effective use beyond the project of the evidence built through the various

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<sup>74</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/news/world-food-programme-expands-emergency-operation-zimbabwe-drought-and-economic-hardship-plunge>

data-collection mechanisms. The ZRBF project currently focuses heavily on collecting data from community- and macro-level indicators, which is a valuable contribution to the project activities and provides information on potential upcoming crises affecting communities. The capacity gap of some of the project's key stakeholders has generally limited the use of valuable data for immediate response as well as for future planning.

Through its seven grant-funded projects implemented across the country, and as part of the combination of interventions that target causal links between hazards, poverty, food insecurity and social aspects of health, nutrition, basic services and social practices, the ZRBF has funded activities that directly contribute to project beneficiaries' livelihoods through a variety of approaches, including value chain developments, access to financial services and trainings. ZRBF support has also contributed to developing productive infrastructure and to the formation of enterprises, both approaches that can improve the viability of crop and livestock production for rural farmers.

The ZRBF monitoring tracks earnings of participants in value chain development activities, as well as access to cash savings and informal safety nets to withstand shocks and stresses. While the evaluation found that beneficiaries have managed to accumulate savings that could be used to invest in their productive capacities or as safety nets, overall, the indicators show a limited increase in access to finance for the targeted communities. The ZRBF progress report for January-June 2019 shows that over the reporting period, 272 new village saving and lending groups, benefiting 2,280 people, were established. Some farmers that were not part of the groups were assisted to access loans through commercial banks. However, the current levels of inflation and the general macroeconomic situation have limited the use of savings and loans in productive investments. A third of the participants stopped contributing to the savings scheme because of general economic challenges.

Meetings with beneficiaries, as well as ZRBF progress reports, have shown important efforts in

training beneficiaries on farming techniques, identifying sustainable crops and practices. The project invested in testing new or alternative crops and supported the establishment of honey processing centres, among other examples of new opportunities to diversify livelihoods and improve the adaptive capacities of targeted vulnerable households.

These results, however significant at the community level, are understandably only a first step to effectively build the resilience of communities. The prolonged drought period that started in late 2018, as well as the devastating effects of Cyclone Idai in March 2019, have shown that the livelihoods of many Zimbabweans remain fragile when faced with sudden shocks. As the ZRBF project document recognizes, "building resilience is a long-term process that requires sustained commitment of all relevant actors". It is therefore essential that the project continue to analyse current results in order to inform future activities. In this regard, the project has set up an effective high-frequency monitoring system which collects data monthly at the district level. ZRBF consortiums are involved with communities to collect information on health, environmental and socioeconomic indicators, which helped to classify and monitor districts according to "normal", "alert", "alarm" and "emergency" situations, based on the collected data. In addition to these considerable efforts to collect data during implementation, in 2018 the project supported the conduct of a baseline report through a survey of 4,200 households in 210 communities.

Changes that are measured on specific indicators can trigger a "crisis modifier" which enables the release of additional funding for certain districts, which is disbursed through the consortiums to help overcome specific resilience issues. The crisis modifier has been used on a number of occasions to ensure additional support at the community level. However, it has been reported to the evaluation team that the modifier has not been operating as designed and in some cases fund release saw some delays.

The evaluation found that observations from the ZRBF baseline evaluation report on the use and

application of knowledge generated by the project were still valid after two years of implementation. Overall, the contribution of the ZRBF to data collection and knowledge generation is significant, valued by many stakeholders and must be recognized. Based on a clear strategy, the project has made an important investment in data collection and has published regular monitoring reports that are readily available. These efforts have also strengthened collaboration with national statistics actors for the publication of data that were long considered sensitive in Zimbabwe. But as noted by the 2018 baseline evaluation report, stakeholders have not entirely understood how

the generated knowledge will be used to influence policy. Beneficiaries on the ground are data producers, but not yet users; district-level authorities show great interest in improving their decisions based on ZRBF data, but do not have the required information or the capacity to do so. ZRBF grants and project implementation partners also spend a considerable amount of resources collecting data without a clear understanding of its use. Finally, while the first component of the project has laid concrete building blocks for evidence-based institutional, legislative and policy frameworks, it is still unclear how operational policies are in place at national and subnational levels.



A decorative graphic consisting of a dotted white line that starts at the top left, goes down, then right, then down again, and finally right. It features five colored circles: a light orange circle at the top left, a dark blue circle on the vertical line, a light green circle at the bottom left, a light orange circle on the horizontal line, a dark blue circle on the horizontal line, and a light green circle at the bottom right.

# CHAPTER 3

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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## 3.1 Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1. UNDP operates in a complex political, economic and social context in Zimbabwe, and has managed to find effective ways to deal with the multiple complexities and effectively adapt its interventions in the current programme cycle.**

While the UNDP CPD for the period under review focused on well-identified development challenges of poverty reduction, democratic governance, climate change adaptation and resilience, the significant political changes that occurred shortly after the start of the programme period have called on the country office's capacity for diplomacy, engagement, dialogue and adaptation. Systematic efforts to strengthen engagement with Zimbabwe's transition authorities, to provide support to the elections and to establish partnerships with the newly elected Government have allowed UNDP to maintain a working portfolio of projects and find new areas of work, including across sensitive issues.

For its work in support of the 2018 electoral process, UNDP adopted the appropriate strategy in approaching a sensitive and complex challenge at a key milestone for the country. Similarly, UNDP interventions on resilience, through the set-up and management of the ZRBF, have shown that the interrelated challenges of poverty alleviation, climate change adaptation and resilience to shocks require complex solutions, and that UNDP has the ability to develop and carry out such solutions. At the same time, investments in data collection can, if put to good use, potentially give UNDP the ability to maintain flexibility for improved responses to future challenges.

- **Conclusion 2. UNDP continues to be a consistent partner of the Government of Zimbabwe, and its positioning in Zimbabwe has been positive for a continued collaboration with both government and other development actors. The strategic decisions that UNDP took by addressing important governance issues at a critical and opportune time, have led to UNDP**

**being able to support and work in development opportunities that would possibly have not been addressed otherwise, given the lack of clarity of donor support to the country.**

The complex terrain that UNDP has had to manoeuvre in Zimbabwe has brought the necessity to adapt to new circumstances and find partners for effective collaboration. The prolonged instability has also been marked by periods of mutual mistrust between the donor community, international financial institutions and the Government. UNDP has showcased its ability to identify spaces for continued collaboration with a transitional government, at a time when it was crucial particularly for the development of national development strategies. While changes in government partners have sometimes affected the smooth implementation of ongoing projects, country office management and project staff have put an accent on partnerships for effective implementation, which have contributed to some of the programme's successes.

Partnerships with other United Nations agencies have been built into the design of projects in the period under review, and the evaluation found that the levels of collaboration have been significant and have contributed to some key results by UNDP, for example with UN-Women on the support for elections. The newly started Spotlight programme, which will involve partnerships with a larger number of United Nations agencies, will require a continued strong engagement from UNDP and United Nations Country Team (UNCT) management to ensure success.

In the democratic governance area, UNDP has shown a strong capacity for engaging with a wide array of actors, including for consultations with government, civil society and academia for the development of a transition plan and for the partnerships with the five independent commissions, both of which were deemed crucial for the achievement of results.

Finally, in the area of resilience, UNDP has used its capacity for engagement with financial partners

and its ability to support complex project structures for the effective implementation of a large – and growing – resilience programme, covering several regions and districts of the country. The engagement with donors has led to successful resource mobilization, giving the ZRBF a prominent role in the UNDP country programme. The ZRBF structure around seven projects implemented by consortiums required strong management capacities, and partners in the projects have expressed that their collaboration with UNDP was key in achieving results of their subprojects, and that their participation in ZRBF implementation has contributed to strengthening their own capacities on key technical issues.

However, the evaluation also noted some missed opportunities to increase internal collaboration between thematically linked projects in the areas of poverty reduction, climate adaptation and resilience, beyond exchange of experiences. Furthermore, the partnership with district-level authorities has been explored and led to some concrete results but remain at a level that is still inadequate for their effective engagement and contribution to results on the ground.

- **Conclusion 3. The country office's ability to position itself has enabled UNDP to give targeted and substantive support to the country, which has been particularly underlined by results at the policy level. UNDP engagement also led to key advances in a number of sensitive areas and issues, including land reform and more prominently, electoral support, which at that time was a particularly sensitive issue for the country.**

UNDP has managed to partner with donors and non-State actors to bring technical support to develop the TSP, which examined the most pressing needs for reforms and was accompanied by a budget for 2019. However, there has been some criticism of this support which must be recognized, with some feeling that the development of the TSP and its tight time frame for production did not allow for an effective participatory approach.

The critical engagement of UNDP with a wide array of actors – including United Nations agencies, independent commissions, CSOs and political parties – combined with its ability to support electoral systems, promote participatory consultations and effectively target voter registration, contributed to the achievement of a smooth electoral process. A number of UNDP programmes were realigned to give support to the elections, including projects on access to justice, peacebuilding and social cohesion, and support to Parliament. UNDP has deployed important efforts for the establishment and operationalization of five independent Chapter 12 commissions, which was critical for the commissions' capacities to deliver on their mandates, but also contributed directly to the 2018 elections.

Equally, UNDP supported important work on sensitive issues, including land reform and compensation. UNDP participation has enabled both the Government and those seeking compensation to move forward.

Inevitably, some challenges related to the country's complex situation still remain. Changes at the government level have perpetuated the lack of clarity on which agency is the key UNDP counterpart on SDG integration and monitoring. Despite the establishment of the TSP, recent economic shocks have continued to affect both the country and the working environment in which the UNDP programme is implemented and are in all likelihood going to continue.

- **Conclusion 4. The UNDP commitment to mainstream gender in its programme in Zimbabwe has led to a more adequate allocation of resources for effective contributions to women's empowerment. While there were clear approaches in the governance area, particularly for the participation of women in elections, the interventions targeting women's livelihoods sometimes lacked a clearly defined strategy to address deeply engrained inequalities.**

The country office has recognized some inadequacies in gender programming and identified

opportunities to strengthen its focus on women's economic and political empowerment. This implied increased efforts to address the intersection of vulnerabilities of women, including their access to productive resources and their participation in democratic processes. The UNDP programme for electoral support has shown that gender-focused interventions that used interrelated activities at government and community levels, while collaborating with the specialized ZGC, could bring notable results for both women's empowerment and for a successful democratic process.

Interventions in the areas of livelihoods, climate change adaptation and resilience have shown different levels of gender-sensitive strategies, situation analysis and monitoring of progress. Although some of the portfolio's key projects in that area have had positive contributions for women's empowerment – for example for their access to land, financial and productive resources – the lack of a clearly defined strategy constitutes a risk for the sustainability of these results. The significant investments in collection of disaggregated data in the ZRBF project will provide an opportunity for a better analysis and targeting for gender-sensitive results.

- **Conclusion 5. The ZRBF is becoming an increasingly important programme to UNDP in Zimbabwe, which was a clear result of the country office's strategy to continue targeting vulnerable households while trying to improve national response mechanisms for the country's challenges in livelihoods and climate adaptation. The focus on resilience has led to resource mobilization dividends for UNDP as well as to the integration of livelihoods and climate change adaptation activities. Significant investments in data collection and knowledge generation have the potential to contribute to more evidence-based policy development work.**

UNDP developed the ZRBF as a response to a number of severe economic, environmental and social stresses in Zimbabwe. This response was

built upon the UNDP track record of working in climate change and livelihoods with a proven technical capacity, as well as leveraging work at policy and community levels. The UNDP capacity to work on complex issues and in good collaboration with key stakeholders has been crucial for the design and effective implementation of this growing resilience-focused programme. However, the evaluation has noted that the complex nature and growth of the project has mobilized the office's resources increasingly for project management, while the required technical support for improved resilience programming has been somewhat missing. The evaluation noted that UNDP has taken steps to reinforce the technical capacity of the PMU with an additional post, which will cover duties of capacity development for resilience, programme support and coordination.<sup>75</sup>

The increasingly important place that the ZRBF has taken in the UNDP country programme is testimony to a recognized capacity for adaptive management, further illustrated by the use of the crisis modifier which released additional funds in response to shocks twice in 2018, releasing an additional \$4.3 million, targeting approximately 200,000 people affected by specific shocks such as Cyclone Idai and the below-average rainfall of the 2018/2019 season. It also illustrates that the project is a potential integrator of livelihoods and climate change adaptation efforts within the UNDP programme. At the time of the evaluation, UNDP was initiating a parallel initiative for urban resilience. While this is a logical evolution of the growth of ZRBF, it comes with the risks of requiring additional and separate internal capacity for project management, a different set of technical capacities for truly effective response to a different set of resilience challenges, and may be perceived as a deviation from the initial ZRBF mandate of targeting vulnerable rural communities.

Finally, the ZRBF project has put a significant focus on gathering evidence and building knowledge that can effectively inform resilience-related

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<sup>75</sup> Resilience advisor – job posting closing on 12 September 2019 <https://www.unjobnet.org/job/detail/3357562>

project implementation as well as development policy at the national level. The inclusion of data-collection mechanisms, complemented by the work of the ZRBF resilience knowledge hub,

has clear potential to support the first outcome of the UNDP country programme, aiming to improve the formulation of poverty reduction strategies and programmes.

## 3.2 Recommendations and management response

### Recommendation 1.



While UNDP has been able to address emerging challenges and navigate changes in context effectively, the implementation of the current programme has brought several issues to light that the country office will need to address in the next programme. UNDP must continue to be strategic in choosing partners within government and engage with civil society and citizens to develop frameworks that will support inclusive growth, particularly in the long run. UNDP can build on its exiting and unique position to further support SDG integration and monitoring, productive and sustainable use of land for the land reform programme, and continued citizen engagement and participation in future electoral processes.

As the situation in Zimbabwe remains complex both politically and economically, UNDP will need to build on the achievements of the current programme period and use its partnership with the Government of Zimbabwe effectively. Recognizing the changes in institutional structures, UNDP needs to clarify its role with different government partners to continue working on SDG integration in national development policies, and to respond to demands for improved mechanisms to monitor progress on the SDGs. UNDP is uniquely positioned for this work and can also build on the significant efforts it has invested in data collection and analysis, mainly through support to the Poverty, Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey and through the ZRBF project, to strengthen the country's capacity to develop pro-poor policies in the future.

While the successful development of the TSP is a recognized achievement, it did not benefit from a buy-in from the whole of government and was developed with minimal public consultations, which raises legitimate concerns for full national ownership of the programme. The implementation of the TSP has also suffered from a strong economic downturn, rendering some of the programme's targets impossible to reach. In the next programme, UNDP must ensure a wider engagement in the development of key development strategies.

Zimbabwe's land reform programme remains a contentious issue and an area where UNDP can use its neutral positioning and current momentum effectively to bring all partners together towards an agreeable solution. Furthermore, in the next programme period UNDP should make efforts to integrate successful approaches from projects in livelihoods and climate change adaptation, for the reform programme to effectively contribute to productive use of land. UNDP should also build on its proven ability for joint work to adequately involve the capacities from other United Nations agencies which have extensive experience in that area.

For its work on the 2018 elections, UNDP has engaged with a wide array of actors and mobilized contributions from several projects, leading to a successful, peaceful electoral process. UNDP must use this success to attract new financial partners and mobilize resources and start early on the preparations for the next elections.

**Management Response:**  
**Accepted.**



The implementation of the current CPD has brought a lot of lessons and provided opportunities that are being explored as the formulation of the successor CPD gets under way. Meanwhile, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic that is further compounding the development challenges in Zimbabwe, UN is leading the UNCT in the development of the United Nations socioeconomic recovery framework. The comprehensive, multisectoral, inclusive socioeconomic framework builds on SDG results achieved so far under the Zimbabwe United Nations development framework and is guided by detailed analytical work as well as immediate programme recovery actions. Furthermore, the socioeconomic recovery framework will complement the National Development Strategy 2021-2025 that is currently under development. UNDP will use the recommendations from this evaluation to inform the NDS development process including ensuring a highly-inclusive, citizen-driven consultative process involving all stakeholders especially the most vulnerable. Given the uncertainty brought about by COVID-19 in Zimbabwe, a five-year development plan may not be ideal, hence the socioeconomic framework will inform the first 12 to 18 months of the National Development Plan period. Both these processes are being crafted in the context of the SDGs and the aspirations of the "Decade of Action". Furthermore, work on the lands project is at an advanced stage and the new comprehensive election project is under drafting following the recommendations of the Needs Assessment mission that took place in January 2020. In view of this, the following are the foreseen action points under this recommendation:

Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1 Provide technical support to the development of the new National Development Strategy for Zimbabwe for the period 2021-2025.	January to June 2021	Programme Unit	Ongoing	
1.2 Lead the development and implementation of the socioeconomic framework 2020 to 2021.	January 2020 to June 2021	Programme Unit	Ongoing	The socioeconomic framework is being developed with full participation of the UNCT under the Government's leadership.
1.3 Develop and implement the New Lands Project.	June 2020 to December 2023	Poverty Reduction and Climate Change Unit	Ongoing	UNDP has been selected as the strategic national partner to lead the pilot of the land governance administrative system in support of the national land reform agenda; this is already under way.
1.4 Continue to coordinate the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs in Zimbabwe.	January 2020 to December 2030	Programme Unit	Ongoing	

## Recommendation 2.



The next country programme will need to be built on strengthened partnerships with the Government of Zimbabwe and other development actors for the full achievement of its programme outcomes. Identifying the right partners, as UNDP has successfully done in implementing its democratic governance projects, can bring more effective and sustainable results. The issues that emerged from some of its upstream work need to be addressed together with government partners. At the district level, partnerships with local authorities must be strengthened to ensure a full contribution from all stakeholders, particularly for resilience outcomes.

The implementation of the current programme has shown how successful projects significantly rely on effective partnerships, as UNDP has shown its ability to position itself at an opportune time for a new chapter in the development of Zimbabwe, identify the most appropriate partners to work with, or support building their capacities from the ground up, as was the case with the five independent Chapter 12 commissions. The close involvement with State and non-State actors on the electoral process has led to positive outcomes in the governance area. But the implementation of the programme has also highlighted that some key partnerships had not been sufficiently solidified, with a lack of clarity on the most adequate partner for support on the SDGs. UNDP needs to establish which unit within central government it should be partnering with for SDG integration in national development plans, as well as for effective monitoring of the country's progress on the SDGs. This must also be accompanied by adequate support to the national capacity for planning and evidence-based policy development. UNDP must also start working early with government partners on the next elections, in order to build on the positive results they achieved together.

Similarly, UNDP has involved several partners on the ground for its work on climate change adaptation and resilience-building. The evaluation found that local authorities are natural partners for the achievement of ZRBF results and are very keen to play a stronger role in improving the lives of the communities they work with daily. However, while UNDP has provided training to district-level partners on resilience, there are remaining capacity gaps that UNDP should recognize and fill in the next programme. A stronger capacity for the use and dissemination of the data collected with rural communities would support stronger and more sustainable results on the ground.

Finally, UNDP is well positioned through its work on development policies to engage in partnerships that derive from the cross-sectoral nature of the TSP. Successful partnerships with United Nations agencies for the elections (UN-Women, for example), can inform strategies for future effective joint work. UNDP will need to ensure close collaboration with four other United Nations agencies in the Spotlight initiative to achieve the ambitious objectives of the programme. Other major projects for the future of UNDP, such as the land reform programme and the ZRBF, will clearly benefit from the collaboration of UNDP with United Nations agencies, for example WFP and FAO, who have clear technical strengths that can complement the UNDP role for the management of these projects.

**Management Response:**  
**Accepted.**



The political and governance space in Zimbabwe remains fragile given the long history of mistrust, conflict and deep polarization. The anticipated reform, opening up of political space and re-engagement with the development community that was promised following the 2018 election remains elusive. However, notwithstanding these challenges, the democratic pillar has evolved during the lifespan of the evaluated country programme, and under this portfolio has opened up to embrace new partnerships which have allowed governance programming to remain relevant to the emerging needs of stakeholders while adapting to the changing operating environment. The work being initiated with the Public Service Commission bears testimony to this. This is a new partnership being pursued by the country office to influence public sector standards. Additionally, the work on the socioeconomic framework and the National Development Strategy development process mentioned above will feed into the subsequent development of the new ZUNDAF and CPD, and provide an opportunity for constructive engagement with partners (development partners, government at all levels and citizens) in defining key national priorities for the country.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
2.1 Implementation of the Public Service Reform project	2019 to December 2020	Governance and Peace Building (GPB) Unit	Ongoing	
2.2 Implementation of the successor Support to Parliament Project	2019 to December 2024	GPB Unit	Ongoing	
2.3 Develop the new CPD for the period 2022 to 2026	January to December 2020	Programme Unit	Ongoing	



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**Recommendation 3.**

**UNDP should analyse the areas where it can address gender inequalities more strategically in its programme, so as to develop a response that goes beyond targeting men and women. By focusing on structural barriers and root causes of gender inequalities in Zimbabwe, UNDP has the opportunity to move from inclusive interventions to truly transformative results.**

UNDP has established effective partnerships with development partners, with other United Nations agencies and within government that have led to important advances in the area of governance. UNDP must build on the success of the support to the elections to strengthen women's empowerment, especially for their participation in elections as candidates and in executive processes as parliamentarians.

UNDP should improve the strategic approaches for more gender-transformative results in the livelihoods and resilience areas. UNDP can build on the effective partnership it has developed with UN-Women to find ways to go beyond gender-disaggregated data collection, particularly for the ZRBF project. This will require a clear strategy that covers the entire portfolio rather than for individual projects.

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**Management Response:**

The current analytical work for the development of the socioeconomic framework covers gender dimensions extensively and this along with other gender analysis data will be used to inform the new CPD. Meanwhile, UNDP is implementing the joint United Nations Spotlight project and through it is facilitating gender mainstreaming across the current country programme as well as with the Parliament and high-level engagement with the Office of the President and Cabinet and Ministry of Women Affairs. Furthermore, gender is also being mainstreamed in the new Global Fund grant 2021-2023, the new election project and the ZRBF. The last two projects have developed gender inclusion strategies.



Recommendation 3 (cont'd)

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
3.1 Continue the implementation of the Spotlight programme	2019 to December 2022	Programme Unit	Ongoing	
3.2 Identify and work on capacitating key national partners on gender issues, specifically the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Gender, Parliamentary Committee on Health and the Women's Caucus, in areas of law-making and political decision-making processes	2019 to December 2024	Programme Unit	Ongoing	
3.3 Implementation of the successor Support to Parliament Project	2019 to December 2024	GPB Unit	Ongoing	
3.4 Strengthen justice sector (specifically Zimbabwe Republic Police, National Prosecuting Authorities and the Judicial Service Commission) capacity to provide adequate remedial action to gender-based violence issues	2019 to December 2024	GPB Unit	Ongoing	
3.5 Design and launch the ZRBF gender equality and youth inclusion action plan	By December 2020	ZRBF Unit	Ongoing	

#### Recommendation 4.



UNDP support to the livelihoods and resilience of vulnerable communities to climate and economic shocks will depend largely on its capacity to effectively approach the complex issues of resilience in Zimbabwe. While the growth in the project's scope is the result of successes in partnership and resource mobilization, it will need to build broader partnerships and more inclusion of local and central government to ensure sustainability of the approaches.

The ZRBF needs to ensure that it differentiates itself from traditional livelihoods and climate change adaptation approaches, especially in the face of increasing (and not reducing) resilience challenges across Zimbabwe. While the traditional responses emanating from the implementation of the current programme have led to some targeted results, the future successes of the ZRBF will depend on the ability of UNDP to bring its full technical capacity for resilience responses.

At the same time, UNDP needs to ensure both clear additionality through the provision of technical support and guidance to project management responsibilities. Allocation of conditional additional resources to monitoring and evaluation should equally ensure efficiency and effectiveness of resources and that data feed into change at community and policy levels, beyond the crisis modifier and occasional papers.

If the project is to continue to grow in financial and geographic scope, or to expand into new resilience areas, then its current management structure, technical capacity as well as the use and role of the resilience knowledge hub need to be reviewed. Challenges due to growth and additional focus must be addressed strategically and not in an ad hoc manner.

Equally, any expansion into urban resilience will strain existing technical and management resources as well as the focus of the project. While the foundation of the project in resilience may be sound, this new direction will need new technical abilities and partnerships and should not be allowed to distract from ZRBF implementation.

The role of the resilience knowledge hub needs to be closely monitored to ensure that it does not operate externally to the ZRBF with its own mandate and goals, using ZRBF data to do so, but should instead be meeting the knowledge management and learning needs of ZRBF itself and of the consortium members and partners, and be influencing policy along with the ZRBF and not in parallel.

**Management Response:**  
**Accepted.**



UNDP is broadening its role on resilience-building beyond the current rural focus of the ZRBF portfolio to encompass urban resilience, livelihood and social protection targeting youth- and women-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The recent approval of the \$48 million Green Climate Fund (GCF) project that focuses on adaptation and climate resilience-building for small holder farmers in 13 additional districts further expands the UNDP role in resilience-building through climate-smart agriculture. This work is being carried out through innovative and diverse partnership arrangements including the private sector, NGOs, CSOs, local community and government at all levels.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
4.1 Establish the national Zimbabwe Resilience Platform		Programme Unit	Ongoing	This platform will be a convergence of knowledge, experience in resilience-building under UNDP thought leadership.
4.2 Implementation of the GCF programme	September 2020 to December 2024	PRECC Unit	Ongoing	UNDP is accredited to lead the largest GCF programme in Zimbabwe, which covers three pillars.

\*Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database.



# Annexes



Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/12294>.

**Annex 1.** Terms of reference

**Annex 2.** Country at a glance

**Annex 3.** Country office at a glance

**Annex 4.** Project list

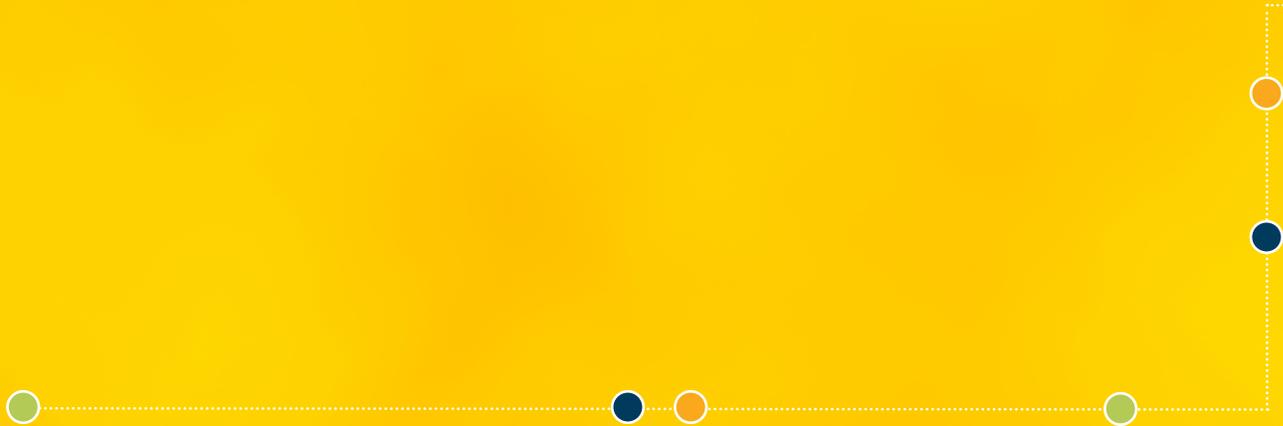
**Annex 5.** Status of country programme indicators

**Annex 6.** People consulted

**Annex 7.** Documents consulted







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