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United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION SIERRA LEONE



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Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation for UNDP in Sierra Leone, the second country-level assessment conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 2014. This evaluation covers the programme period 2015 to 2019. It has been carried out in close collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone, UNDP Sierra Leone country office and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa.

Sierra Leone continues to face numerous development challenges with high levels of poverty and infant and maternal mortality and a high prevalence of malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, all of which have resulted in one of the lowest life expectancies in the world. The period under evaluation was also highly impacted by the recovery from Ebola, which devastated the country in 2014.

However, Sierra Leone has also been marked by almost 20 years of peace and stability following a devastating civil war in the 1990s and the successful implementation of four stable and credible elections. This included an election in 2018 that saw the peaceful transition of power to a new President, retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.

The evaluation found that UNDP's support remains highly relevant and closely aligned to government policy and plans. The smooth running of the elections in 2018 as well as many aspects of the response and recovery from Ebola were strongly supported

by UNDP and were strengthened through its continued ability to coordinate donor support and response around certain development issues.

That said, considerable development challenges remain across Sierra Leone at every level. As the UNDP country office moves forward under a new country programme document as well as Sierra Leone's new development plan, the office will face many hard choices. So far, UNDP has been highly responsive to a number of development needs, especially in governance. However, this support has been spread thinly with often little depth or sustainability. What's more, its efforts towards inclusive growth, including work with youth and poor communities, while highly relevant, is unsustainable in a resource-limited climate. The organization must work more to leverage and increase its overall impact.

I would like to thank the Government of Sierra Leone, the various national stakeholders, and colleagues at the UNDP Sierra Leone 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

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BDS	Business development services
CAPS	Career Advising and Placement Services
CPD	Country programme document
CRC	Constitutional Review Committee
CSO	Civil society organization
EU	European Union
EVD	Ebola virus disease
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIP	Graduate Internship Programme
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
LGED	Local governance and economic development
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MP	Member of Parliament
NAYCOM	National Youth Commission
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PMSU	Project Management Support Unit
RRF	Results and resources framework
SAU	Strategic Advisory Unit
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SME	Small- and medium-sized enterprise
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VAW	Violence against women
YEEP	Youth Employment and Empowerment Programme

Evaluation Brief: ICPE Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone continues to face numerous development challenges and remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with high poverty rates (76.5 percent), low life expectancy (52.2 years) and major challenges in addressing gender inequality as well as youth unemployment and underemployment. This development fragility was further strained during the 2014 Ebola outbreak across the region, which killed 4,000 people in Sierra Leone alone and had significant economic and social consequences, adding to the country's economic downturn, despite several years of high growth.

However, the country is successfully consolidating its peace and security following a devastating civil war from 1991 to 2002, and has successfully implemented four post-crisis elections, including the 2018 election of a new President, retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. These elections marked the peaceful transition of power from the previous government, which had ruled over the previous 10 years.

UNDP Sierra Leone's support to the country is guided by its country programme document (CPD) for 2015 to 2019, which is closely aligned to the Sierra Leone Government's Agenda for Prosperity 2013 to 2018.¹ At the same time, UNDP, along with the United Nations in general and other donors, have responded to emerging needs such as the Ebola crisis and the Freetown landslide. UNDP's CPD focuses on two priority areas: 1) inclusive and effective democratic governance and 2) inclusive growth and sustainable development over the CPD period.

This Independent Country Programme Evaluation covers UNDP's development work in Sierra Leone from 2015 to 2019.

Findings and conclusions

UNDP's programme in the current cycle has faced a number of external shocks and upheavals that have presented considerable challenges to implementation, including the outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in 2014, economic crisis due to a drop in the price of iron, floods and landslides in 2017 and the general elections in 2018. The country office has been able to respond effectively to these events by adjusting its activities and support, but it has struggled in the implementation of its planned goals under the programme outlined in its CPD.

UNDP's engagement during this cycle has been broad, but has lacked depth and strategic focus, further limiting UNDP's ability to effectively achieve intended and planned country programme objectives. UNDP could have been considerably more strategic and focused in its support to Sierra Leone's development to ensure it meets the country's priority needs, but also to make a lasting impact in areas where it chooses to work. Equally, UNDP could have captured the broad range of synergies that existed across its portfolio of projects to further improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

The country office needs to strengthen its use of results-based management practices. A number

Programme expenditure by thematic area, 2015–2018 (US\$ million)



¹ See: <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Agenda%204%20Prosperity.pdf>.

of systemic issues have been identified throughout this report in relation to the poor quality of data and statistics, lack of results frameworks and theories of change, and the short-term perspective of activities. Although the country office has a good evaluation plan, evaluations are often weak and their results are not utilized effectively.

The country office has spent a significant amount of core resources in areas where it has not been able to leverage additional funds. The country office needs a more strategic approach to its use of TRAC (core) funding to ensure that this type of funding is used efficiently, sparingly and mainly to catalyse new activities, as opposed to sustaining long-running initiatives, as is the case now.

UNDP has been involved in a range of areas and activities in the governance sector in pursuit of its

objective of good governance and justice, with its most important contributions in the area of elections and in the rule of law and access to justice. Within the governance sector, there are areas where UNDP is currently well established, but the challenge going forward will be to consolidate its work by integrating all related activities into holistic programmes that point in one direction and are managed efficiently.

The country programme's pursuit of inclusive growth and good governance through multiple projects across clusters involving various government and non-governmental actors has enabled UNDP to conduct a wide range of activities related to local governance at the subnational level. This is an area where UNDP can be quite competitive, but it needs to rationalize its activities and integrate them into cohesive area-based programmes that are managed under one strategic framework and by one set of people.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: In developing the new CPD, care should be taken to: reflect UNDP's comparative strengths and identify areas it is able to deliver on effectively; develop clear and supporting theories of change for UNDP's work in the country; and prioritize interventions and resources. Included in the country programme development should be a detailed analysis of the use of core funding and a strategy for leveraging core funding for greater impact. The country programme development process should ultimately strengthen the strategic focus of the programme, develop synergies across projects and clusters, deepen interventions and ensure sustainability.

Recommendation 2: The country office should further strengthen its results-based systems and practices. These efforts should be driven by the need to establish clarity and

a clear sense of priority over what UNDP is seeking to achieve in Sierra Leone.

Recommendation 3: The establishment of a new Ministry of Planning and the finalization of a new National Development Plan provides UNDP with an opportunity to consolidate a number of activities, while working to strengthen a key new ministry. UNDP should also strengthen its support to the government and the new administration's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendation 4: UNDP has had a positive experience in recent years in convening and coordinating key stakeholders (including government, donors and UN agencies) in support of the last two elections and during the EVD outbreak. There is an appetite among donors and UN agencies

for improved and strengthened development coordination and cooperation within the country, and this presents an opportunity for UNDP to play a greater role.

Recommendation 5: Interlinked with support to planning is that of ongoing and expanded support to local governance. UNDP is well positioned to develop further support to local governance and to ground several ongoing or planned activities in local governance work.

Recommendation 6: In terms of positioning, UNDP should further consolidate its work in areas such as elections and rule of law, where it has had real impact and is currently well established; it should also strengthen its presence in areas where there is clear and strong potential for synergies among activities it has undertaken.



CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Purpose, Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results at the country level as well as the effectiveness of UNDP's 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 document (CPD)
- Strengthen accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders
- Strengthen accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board.

ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.² 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 Sierra Leone was selected for an ICPE since its country programme is due to end in 2019.³ The ICPE was conducted in 2018 and covers the period of the current CPD (2015 to 2019) and was timed to provide input into the development of the new country programme for Sierra Leone. The ICPE was conducted in close collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone, UNDP Sierra Leone country office and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa. It focuses on the current programme cycle, with consideration to the previous country programme document, 2013 to 2014. The ICPE also reviews the implementation of recommendations from the IEO's previous *Assessment of Development Results for Sierra Leone* undertaken in 2013.⁴

1.2 Country Context

Poverty and development challenges: Sierra Leone faces numerous development challenges. The country has the lowest life expectancy globally at 52.2 years, according to the *2018 Human Development Report*, and has development and health challenges across all areas. These includes high levels of infant and under-five mortality and maternal deaths, as well as a high incidence of malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. The country's human development index also remains one of the lowest, at 0.419 in 2017, placing it 184th among 189 countries.⁵ Poverty rates across the country remain very high, reaching 76.5 percent in the 2017,⁶ with multidimensional poverty of over 77.5 percent. Sierra Leone's gender inequality index ranking is also high at 0.645, placing the country 150th among 189 countries.⁷ A major challenge for the economy continues to be employment-generation, especially among youth, the majority of whom are unemployed or underemployed. Three quarters of Sierra Leoneans are below age 35,

² See UNDP evaluation policy: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml>. The ICPE was also conducted in adherence to the norms and the standards and the ethical code of conduct established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (www.uneval.org).

³ The country programme document for 2015 to 2018 was extended for one year, to 2019, at the Annual Session of the UNDP Executive Board in 2018.

⁴ See: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/adr/sierra_leone.shtml.

⁵ Human Development Report website, 2018 statistical update: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update>.

⁶ *Human Development Indices and Indicators, 2018 Statistical Update*, p. 43. See: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf.

⁷ *Human Development Indices and Indicators, 2018 Statistical Update*. See: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf.

and 60 percent of them are between 15 and 35 and structurally unemployed, according to the country's Ministry of Youth Affairs.⁸

Political-economic context: Sierra Leone continues to feel the impact of two severe social and economic shocks in 2014. In 2012 and 2013 the country's economy peaked, with its gross domestic product (GDP) reaching 20.7 percent on the back of high iron-ore prices. However, the 2014 spread of Ebola and the collapse of iron-ore prices led to a significant shrinkage of the economy, with GDP declining by 21.1 percent in 2015. In recent years, the economy has improved somewhat as a result of recovery from the Ebola crisis and some improvement in mineral prices, with GDP increasing nearly 6 percent in 2017. The economy remains agriculture-based, with 61 percent of GDP provided by the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sectors in 2016.⁹

Elections: Peace and security continue to be consolidated, building on a series of orderly post-civil war elections held in 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2018. The March 2018 general elections were largely peaceful and credible. The presidential election, which underwent a run-off to determine the winner, saw a close result, with retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio winning the presidency. These elections marked a peaceful transition of power from the previous government, which had ruled for the previous 10 years.

Democratic governance: Following a decade-long civil war from 1991 to 2002, the country has considerably strengthened its democratic institutions, security and peace. However, challenges are engrained in weak governance structures, including a lack of accountability and transparency. Corruption continues to be a challenge, with Transparency International ranking the country 130th out of 180 countries in its corruption perception index for 2017.¹⁰ Local governance and rule of law also require further strengthening.

Humanitarian crises: Recent years have been marked by several humanitarian crises, most notably the outbreak of Ebola in 2014, which impacted several West African countries, including Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. As of October 2015, there were 15,000 reported cases of Ebola in Sierra Leone and 4,000 deaths. The outbreak has had significant economic and social consequences. The response to the outbreak and the recovery phase following its eradication were supported by considerable flows of overseas assistance. Then, in August 2017, heavy rains caused a major landslide in Freetown that killed over 1,000 people and displaced more than 3,000.

1.3 UNDP Programme Strategy in Sierra Leone

UNDP Sierra Leone's CPD for the period 2015 to 2019 has been closely aligned to the Sierra Leone Government's Agenda for Prosperity 2013 to 2018.¹¹ At the same time, UNDP, along with the United Nations in general and other donors, have responded to emerging needs such as the Ebola crisis and the Freetown landslide. UNDP's support has been coordinated with other UN agencies and generally linked to outcomes under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2015 to 2018). UNDP's CPD for 2015 to 2019 focused on two priority areas: 1) inclusive and effective democratic governance and 2) inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Across the area of inclusive growth, UNDP Sierra Leone developed projects focused on local economic development as well as strategies for strengthening youth employment, including support to business as well as policy development. Work in inclusive growth has also included a number of crisis recovery projects following the 2014 Ebola outbreak, such as the reintegration of response workers, Red Cross volunteer teams and livelihood programmes for

⁸ Government of Sierra Leone's Ministry of Youth Affairs, *National Youth Programme, 2014 to 2018*. See: <http://nationalyouthcommission.sl/pdf%20files/blue%20print.pdf>.

⁹ African Development Bank, *African Economic Outlook 2017*, 2017.

¹⁰ Transparency International website: www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017#table.

¹¹ See: <http://www.sierra-leone.org/Agenda%204%20Prosperity.pdf>.

Ebola survivors and affected households. The environment and energy portfolio has included a range of activities supporting government policy as well as decision makers in the public and private sectors to strengthen the country's response to climate change. The inclusive growth and environment clusters were combined in 2018 to improve implementation across clusters.

UNDP's democratic governance work covers a broad range of areas, including support to the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government as well as the media and civil society. Recently, governance support included assistance to the Government of Sierra Leone in organizing credible and peaceful elections, including the general elections of 2018. Access to justice and strengthening of the rule of law have been central to UNDP's governance work,

including support to key institutions such as the police, judiciary, correctional services, Legal Aid Board, Independent Police Complaints Board and Human Rights Commission. A further area of work has been assistance to Parliament and support for a comprehensive constitutional review.

Governance was a key area of funding for UNDP Sierra Leone between 2015 and 2018, with US\$18.55 million for various activities and an additional \$18.85 million for elections-related work,¹² totalling \$37.4 million. This represented 53 percent of expenditure from 2015 to 2018. Support to combat Ebola virus disease (EVD) totalled \$13.4 million (19 percent), although many individual projects across the programme also had related activities that are not captured here. Support to the environment portfolio has been bolstered in recent years by

TABLE 1. Country programme outcomes and indicative resources (2015-2018)

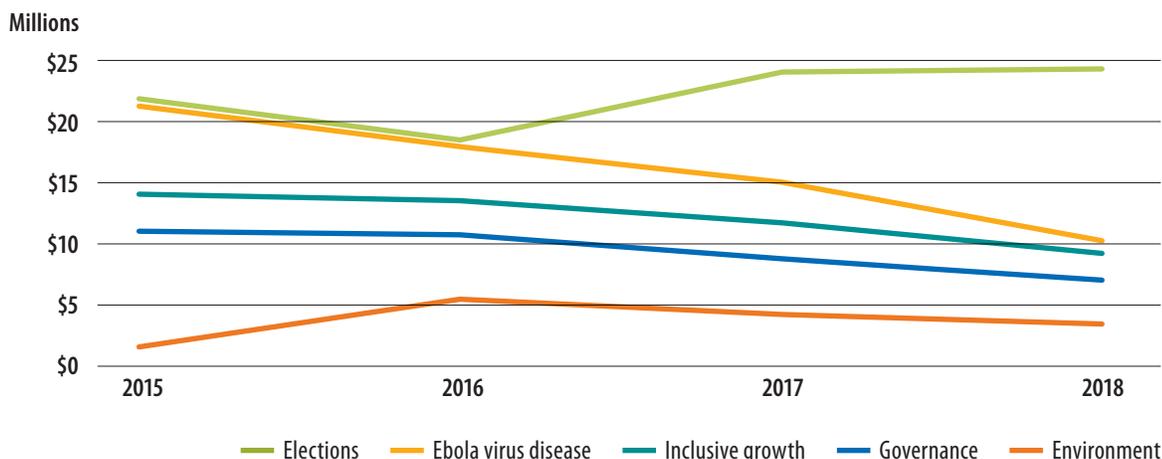
Country programme outcome		Indicative resources 2015-2019 (US\$)	Expenditures to date 2015-2018 (US\$)
Outcome 30	Low-income and food-insecure households have improved access to sustainable income-generating opportunities (on-farm and off-farm).	33,200,000	16,174,998
Outcome 31	By 2018, targeted government institutions, the private sector and local communities manage natural resources in a more equitable and sustainable way.	4,600,000	11,727,873
Outcome 32	Capacity of democratic institutions strengthened to enable good governance.	44,200,000	31,523,921
Outcome 33	Justice and security sector delivery systems improved in compliance with international human rights standards.	22,000,000	11,293,848
Total		104,000,000	70,720,639

Source: Indicative resources were extracted from the 'UNDP Sierra Leone Country Programme Document 2015-2018' (DP/DCP/SLE/3); expenditures 2015 to 2018 were extracted from Atlas, March 2019.

¹² This includes some expenditure for support to the 2012 elections, support to the National Electoral Commission and the Conflict Mitigation project for the 2018 elections.

FIGURE 1. UNDP Sierra Leone expenditure, 2015 to 2018 (US\$ million)

Evolution of expenditure by thematic area



the implementation of Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects, which accounted for \$11.7 million (17 percent of expenditure). Inclusive growth, beyond EVD and environment, has been highly reliant on TRAC¹³ funding and has amounted to \$8.2 million (11 percent) in expenditure over the country programme period. Election support and EVD recovery projects accounted for 46 percent of all expenditure during the country programme period.

UNDP Sierra Leone has benefited from high levels of core funding: \$22.8 million (32 percent) in total between 2015 and 2018, as well as a high proportion of pooled and vertical funds (\$21.6 million or 31 percent).¹⁴ In addition, bilateral and multilateral donors have strongly supported specific UNDP project activities, including EVD response and recovery support and, more recently, the 2018 elections. In total, donors have contributed \$26.3 million in support to Sierra Leone through UNDP since 2015 (37 percent of UNDP’s expenditure).

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation’s methodology adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group’s norms and standards.¹⁵ The ICPE addressed the following three key evaluation questions.¹⁶

- What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
- To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
- What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP’s performance and, eventually, the sustainability of results?

To answer these questions, the evaluation methodology included a triangulation of the following elements:

- An analysis of the programme portfolio as well as a review of programme documents,

¹³ TRAC refers to the target for resource assignments from the core system.

¹⁴ Including the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Ebola Response, Global Environment Fund, Peacebuilding Fund, Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office/JP Sierra Leone, Multi-Partner Trust Fund-Sustainable Development Goal Fund.

¹⁵ See United Nations Evaluation Group website: www.uneval.org/document/detail/21.

¹⁶ The ICPEs have adopted a streamlined methodology that differs from the previous *Assessments of Development Results*, which were structured according to the four standard criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

documents and reports on projects implemented by the UNDP and the government, evaluations, UNDP institutional documents (strategic plan, results-based annual reports, etc.), data on programme outcome indicators (sex-disaggregated data, where available), research, and other available country-related publications. The main documents consulted by the evaluation team are listed in Annex 5.

- Approximately 60 interviews were conducted with UNDP Sierra Leone country office staff, representatives of authorities and various governmental institutions at the central and local levels, officials and staff of other UN organizations, development partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), and populations (men and women) benefiting from the country programme. These interviews were used to collect data and assess stakeholders' perceptions of the scope and impact on men and women of UNDP programme interventions, including their respective contributions

and performance, and to determine the constraints encountered in the implementation of the projects, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of UNDP in Sierra Leone.

- Field visits allowed the evaluation team to see the achievements of a few key projects and to conduct semi-structured interviews with participants in UNDP-supported interventions. The team also visited a sample of project sites in the Kambia and Bo districts.

The evaluation found that there was limited availability of reliable project-level data, since many projects were implemented on the basis of annual work plans that were drawn from antiquated project documents with no updated results frameworks. A considerable amount of time was spent reviewing project documentation to establish goals and to analyse reported data, as well as reviewing information collected from interviews to triangulate reported results.



CHAPTER 2

FINDINGS

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This chapter outlines the evaluation’s findings in terms of UNDP’s effectiveness in achieving its objectives (as stated in the CPD) for each programme outcome and cross-cutting area. It also describes the **main factors that influenced UNDP’s performance and contributions to results**. The assessment, which is qualitative in nature, is based on an analysis of the correlation between reported project achievements, their contribution to expected outputs under each outcome, and consequently the overall outcome objectives.

2.1 Overall Country Programme Implementation

Finding 1: The programme has faced significant external challenges throughout the cycle. The outbreak of EVD in 2014 disrupted regular activities, forcing the country office to concentrate its efforts and resources on the response. The effects of Ebola on the programme continued in 2015 and 2016, while the country was struggling with the recovery process. Other major events that occurred during this period include the economic downturn triggered by the fall in iron-ore prices and the ensuing drop in government revenues, the August 2017 landslide in Freetown, and general elections in March and April 2018.

The implementation of the previous CPD (2013 to 2014) was slowed considerably due to the 2014 outbreak of EVD. Its repercussions spilled into the current country programme cycle (2015 to 2018, extended to 2019), with planned activities under the new country programme unable to start. At the same time, the government’s focus was directed to combating EVD, and it took some time to refocus on regular development challenges. This led to a further delay in the actual start of some projects, as well as a delay in working with national and local partners and a degree of project implementation fatigue.

The economic impact of the EVD outbreak would have been catastrophic on its own. But it was exacerbated by falling iron-ore prices in 2013 and 2014, which led to a drop in government revenues from its main export and increased unemployment as mines closed or reduced production. As

implementation of activities gained traction in 2016 and 2017, Sierra Leone was further hit by flooding and a devastating landslide in Freetown, which also redirected the programme’s focus to some extent.

Finally, late 2017 and early 2018 saw the incumbent administration and many institutions focusing their attention on upcoming general elections (presidential, parliamentary and local) planned for March 2018. This further slowed UNDP’s implementation of activities not related to the election process itself. The election of a new administration in April 2018 has meant that new relationships across many key projects have had to be re-established. Moreover, UNDP’s work and mission in the country had to be explained to newly appointed government partners.

Finding 2: Overall, UNDP has pursued activities relevant and closely related to key goals and objectives in the country’s development strategies, including the overarching Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2018).¹⁷ In certain areas, such as elections and the rule of law, UNDP has provided significant and important contributions, which are closely aligned to the needs of the country. However, the overall programme has lacked depth, strategic focus and coherence as a result of thinly spread resources across a wide range of projects that, in many cases, have been inadequately planned and have not taken advantage of synergies and collaboration across projects. As a consequence, efficiency has been suboptimal and impact limited.

Overall, the UNDP country office has pursued a wide variety of projects and activities. This is especially apparent in the governance cluster, where support has touched all major areas, including the

¹⁷ Sierra Leone’s *Agenda for Prosperity: Road to Middle Income Status* can be read [here](#).

legislative, executive and judicial branches as well as the media and civil society. In the area of elections and rule of law, UNDP's footprint has been significant. UNDP's support is one of the key factors in Sierra Leone's successful experience in peaceful elections and the transfer of power. Activities in the inclusive growth and in the environment clusters have similarly encompassed vast areas of concern for the country, such as climate change, access to clean water, youth unemployment and local socio-economic development.

The flip side of this comprehensive coverage has been a considerable lack of strategic orientation and depth of engagement in several areas. There have been a number of reasons for this, but the major four can be summarized as follows.

First, limited financial resources, including decreasing UNDP core funding, have been spread too thinly, resulting in small activities with weak catalytic effects and consequently limited impact. UNDP has not been able to refocus projects with

a view to increasing impact by leveraging its own core resources and targeting the country's most pressing needs. Rather, it has chosen to continue with activities from previous years, relying on decreasing amounts of funding, and as a result doing progressively less. This can be clearly seen in the reduced scope of work and sporadic nature of interventions in the Youth Empowerment and Employment Programme (YEEP), and in its support to local governance and economic development (LGED), environment and natural disaster management, and conflict prevention and peace preservation, among other areas. In YEEP, the number of youths trained in business skills has fallen annually in line with core funding reductions, from 1,316 in 2012 in the project's initial stages to 150 in 2017. In the Conflict Prevention and Peace Preservation project, UNDP reduced activities in 2016 and 2017, after support for the Peacebuilding Fund ended; the project was subsequently unable to complete most of the activities it had committed to in its work plans due to resource limitations.¹⁸

TABLE 2. Examples of projects that have operated from outdated project documents

Project name	Project dates	Note	Budget under the CPD period (2015 to 2018) (US\$)
Support to Parliament	January 2008 to December 2017	Continued into 2018 and 2019	1,003,504
Environment and Natural Disaster Management	March 2008 to December 2018		5,044,580
Finance for Development	January 2008 to December 2017	Continued into 2018	1,305,717
Support to Access to Justice	January 2008 to December 2016	New project document from 2017	1,842,743
The Local Governance and Economic Development Joint Programme	September 2010 to December 2017	Continued into 2018 and 2019	2,443,338
Youth Employment and Empowerment	March 2011 to December 2017	Continued into 2018 and 2019	4,127,158
Total			15,767,040

¹⁸ See final evaluation report of the Conflict Prevention and Peace Preservation project, pp. 23-25.

Second, many projects have been operating under project documents that are several years old, in some cases a decade or more. Activities are often developed on the basis of individual annual work plans and are not linked to results frameworks – or even when linked, they are linked to outdated ones. What is challenging here is that where project outputs, activities and results have been modified over time, it is not clear what has driven the change. Further, while in some cases there may have been an implicit theory of change, it is not clear to outsiders what it was, since annual work plans are not anchored to revised project documents. As a result, some key projects (see Table 2) have been implemented on rotation through annual work plans that often have had only tentative linkages across years, weakening their overall strategic focus and ability to support partners and the country's development goals.

The final evaluation of the Conflict Prevention and Peace Preservation project illustrates the drawbacks of this approach. After the project's official end, UNDP decided to prolong its activities by switching its focus to civic education. It did this without seeking an extension or revising the project document, but by simply introducing annual work plans. Similarly, the crucial project of Support to Parliament has similarly been implemented on the basis of annual work plans, lacking an over-arching strategic framework and theory of change.¹⁹

A further example of this problematic approach is the Finance for Development project, which started in 2008 and is still operating. The initial project focused on the development of a seven-year strategic plan for relaunching the country's tourism sector. However, over time it has also supported mineral cadastral development and licensing, trade policy, the national human development report 2014 (not published yet), aid coordination, the poverty reduction strategy paper III and, currently, public-private partnership development.²⁰

Third, projects and clusters have suffered from weak collaboration and synergies. In many cases, UNDP has engaged in similar areas of work across projects, but with activities designed and implemented in silos, implemented by different CSOs and managed by separate teams within projects and the UNDP country office. Projects have mostly operated in isolation and have engaged national institutions individually. The following are some notable examples.

- **Media support:** Several projects have had media-related activities, including Support to the Elections, YEEP, Rule of Law, 2018 Election Conflict Prevention and Mitigation, Constitutional Review, and Local Governance and Economic Development. These projects have engaged the media in different ways – to raise awareness about various activities and issues or as advocacy channels. However, work with the media has been implemented in isolation within projects and has not been linked to the platform provided by the Media Development project – UNDP's programme dedicated to strengthening the media.
- **Business development services:** YEEP and the LGED projects have had business development services (BDS) as central pillars of their activities, targeting beneficiary groups. Other projects in response to both Ebola and the 2017 landslide have also developed BDS components to support communities impacted by the disasters. These projects have operated individually with few linkages, based on annual cycles (which has limited support after the provision of training and grants), and working through a number of separate CSOs, which has further limited the opportunity to capture synergies and lessons learned.
- **Conflict prevention and mitigation in the context of governance:** Recent years have

¹⁹ This was one of the weaknesses highlighted in the project's final evaluation report: *Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Parliament of Sierra Leone*, March 2018, p. 3.

²⁰ Project Id 480008: Data from outputs and activities entered into the UNDP corporate planning system between 2008 and 2016. See: <https://intranet.undp.org/sites/SLE/project/00048008/SitePages/annualworkplan.aspx>.

seen the combination of the Access to Justice project and the Rule of Law project, strengthening synergies. However, the introduction of the Conflict Prevention and Mitigation project in support of the 2018 elections was not well aligned with existing projects and activities. Conflict Prevention and Mitigation has significant links to a range of other UNDP activities in the areas of elections, rule of law, access to justice, youth and conflict prevention and peace preservation. But it does not share a common interface with projects in these areas and, in some cases, seems to have had parallel activities.

Fourth, UNDP Sierra Leone currently does not have a well-articulated longer-term strategic plan or perspective – supported by a coherent theory of change at the programme or cluster level – that connects all activities and projects into one cohesive and strategic framework linked to the overall goals of the CPD. Since many projects have been operating as a continuation of previous projects and activities for quite some time, it is hard to see how this body of interventions, as a whole and within clusters, is functioning as one system, moving in one clear direction. A theory of change at the programme or cluster level would enable UNDP to be more farsighted and develop its interventions with a longer perspective in mind (one example: activities supporting elections or the Parliament, which should be synchronized with the electoral cycle).²¹

These shortcomings have been well known to senior management and were recently highlighted in an audit by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigation in August 2017. The report noted that the country office was operating with too many projects, some of which were not aligned to the CPD. The country office has taken some steps to address some of the issues, including a minor restructuring of clusters. But, overall, little has changed in the project portfolio, especially given

the opportunity presented by the fact that many projects are coming to an end in 2018/2019. A change management process was also undertaken in 2018 and finalized in October 2018, with minor changes to the office structure recommended.

Discussions with management and cluster representatives showed that the newly proposed cluster structure, and even projects under consideration or design, look similar to those currently being implemented. The governance cluster is pursuing similar approaches to previous years with new project documents under revision or consideration for support to the Parliament, media, rule of law and civil registration. Several new project documents, including those for the Parliament or the media sectors seem to continue the same approaches, despite annually decreasing TRAC funding (for which they are reliant), as well as little in the way of tangible results to justify the same levels of fund allocation. Similarly, the inclusive growth cluster is considering a continuation of YEPP following a similar approach to the one previously implemented. This continuation along the same lines suggests a lack of strategic vision for the programme as a whole.

The country office needs to reflect more deeply on its ability to support this wide range of areas and partners, as well as realistically assess its comparative strengths and ability to deliver before progressing with similar approaches. The current management structure has not been conducive to collaboration, integration and focus on results, and therefore needs to be addressed. Managerial capacity at the cluster level has been one issue, as has senior management guidance. Cooperation among programme units and clusters is limited, responsibilities for programme development and design are not clear, and management at the cluster level has not been able to capture synergies and encourage projects and project staff to work together in different areas. At the same time, there has not always been a clear division of technical and administrative responsibilities

²¹ The need for synchronizing elections and Parliament-related activities to the electoral cycle has been pointed out in a number of documents, including the evaluation reports of these projects.

for staff. Coupled with this, staff turnover in the country office and within some projects has been high, making it difficult to capture synergies across projects.

UNDP Sierra Leone is now entering a key phase in the implementation of a change management process, as well as the development of a new CPD and UNDAF. These are opportune moments for the country office to re-assess its capabilities, re-focus the programme, and re-align financial and human resources accordingly. The country office needs to create more depth where impact can be larger and more sustainable. The current project portfolio has strong potential for synergies that could be captured to improve implementation efficiency. Programme depth could be created around UNDP's comparative strength, existing expertise and proven impact, in areas such as rule of law and access to justice, elections and support to local governance. The development of a clear theory of change would help to identify those areas. In addition, TRAC funding should be used selectively to create depth in prioritized areas.

The following are three dimensions where programme synergies could be further strengthened:

- **Horizontal synergies:** The country office could strengthen linkages across projects and clusters, both in terms of design and implementation. As already discussed, the governance cluster has a lot of potential for further integration of activities, especially between the rule of law and elections programmes. Significant linkages could also be established between the rule of law and elections activities and the Conflict Prevention and Mitigation project (which, as has been mentioned, parallels many of the activities of the former programmes). Also, connections can be drawn between the support to Parliament and the constitutional review process that is expected to be reignited, the media project and all media components of other projects. Further, YEEP and the LGED projects, as well as some response activities for EVD and the 2017 landslide, all have
- **Vertical synergies:** The programme also has significant potential for vertical synergies, especially where local support is not well connected to upstream work in support of higher-level policies. In the governance cluster, all the activities around access to justice and conflict prevention could be connected more effectively to national-level efforts around the rule of law, Parliament, media and possibly even the constitutional review process. Downstream work under the LGED project for local council revenue-generation as well as BDS services at the district level could be linked more effectively to upstream support, including work with the Ministry for Local Governance and Rural Development, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the development of a local economic development policy and action plan.
- **Temporal synergies:** The previous sections of this report have also pointed out the lack in many cases of synergies over time, given the continuity of many of the interventions that have taken place in this programme cycle. A number of projects have been identified above that operate on the basis of annual work plans, unconnected to project documents or coherent outputs and outcomes. Annual work plans themselves show few linkages over time and do not demonstrate how proposed interventions build on past experience.

Finding 3: UNDP Sierra Leone has benefited from a high level of TRAC funding, as well as pooled and vertical funds, which have enabled it to support a number of key areas and institutions. Donor

funding from the European Commission, Irish Aid, Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom has been focused on specific areas, such as EVD response and recovery, support to the 2018 elections as well as support to rule of law. Although TRAC funding has been used to develop work in crucial areas of need, the country office has not been able to leverage significant external funding to strengthen this work further.

Over the current country programme period, UNDP Sierra Leone has benefited from high levels of core (TRAC) funding (above global and regional averages), as well as generous access to pooled and vertical funds (see Figure 2). Core funding expenditure amounted to \$22.84 million (32 percent of all expenditure) at the time of this evaluation. Pooled and vertical fund expenditure amounted to \$21.63 million (31 percent), while donor funds have strongly supported specific activities, including the EVD response and recovery and recent high levels of funding for the 2018 elections, totalling \$26.25 million since 2015 (37 percent).

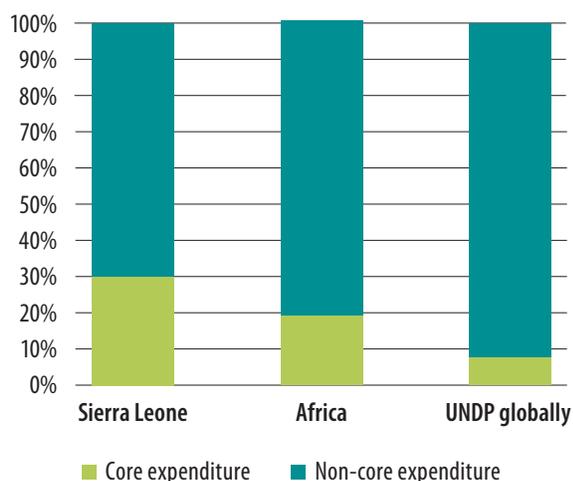
Financial data show that core resources are the sole source of funding for many of the legacy proj-

ects (related to Parliament, youth, local economic development, environment and natural disaster management and media, among others). UNDP Sierra Leone has not been able to leverage these resources effectively to generate additional funding. This is not due to an overall lack of donor interest in these areas, but perhaps a sign of hesitation to work with UNDP further. Some of these donors have chosen to establish themselves in the same areas but to develop programmes without partnering with UNDP. For example, the United States Agency for International Development has been implementing independently activities similar to those of the Conflict Prevention and Peace Preservation project, whereas the European Union (EU) has started a large programme in support of the Parliament that does not involve UNDP. Even in the area of elections, where many have recognized UNDP’s major role and where it has been instrumental in the delivery of free and fair elections, the EU is establishing a separate programme of support for the next four years.

The use of TRAC funds within projects has also been imprudent, often funding management and operational costs and maintaining the daily operations of some partners. TRAC funds have been used for a wide variety of activities, including but not limited to: 1) various implementing partner and project operating costs such as information technology equipment, Internet connections and furniture, 2) project management and technical support costs, including both international and national project staff and technical advisers, and 3) funding of various UNDP costs and cost-recovery modalities, including direct project costs, general management services, staff costs assigned to projects, communications charges, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) charges, premises, security, joint medical charges and common premises.

As mentioned in earlier findings, the reduction of core funding has meant that projects funded mostly from core resources have been forced to reduce their scope and activities accordingly. As a result, the country office’s pipeline of upcoming projects appears rather limited, compared to the amount of resources mobilized in the present

FIGURE 2. UNDP core and non-core funding: UNDP total, Regional Bureau for Africa average, and Sierra Leone, 2015 to 2018



Note: Non-core funds include vertical and pooled funds.

programme cycle. Since the mobilization of funds is going to become more challenging in the new post-crisis environment, the country office needs to look more creatively into the development of new partnerships in its preparations for the new country programme.

Finding 4: There are clear weaknesses in the overall approach to results-based management across the programme portfolio. For the most part, programme planning and implementation have been informed by monitoring and reporting at the level of inputs, activities and outputs. Data about outcomes and results have been largely lacking or fragmented. On the positive side, the country office has developed a comprehensive evaluation plan, and has evaluated the majority of its projects and programmes.

Overall, the country office shows inadequate use of evidence-based, results-based management practices. While the results and resources framework (RRF) supporting the CPD is comprehensive, with 23 detailed indicators across the different outcome and output areas, the country office only reports on three of these, while developing a new set of output indicators to support the reporting of its work (see Annexes).²² Collection of data in support of the CPD's RRF has been hindered both by data collection weaknesses generally within Sierra Leone, including poor statistics and lack of data, as well as a failure to revise project RRFs over time as the projects change.

As previously noted, some projects no longer have results frameworks and are managed on the basis of annual work plans that are focused on outputs, such as the number of beneficiaries or trainees within a year. At best, data are disaggregated by gender or some other factor, but are not measured over a longer time-frame or post-intervention to get a sense of the outcomes that are being achieved. Therefore, little is learned about the impact and

sustainability of interventions. An example of this is support for BDS under the YEEP and LEGD projects. These projects collect stories of change but do not monitor the impact of training and grants beyond the initial year. As a result, it is not known if knowledge and guidance delivered under the project continued to be used beyond the year of the training. Also, no additional post-training support needs are analysed to inform follow-up activities. As a consequence of this short-term perspective, the projects are not calibrated to address evolving needs. Even when multi-year RRFs exist, they are often outdated (not revised), and in such cases the projects implement a range of unconnected activities with no relation to a clear set of goals (or theory of change). This makes it difficult for the country office to measure and report results against tangible goals.²³ Likewise, the Conflict Prevention and Peace Preservation, Access to Justice and Rule of Law, and Support to Parliament projects have suffered from the lack of results frameworks or inadequate indicators, an issue that is clearly highlighted in their respective evaluation reports.

Another challenge that has hindered the conduct of results-based monitoring and reporting has been the lack of access to reliable and consistent data and statistics from government implementing partners and CSOs. Statistics and disaggregated data on UNDP-supported initiatives (that is, trainings, mobile courts, Saturday courts, Sierra Leone Police Family Support Unit cases, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone complaints and investigations, etc.) have been limited; when provided, they have often lacked baselines and have rarely been disaggregated to a meaningful degree. The need for more meaningful data (for example, on how the courts are performing and whether they are dealing with sexual and gender-based violence and violence against women cases appropriately) and the need to continue to build the reporting and M&E capacities of government and CSO partners has been pointed out

²² CPD RRF indicators reported on directly: 1.2.2., number of jobs and other livelihoods generated; 1.3.2, youth capacity-building; and 2b, percentage area of district where sustainable natural resources management is being practised.

²³ Figures reported by the country office for the 'number of full-time equivalent jobs created' include accumulated figures for those trained under the various activities of the programme.

repeatedly in several evaluation reports. However, little organized action has taken place to address the issue.

In the current cycle, the country office has developed a comprehensive evaluation plan, which consists of 14 evaluations – 2 outcome evaluations, 11 project evaluations and a joint UNDAF evaluation. While the high coverage of evaluations is commendable, some of the evaluations are weak and would benefit from stronger screening by the country office before they are accepted.²⁴ At a higher level, there is no clear underlying strategy guiding the plan or the learning derived from the evaluations. From an efficiency perspective, some of these evaluations could have been combined at the level of outcome or portfolio evaluations (such as the evaluation of EVD support) to create scale, save resources, but also to establish stronger linkages among disparate activities. Moreover, it is not clear what level of learning the country office and its counterparts are drawing from these evaluations. Some of the recommendations provided by the evaluations are repetitive, and it does not seem that the country office is taking resolute action to address them.²⁵ Furthermore, the design of new project documents does not always take into account the findings of evaluations: as already noted, there are a few cases of ‘new’ project documents that are largely extensions of ‘old’ projects, without major changes in approach or strategy as recommended by evaluations.

Finding 5: UNDP Sierra Leone has played a major role in the establishment and capacity development of a number of key institutions in the country. However, some of these remain almost solely reliant on UNDP for further support, with no clear sustainability or institutionalization plan in place.

UNDP has been central to the establishment and strengthening of a large number of Sierra Leonean institutions in all branches of government (executive,

parliamentary, judicial, and independent oversight bodies such as the Human Rights Commission) at both national and subnational levels, as well as civil society (such as non-governmental organizations, the media and universities). While this is to UNDP’s credit, some of these institutions remain dependent on funding from UNDP or other donors (including for basic items such as salaries, office rent, furniture and Internet services) and are not yet fully integrated within the country’s overall governance structure.

Support from the government is lacking, due both to its own limited financial resources, but also in some cases because of a lack of full buy-in and commitment. This is particularly the case for the Human Rights Commission, judicial institutions and others. With an uncertain future, they face a high turnover of staff, which limits their effectiveness and influence. UNDP has not developed a transition or exit strategy for them, and in some cases is simply considering supplementing its support with that of other donors, which in itself does not represent a sustainability strategy.

Going forward, the country office could look into the sustainability of the structures it has created by carefully assessing the needs of individual institutions and developing sustainability strategies in cases when it is at risk. Furthermore, UNDP and the UN Resident Coordinator could play a bigger role in advocating with the Government of Sierra Leone at the political level for increased funding and political support for these institutions.

Finding 6: UNDP has engaged with a number of CSOs, primarily as implementing partners of its projects. This has been a significant contribution to the development of civil society in the country. Overall, CSOs have limited capacity, and UNDP could have done more to strengthen their capabilities, rather than using them mainly as contractors.

²⁴ Examples of project evaluations that are not strong include those for the Support to Parliament, Media Development, and Support to Integrated Civil Register projects.

²⁵ For example, multiple evaluations have highlighted the weakness of results frameworks, but resolute actions have not been taken to address this issue.

In recent years, UNDP has engaged with a number of CSOs as implementing partners across projects.²⁶ In most cases, this engagement has taken the form of annual contracting, whereby CSOs have implemented project activities on behalf of UNDP. The nature of annual contracting with CSOs involves a challenge: CSOs are engaged on short-term contracts that meet the needs of project annual work plans, but this limits their ability (and financial resources) to follow up on activities. In such a situation, no crossover learning or capturing of lessons learned is undertaken from their work (this has been highlighted in a number of project evaluations). While project beneficiaries would benefit from mentoring and follow-up, CSOs are financially constrained in their ability to offer further support. This was the case with the training activities under the Conflict Prevention and Peace Preservation project and the support to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through BDS activities. Moreover, many UNDP-funded CSOs are operating in similar areas, especially in BDS, but are not sharing resources or experiences with each other, which limits the learning process.

Civil society organizations are seen by many in Sierra Leone as having capacity issues, and UNDP comments mirrored this sentiment. UNDP could have done more to address these capacity issues. For example, while a number of UNDP interventions improved the capacity of CSOs to conduct court monitoring and provide counselling services, there was no overarching coordination mechanism developed by the programme for the coordination of CSO-led legal aid in the country. Clearly, a coherent approach for engagement with CSOs is needed, based on a clear identification of synergies and building on them to improve efficiency. Going forward, UNDP could support the establishment of coordination structures to help empower local organizations to work together, carry out advocacy, coordinate activities, etc.

Finding 7: Between 2015 and 2018, the programme budget was spent predominantly on projects designed to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, with 60 percent of projects under the gender equality marker (GEN) 2 or GEN 3 (see Figure 3).²⁷ UNDP has made significant contributions in this regard.

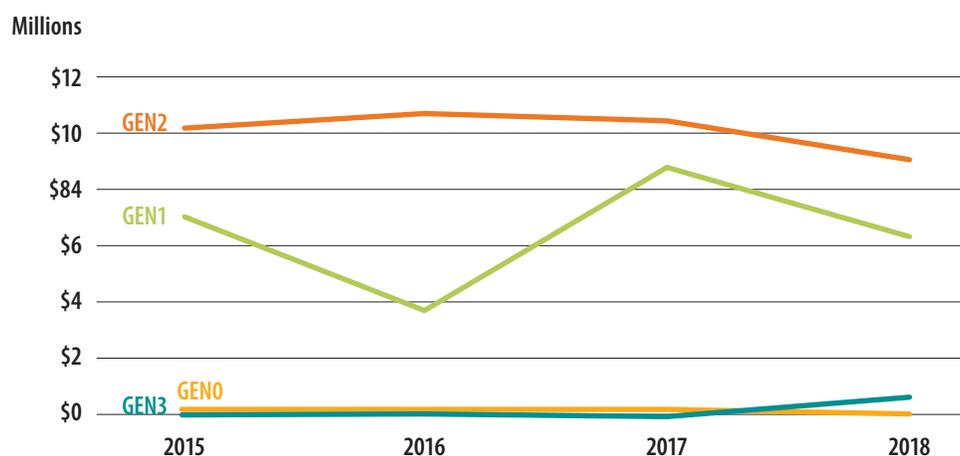
There has been an effort to ensure that women are included in and benefit from most projects, with high participation rates in project activities. The Rule of Law project in particular has been well oriented on gender justice and has focused on improving access to justice for women and victims of violence against women (VAW) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). For example, of the 1,882 people who benefited from paralegal services to help them navigate institutions of redress by the Rule of Law project, 1,265 were female and 617 male. Furthermore, UNDP support for the 'Saturday Courts' (special courts for SGBV) resulted in a reduction of case backlogs and average case duration.

Projects such as YEEP and LGED have also targeted women through BDS support, grants as well as the Graduate Internship Programme (GIP). YEEP activity data related to BDS, the GIP and the Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS) programme suggest almost equal inclusion of women and men. Of the 3,666 people involved in the various activities of YEEP in 2015, 2016 and 2017, 1,754 were women (48 percent). What is not clear is how support and training was in any way differentiated to take into account the different social and economic pressures women face. As also mentioned, the lack of post-training follow-up makes it impossible to understand the different challenges faced by women, the sustainability of support vis-à-vis men and women, and the continued support women may have needed to sustain their businesses.

²⁶ The following are some examples of CSOs that UNDP has engaged with: TIMAP for the monitoring of local courts under the Rule of Law project; Advocate Plus-Sierra Leone and West Africa Network for Peacebuilding in the area of conflict prevention and peace preservation; Prison Watch in the area of rule of law, Media Reform Coordinating Group in the area of media development; Restless Development for BDS training under YEEP; Graceland for BDS training under the LGED project; CaWeC for water systems and health clinic reconstruction under EVD-supported projects; and AID for BDS training under Freetown landslide recovery support.

²⁷ The gender marker, a tool launched in 2009, requires all UNDP-supported projects to be rated (at design) against a four-point scale, indicating their contribution towards the achievement of gender equality, with 0 being the lowest and 3 being the highest rating.

FIGURE 3. Expenditure by gender marker and year*



* With GEN 0 as the lowest rating and GEN 3 as the highest rating.

At the institutional level, the programme has supported the development of gender strategies and legislation²⁸ and has increased gender sensitivity in the Sierra Leonean Police. In the area of electoral support, gender-related activities have focused on awareness-raising of women’s participation in the political process. Although the ultimate results (that is, the number of women in Parliament or government) aren’t significant, the support provided to structures supporting women, such as the All Parties Women Association and the Women’s Situation Room,²⁹ was substantial. In the area of parliamentary support, UNDP promoted the gender agenda in Parliament, supported the recruitment and promotion of female staff, mainstreamed gender in the Conditions of Service for staff, set up the Women Caucus in the 4th Parliament, and supported the Parliamentary Committee on Social Welfare, among other activities. In the area of conflict prevention and peace preservation, the focus has been on promoting the role of women in the peacebuilding process. Women were involved as conflict mediators as well as recipients of interventions when the conflict was related to them.

Within the UNDP country office, 65 percent of staff are women, and this is consistent throughout the office structure. The programme has benefited from the advice of the UNDP Gender Advisor, who joined the country office in February 2015. UNDP has actively collaborated with UN Women and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on gender issues, but cooperation with UN Women could be deepened, especially in areas such as SGBV, VAW, women’s equality and gender rights.

2.2 Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction

RELATED OUTCOMES

Outcome 30: Low-income and food-insecure households have improved access to sustainable income-generating opportunities (on-farm and off-farm).

²⁸ Examples include the Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2018) and the Sierra Leone National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

²⁹ The Women’s Situation Room is an NGO supported by UNDP that monitors elections with a focus on occurrences of violence and intimidation of women.

Finding 8: Support to national and community disaster recovery following the EBV outbreak was somewhat successful and showed UNDP's ability to absorb additional resources and refocus financial and human resources into new areas unrelated to its normal core business or existing focal areas.

UNDP, along with all donors, refocused activities in 2014-2015 to combat EVD. This saw projects paused and financial and human resources directed to respond to the crisis. Throughout this period, UNDP supported the convening of donors and government in a coordination effort to support the EVD response. During the recovery phase, UNDP implemented 14 EVD-related recovery projects with an expenditure of \$13.3 million, although a number of other projects also had EVD response and recovery components embedded within them. Most EVD recovery projects focused on the short-term (2-3 year) recovery work and aimed at having quick impact, with interventions not normally under UNDP's mandate, such as strengthening and rehabilitating health care systems, constructing water systems, reintegrating health volunteers and those impacted by the virus, and working to reduce stigma associated with EVD among communities.

Support in most cases only covered two to three years, and while it enabled UNDP to strengthen communities in their recovery, it did not enable any longer-term support. As a result, some activities such as BDS and livelihood support activities were carried out quickly with little opportunity for follow-up support. UNDP was also unable to leverage this work further, beyond the expansion of some projects to cover recovery work for people impacted by the 2017 landslide in Freetown. UNDP was able to refocus some of its assistance to deal with the aftermath of the crisis through relief and recovery operations and helping the government manage disaster risks more effectively in the future. The existence of an EVD and disaster risk mitigation donor group convened by UNDP helped speed up the response and coordination from donors following the 2017 landslide.

Finding 9: UNDP continues to support and align its work with a major government focus and development concern through its Youth Employment and Empowerment Programme. However, YEEP's overall activities and impact have been declining as funds have decreased.

Work carried out through YEEP has focused on both direct support to youth as well as institutional support to the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the Departments of Youth Affairs and the National Youth Commission. Support to youth includes a strong focus on entrepreneurship and giving youth beneficiaries access to BDS and grants for successful trainees. Business development services were managed and delivered through five CSOs, later reduced to three. The project also supported five CAPS offices within several colleges, universities and polytechnics and finally supported GIP, which claimed a 70 percent employment retention rate for placed graduates.

Support to the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the Departments of Youth Affairs and the National Youth Commission has included the development and launching of the annual *Status of Youth* report, capacity building and advisory support to the offices (Internet and office supplies) and support to National Youth Affairs.

The initial years of YEEP saw high numbers of beneficiaries for training across BDS, GIP and CAPS centre visits. Project data from 2012 suggest that 1,316 people were trained in BDS during the year while 438 graduates were placed in 2012 and 2013. The scope of the project has been reduced over the years due to budget contractions, but the project remains relevant since 34 percent of Sierra Leone's population is between 15 and 35 years of age, and a further 42 percent are under 15.³⁰ While the project remains relevant, there is a need to reflect on whether the current approach, given the reduced budget, is bringing about the levels of impact required or whether it is serving as a pilot to leverage higher levels of support. As discussed earlier in this evaluation, the programme is operating

³⁰ According to 'A Blueprint for Youth, Sierra Leone's National Youth Programme, 2014 to 2018'. See: <http://nationalyouthcommission.sl/pdf%20files/blue%20print.pdf>.

through an old project document and mostly annual work plans that are not strategically aligned beyond some activities within the Ministry of Youth Affairs and the National Youth Commission. The programme continues to support BDS, GIP and CAPS for fewer and fewer beneficiaries every year, despite retaining high technical assistance, management and service costs.

The delivery of BDS activities under YEEP has an average per trainee cost of \$578, while the delivery of GIP averages \$542 per placement. It is difficult to say if these costs are high or not or offer good value for money since there is little post-activity monitoring and no income- or business-earning data to compare the project expenditure against in order to calculate the beneficial impact on individuals. If the project had followed and mentored recipients of training, grants, GIP and CAPS after they received support, then a clearer picture of the benefit and impact of the project may have emerged and, equally important, served as a basis for expanding the project. Notably, YEEP average training costs are higher than those for the LGED project, which also implemented BDS activities, although with an average cost of \$150 per trainee (400 trained at a cost of \$60,000 from 2015 to 2018).

Support to central agencies, mostly the National Youth Commission, has focused on capacity-building through technical support. However, beyond the annual *Status of Youth* report, it is not clear how this is linked to more in-depth policy or strategy development. Support to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and the National Youth Commission has also focused on monitoring project activities.

Finding 10: The Local Governance and Economic Development project has supported a number of businesses, again through BDS and the provision of grants. Work with local governments to support improved revenue-generation has led to some increased income-generation by local governments following support from the project.

The LGED project, though falling under the inclusive growth cluster, has a strong focus on governance; a key activity is working with the Ministry for Local

Governance and Rural Development to support the development of a local economic development policy and guidelines and support for decentralization. Downstream, the project initially worked with three districts (Kailahun, Kambia and Kono), developing capacity within local government (through study tours), as well as its ability to raise revenues (through cadastral systems and the raising of property taxes). The project also supported value-chain mapping with local governance linked to local economic development in different districts. Finally, the project worked with local SMEs by offering BDS and grants. Overall, the project had reasonable linkages between its upstream and downstream activities, although the implementation of the local economic development policy and further decentralization was a slow process.

Local governance and economic development activities were built on the basis of a project document that started in 2010 with joint funding from the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF); that funding ended in 2015. A corresponding reduction in the scope of the project has been seen as both UNCDF and TRAC funds have been reduced. Despite this constraint, the project has continued to pursue many of the same activities rather than restructuring it to focus on areas of greatest need or impact. In 2012, the project started with a budget utilization of \$1.2 million, and in 2018 the project had a budget of \$560,000, all of which was TRAC funding.

Business development services activities have been implemented by CSOs and were not well linked to local government. They were implemented on an annual basis, and the CSOs were not able to follow up on previous years' support to SMEs due to time and budget constraints. Many of the CSOs were not based in the areas where BDS were delivered and were not well connected to local governments; therefore the experience and capacity to deliver BDS will likely leave with the CSOs when the project and activities end. However, there were some successes in BDS, especially through the grants given to individuals whose businesses were fully licensed and paying taxes. Again, due to lack of data, it is not clear to what extent the businesses' growth was

sustainable or to what level they have grown, or the cost-benefit of giving some business grants. More data and post-training and grant support and monitoring are needed to fully quantify the impact and sustainability of the project.

The project trained 400 owners of SMEs in the three districts between 2016 and 2018, at a cost of \$60,000, with 145 (36 percent) receiving grants of over LE958 million Leones (\$114,000). It is not clear whether this is good value for money since post-support monitoring data are not available. However, it is clear from the project data that have been collected that, although the numbers of those trained has declined, the number supported by grants has increased with increasing levels of funding. In 2016, on average, only 13 percent of those trained accessed grant funding from the project; however, by 2018, the ratio had risen to 70 percent.

An evaluation of the project, as well as annual reports, say that revenue-generation by local governments has improved due to project support and capacity-building. This is to be commended, although there is little in the way of supporting data from the project or local governments to quantifiably demonstrate this. Moreover, there were some questions around the transparency of the revenue collection. Again, this should be monitored closely.

2.3 Democratic Governance

→ RELATED OUTCOMES

Outcome 32: Capacity of democratic institutions strengthened to enable good governance.

Outcome 33: Justice and security sector delivery systems improved in compliance with international human rights standards.

Finding 11: UNDP has provided significant contributions in the area of governance. It has assisted all branches of government and has contributed to the strengthening of the system of checks and balances, which is essential for good governance. However, by covering such a wide range of areas and issues, UNDP has been unable to create significant depth in many areas of its operation and to secure the sustainability of some of the structures and initiatives it has supported.

Through its activities in the current programme cycle, UNDP has assisted all branches of government – executive, parliamentary and judicial – and has provided support to a number of independent institutions (including the Human Rights Commission, Independent Media Commission, National Electoral Commission, Political Parties Registration Commission and the National Commission for Democracy, among others). It has also supported the development and independence of the media sector and civil society. By strengthening the Parliament, the judiciary, independent institutions, the media and civil society, UNDP has contributed to the strengthening of the country's system of checks and balances, which is essential for good governance. UNDP has also contributed to the improvement of service delivery in the public sector, especially in the area of access to justice, and has contributed to highly strategic processes of national importance, such as the constitutional review and the formulation of Sierra Leone's National Development Plan.

While covering all these crucial areas and positioning itself as perhaps the most visible development partner in the country in the area of governance, UNDP has not taken a strategic approach to its work. Nor has it created significant depth in many of these areas – with the exception of electoral support and rule of law and access to justice, where its engagement has been consistent and impactful. Even within the latter two areas, interventions could have been delivered more efficiently, rather than in a fragmented manner and organized around specific projects run by different teams and that were not well coordinated at the cluster or programme level. Such lack of depth and strategic

focus has led to the creation of some structures that are not sustainable due to the lack of government funding and support (examples include the Human Rights Commission, Legal Aid Board, mobile courts, Saturday courts and human rights mobile clinics).

Finding 12: In the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, UNDP sought to fill the gap left by the closing of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) mission by strengthening existing conflict resolution mechanisms. UNDP's main objective in this area has been the establishment of an early warning and response system and the creation of a culture of dialogue with a particular focus on engaging youth at risk. However, these activities did not attract donor interest and were replaced by UNDP in the last two years of the project with civic education activities, which were not a good fit for the governance structure of the project.

Activities related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding were delivered under the Conflict Prevention and Peace Preservation project implemented from July 2015 to December 2017. The project supported national institutions, including the National Commission for Democracy, Political Parties Registration Commission, Office of National Security, National Youth Commission and selected CSOs in institutionalizing systems for preserving peace by strengthening the national early warning and response system and creating a culture of dialogue with a focus on engaging youth at risk.

Key achievements of the project were the creation of a national early warning system that was used to produce regular reports of incidents as they occurred and track current, potential or emerging threats to peace and human security. The project supported the deployment of conflict monitors in all 149 chiefdoms and the training and placement

of conflict mediators and dialogue facilitators. The Peacebuilding Fund stopped its funding for the project in December 2015, and in 2016 and 2017 the project was funded exclusively from UNDP core resources. During these years, UNDP redirected the project's focus to civic education, which raised concerns among some stakeholders who had reservations about the appropriateness of giving security sector institutions (the project's implementing partner) oversight over civic education activities.

Finding 13: UNDP's contribution to the successful conduct of the 2018 general elections is highly recognized. The country office supported key electoral institutions in the management of the election process, promotion of public confidence and participation in the electoral process, delimitation of constituency boundaries, development of a national civil registry, and mitigation and prevention of election-related violence through national dialogue and peace advocacy.

Building on a long-standing partnership with Sierra Leonean authorities and civil society in the area of electoral support (in particular, the general elections of 2007 and 2012),³¹ UNDP provided important contributions to the conduct of the 2018 general election (presidential, parliamentary and local councils). The overall goal of its involvement was to enable the country's elections management bodies to conduct free, fair and peaceful elections. The country office provided direct support to key electoral institutions,³² promoted public confidence and participation in the electoral process, and assisted in the area of conflict management and electoral security (before, during and after the election). Support in this area was organized through a cluster of loosely linked projects with different focus areas.

The most critical part of the electoral support was provided to the National Electoral Commission

³¹ The United Nations has a long history of support for the conduct of elections in Sierra Leone. In partnership with development partners, it has supported the following elections: 2002, 2007, 2008, 2012 and, more recently, in 2018. Taking over from the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), UNDP has led support in the area of elections starting in 2007.

³² There are two main electoral institutions in Sierra Leone: the National Elections Commission, which administers elections, and the Political Parties Registration Commission, which regulates political parties and supports their development. Other important institutions related to elections include the National Civil Registration Authority, Sierra Leone Police, Office of National Security, National Commission for Democracy, Boundary Delimitation Technical Committee, and Statistics Sierra Leone, among others.

(NEC),³³ and included capacity-building in the planning and management of the electoral process and procurement of supplies and equipment for the voting process, including the biometric voter registration system. Further, UNDP supported CSOs in running a nationwide campaign of sensitization in favour of participation in peaceful and fair elections. Overall, the project's impact has been assessed as significant by the government and donors. Nevertheless, there were a number of initial design concerns by donors that led to a considerable restructuring of activities once the project got under way in 2016. There were also delays in the recruitment of staff, in particular the project manager (chief technical adviser), who took over at the end of 2016 when, ideally, s/he should have started at the beginning of that year.

UNDP, with Irish Aid support, successfully supported the NEC in reviewing and revising constituency boundaries,³⁴ as well as improving the institutional capacity of national elections management bodies for future delimitation of electoral borders, a process motivated by large population movements and outdated demographic data.³⁵ The focus of this support was on strengthening the NEC's institutional capacity³⁶ for effective boundary delimitation (including procurement of software and hardware for maps and databases), participation of stakeholders in the boundary delimitation process, sensitization of the public on the boundary delimitation process, and the strengthening of the capacity of national and district boundary delimitation monitoring committees.

A key interconnected project implemented prior to the 2018 election was UNDP's support to the

development of a unified civil registry (Integrated National Civil Registry),³⁷ which was envisioned to enable the NEC to obtain the voter registry as well as serve other purposes, such as the production of a multipurpose national identity card. The major achievements of this project were the establishment of the National Civil Registration Authority³⁸ with well-equipped and staffed offices at the central and local levels, the passing of the Civil Registration Act,³⁹ and the development of manuals for administrative procedures in the registration of births and deaths. However, the ultimate goal of the project – the establishment of a civil registry – was not achieved. The project's design underestimated the complexity of creating a civil registry in an environment that lacks a basic information infrastructure and where responsibilities concerning population registration are not clearly defined. Other donors withdrew from the project once it became clear that it was unlikely that the civil registry would be established within the timeframe of the project (and in time for the elections), with a number of key preconditions missing, such as a functional delimitation and residential address system. Some donors felt that the delays in developing the civil registration system could have negatively impacted the forthcoming elections and the establishment of the electoral roll. As a result, UNDP remained the only financial supporter to the process, and the project was implemented with a budget of \$3 million against a projected budget of \$13.2 million. A lesson learned from this experience is that the successful establishment of the civil registration system requires a more comprehensive approach from the outset, based on a complete, costed and realistic operational plan.

³³ This support was provided under the project called Support to the National Electoral Commission 2016-2018.

³⁴ The project's title was Support to Boundary Delimitation.

³⁵ The 2016 boundary delimitation process resulted in a revised number of constituencies (132) and wards (423).

³⁶ Support was coordinated by the Boundary Delimitation Technical Committee, which consisted of representatives from the NEC, Statistics Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Office of National Security, and other relevant ministries and organizations.

³⁷ The project's title is Support to the Integrated National Civil Registry in Sierra Leone 2015-2017.

³⁸ The National Civil Registration Authority's primary objective is the creation of an integrated civil registry, meaning that all residents, citizens and non-citizens of Sierra Leone are registered in one single integrated civil registration database. The integrated civil registry will be the unique data source for the issuance of official documents such as birth and death certificates, marriage certificates, passports, national ID cards and voters cards.

³⁹ This law needs to be complemented by the Data Protection Act.

Another UNDP area of work related to the 2018 elections was support for conflict management and security in the electoral process.⁴⁰ This type of support was needed in Sierra Leone due to the legacy of the civil war, which ended in 2002, social cleavages linked to conflict, and continued political polarization. The project was funded originally by the Peacebuilding Fund, with later contributions from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Canadian Government. It aimed to mitigate and prevent election-related violence through national dialogue and peace advocacy and by building the capacities of the security sector for civil protection, human rights promotion, and peaceful response to election violence. UNDP facilitated high-level and decentralized political dialogues, culminating in a national Peace Pledge overseen by an eminent persons group. It supported a range of educational and awareness-raising activities related to peace advocacy, human rights, electoral law, alternative dispute resolution, legal aid, etc. It also established a media situation room to monitor content and ensure compliance and provided training for journalists on conflict-sensitive journalism and use of social media platforms. UNDP also established an elections situation room and an early warning system with presence at the local level and provided training on security and human rights issues for judges, lawyers and security staff. Overall, the project helped improve the coordination of security bodies and strengthened their ability to assess security threats. Despite all the contributions in this area, activities were delayed by the late recruitment of the project manager and other operational bottlenecks. This led to a situation where most of the planned activities were implemented after the election, rather than before.

In conclusion, UNDP's support was critical to the successful delivery of the 2018 elections and the

peaceful transition of power. However, a number of challenges remain in this area:

- The ultimate goal of enabling Sierra Leone's elections management bodies to run elections on their own or with less international assistance has not been achieved. In the 2018 elections there was greater effort on knowledge transfer and capacity-building. However, local institutions are not yet able to manage future elections on their own.⁴¹ The National Electoral Commission, in particular, still requires support to manage the election process.⁴² Thus far, electoral support has brought results, but not durable change.
- Despite a continuing need for assistance in the area of elections, donor support has been declining. This is evident in the reduced donor support for the 2018 election compared to the previous election. Although the 2018 elections saw a large investment in the process by the Sierra Leone Government, the need for donor resources will likely continue to be significant.
- Previous UNDP support for elections (2011-2014 Electoral Support of Sierra Leone) had a longer time-frame and was more closely aligned with the electoral cycle. This was a positive feature that was commended at the time, including in an outcome evaluation of electoral support activities.⁴³ By contrast, support for the 2018 election was less aligned with the cycle and key activities started late. UNDP should try to start such projects early – more than a year before an election – to allow more time for capacity-building. This is particularly true for activities such as boundary delimitation and voter registration, which need to be completed before the start of election activities.

⁴⁰ The project's title is Conflict Prevention and Mitigation during the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone.

⁴¹ The next local elections should take place in 2022, and the next parliamentary and presidential elections in 2023.

⁴² The NEC does not yet have adequate planning and operational capacity or internal management processes to manage complex election processes, such as drawing constituency boundaries, managing the biometric registration system, doing the printing of ballot papers, and running the results system (tallying the count).

⁴³ 'Outcome Evaluation of Support to Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014, Final Report', December 2013.

- It is also important that electoral support activities be more closely integrated. The experience in this cycle was one of a range of activities scattered among disparate projects. As a key example, the activities of the project on conflict management and security in the electoral process (the Conflict Prevention and Mitigation project) had significant similarities and commonalities with activities pursued in other governance areas, such as conflict prevention and peace preservation, rule of law, access to justice, elections and so on. Ideally, activities within the elections cluster (and even beyond) could have been organized and delivered under a unified framework, using one team, led by one leader, and based on a single and comprehensive capacity development plan.

Finding 14: In the area of rule of law and access to justice, UNDP has provided important contributions to Sierra Leone’s justice institutions and citizens, in particular the most marginalized and vulnerable. UNDP’s support has resulted in the strengthening of a number of justice institutions, and improved access to justice, accountability and justice service delivery at the local level. However, interventions in this area have been fragmented across multiple small projects and the sustainability of a number of initiatives and structures supported by UNDP is uncertain.

UNDP interventions in the area of rule of law and access to justice draw on years of UN and development partners’ support for justice and security sectors in Sierra Leone. As in the area of electoral support, interventions here have consisted of a cluster of projects sharing the overall objective of ensuring equal access to justice for all, with a particular focus on the most marginalized and vulnerable, particularly women. Donors in this area have included DFID, Ireland, the Netherlands, the Sierra

Leone Multi-Donor Trust Fund, UNDP and the United States.

On the supply side, the focus of the rule of law component has been on strengthening the capacity of national justice sector institutions for effective and equitable justice service delivery.⁴⁴ Through trainings and technical expertise, UNDP has supported the High Court of Justice and magistrate courts to fulfil their mandate and reduce case backlogs. UNDP has also supported the establishment of mobile courts and Saturday courts⁴⁵ for both the High Court and magistrate courts, enabling them to hear cases and reduce backlogs. The first ever electronic case management system was developed for the justice system, allowing the chief justice and senior management to monitor case progress in real time. The programme has also supported the independent Human Rights Commission in establishing mobile clinics, which have been instrumental in bringing justice closer to the people, allowing them to lodge complaints to the Commission during field visits. With funding from the United States,⁴⁶ the programme has also contributed to the development, adoption and application of sentencing and bail policies and guidelines, with the engagement of the entire justice chain and civil society actors. It has also supported the judiciary in establishing a public relations office that engaged in the development of a communications and outreach strategy for bail and sentencing instruments.

Following the closure of UNIPSIL, UNDP started to also provide support to Sierra Leone’s security sector reform process.⁴⁷ Support in this area has focused on the Sierra Leone Correctional Services and was highly impacted by the Ebola crisis. With the assistance of Prison Watch, a non-governmental organization (NGO), UNDP helped prevent an EVD outbreak in prisons (correction and holding centres). The security sector reform project supported the rehabilitation

⁴⁴ Key partners that have benefited in this area are the judiciary and courts, Ministry of Justice, Sierra Leone Police (police prosecutors and Family Support Units), Correctional Service, Independent Police Complaints Board, Law Officers Department, and the Human Rights Commission, among others.

⁴⁵ Saturday courts are designed to exclusively address issues related to justice for victims of SGBV.

⁴⁶ The Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, funded a project under this cluster titled Promoting Transparency in Sierra Leone’s Judiciary.

⁴⁷ Support in this area was delivered through the Security Sector Reform project.

of two EVD holding units at the correction centre in Freetown and supplied Sierra Leone Correctional Services across the country with hygiene and sanitation materials. In partnership with the Sierra Leonean Police, UNDP supported the establishment of processes for the handling of investigations and complaints and mainstreamed human resources recruitment and police oversight procedures within the police force, bringing security services closer to the people through community policing. UNDP also strengthened security sector coordination, especially in the context of the EVD response.

On the demand side, the focus of the access to justice component has been on enhancing civil society capacity to support access to justice and elicit accountability for justice service delivery, with vulnerable people, women in particular, at the centre of attention. Through a network of CSOs working at the community level, the programme has provided legal representation to victims of sexual and domestic violence and has empowered families to recover through socio-economic development skills. The programme has also supported the Legal Aid Board to provide legal assistance and representation for women in civil cases involving property and inheritance, divorce and land rights.

Despite these achievements, the programme has faced a number of challenges, the main one being the activity-based and fragmented nature of this cluster. As has already been mentioned in the previous sections, there is a need for a more holistic and programmatic approach to rule of law and access to justice activities that will strengthen synergies among various components. Another concern is related to the sustainability of the initiatives and structures supported in the area, in particular the Legal Aid Board, mobile courts, Saturday courts, human rights mobile clinics and others. What is needed is a more strategic focus on sustainability, including exit strategies, which ties these initiatives and structures to more sustainable funding by the Government of Sierra Leone.

Finding 15: UNDP Sierra Leone has been a long-running, continuous and consistent supporter of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, with activities supporting the establishment and strengthening of parliamentary support services. However, this support has focused more on administrative aspects of the institution, while more could have been done to engage with the Parliament at the political level, especially supporting the law-making capabilities of members of Parliament (MPs) and their interaction with citizens.

UNDP has been supporting the Parliament of Sierra Leone since 2007, with a programme of capacity development activities starting from almost zero.⁴⁸ During the current country programme period, UNDP has spent over \$1 million in core resources in support of the Parliament. This support has focused primarily on the establishment and strengthening of the parliamentary service, with a focus on organizational and human resource development through the provision of technical advisory support. Major achievements include the creation of the parliamentary service, which now has a distinct status from that of the public service, the development of the Parliament's Strategic Plan, the establishment of a Parliamentary Budget Office, the establishment of the Parliamentary Assistance Coordination Office (now the Department of Parliamentary Assistance Coordination), the revival of the parliamentary library, which was virtually non-existent, the creation of a functioning information and communications technology infrastructure, and the development of the Parliament's website.

The focus on administrative aspects has certainly been important to ensuring a strong parliamentary service that strengthens the capabilities and independence of the institution. However, more effort could have been made to engage at the political level, especially supporting the law-making capabilities of MPs. UNDP could have paid greater attention to the dimension of representation, strengthening parliamentary outreach and incorporating

⁴⁸ Initially, support to the Parliament was delivered under the umbrella of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone. Starting in 2014, UNDP has been exclusively engaged in supporting the Parliament.

citizens' voices into the legislative process. UNDP, as in other projects and areas, has lacked a long-term strategic framework of engagement with the Parliament, with activities primarily being delivered on the basis of annual work plans and relying on declining core resources to fund technical advice. Attempts by UNDP to attract greater donor interest through its project support have not been successful. What's more, the EU has recently announced a separate project, without UNDP, in support of the Sierra Leonean Parliament.

Finding 16: UNDP successfully supported the government's comprehensive constitutional review process launched in 2013, producing good results, and ensuring that the process was highly consultative and participatory. The outbreak of Ebola and the 2018 elections put the process on hold. However, there is now an opportunity for UNDP to facilitate discussions over the future of the process.

The previous Sierra Leonean President pledged his government's support for revising the constitution in his election campaign; he also appointed an 80-person Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) in 2013 to review the constitution. At the request of the government, UNDP, as part of broader UN engagement, began supporting the process from the end of 2013.⁴⁹ Through the CRC project, UNDP provided capacity development for CRC members and its secretariat, supported the design of a communications strategy, and engaged CSOs to lead an inclusive and informative civic education process and a series of public consultations around the constitutional review process. The project also supported the capacity development of MPs, political parties and traditional leaders to effectively support and participate in the review process. The end result was the submission of a 'Report on the CRC Process' to the President, whose quality was assessed positively by most stakeholders interviewed for this assessment.

UNDP's support project and the constitutional review itself were delayed due to the EVD outbreak. The project was extended from a planned

conclusion of 2015 to the end of May 2017. The 2018 elections further interrupted the review process and no revisions have yet been made to the constitution. However, the proposal is in place for the new leadership to consider and the process through which it was derived was generally considered open, transparent and inclusive. UNDP is in a good position to facilitate a discussion around the fate of the process and see how it could reposition itself in case the process is revitalized by the current government. Constitutional changes will have significant implications for areas where UNDP is heavily invested (including the rule of law and elections), so UNDP has a direct stake in the process.

Finding 17: UNDP has supported a number of other governance areas, including support to the media sector, assistance to the Ministry of Planning in the formulation of the National Development Plan and Aid Coordination, and support to governance at the subnational level. Assistance in these areas could have been more strategic and substantive and has the potential for high impact, especially if efforts on strengthening governance at the subnational level are sustained and organized more strategically.

UNDP activities in support of the media sector have lacked a clear strategic focus. Recent activities have centred on the Media Reform Coordinating Group, which is a coordinating NGO with limited membership and low impact. In recent years, UNDP has disengaged from key, but also more political, institutions, such as the Independent Media Commission and the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation. A range of media-related activities have taken place across many other projects, especially in the governance cluster, but for the most part they have not been coordinated with the dedicated media project. The media project has been using core resources exclusively, and it is not clear what the value of this investment is for the country office over the long term.

Support to the Ministry of Planning on the formulation of the National Development Plan and Aid

⁴⁹ This support was provided under the project Support to Sierra Leone Constitutional Review.

Coordination has been timely, but limited, and has consisted primarily of the provision of advisers funded with core resources. Opportunities for greater engagement of the other clusters and projects in the planning process have not been exploited. Aid coordination has, in general, been weak and remains another area of significant opportunity for greater UNDP involvement.

The subnational level is perhaps the area that deserves most attention and strategic thinking by management in the run up to the development of the new country programme. UNDP has done a lot of work at this level, all of which in one way or another has contributed to the strengthening of local governance structures, but which has been largely disconnected, fragmented and unsteady. Country office representatives mentioned the potential engagement of UNDP with subnational governments in the area of financial management and accounting. This deserves careful consideration since it is not clear to the evaluators what comparative advantage UNDP has in this area vis-à-vis organizations such as the World Bank. Where UNDP is uniquely positioned to contribute to subnational development is in linking the planning process at the national level to planning at the subnational level and using this process as a platform for embedding a range of other initiatives taking place at the subnational level, including in the governance, environmental and livelihoods sectors.

2.4 Environment and Energy



→ RELATED OUTCOMES

Outcome 31: By 2018, targeted government institutions, the private sector, and local communities manage natural resources in a more equitable and sustainable way.

Finding 18: The country office has developed a more comprehensive approach to support for the environment through the development and implementation of several GEF-funded projects in energy efficiency, climate change management and climate information systems, among other key areas.

A number of new GEF-funded environment projects were developed during the country programme period with a range of different implementing partners. Implementation has seen some initial delays due to poor project design, in some cases, as well as capacity issues with partners and the fact that these were new initiatives. Government contributions have mostly been in kind due to government resource constraints.

One key success has been the establishment of a national meteorological system. Sierra Leone has been reliant for many years on other countries' meteorological systems and weather forecasting. It has long needed a national system that can monitor a range of weather conditions and their effects in order to better prepare communities across the country for everyday and extreme weather events. In addition, the system will help the country monitor, identify and mitigate the impacts of climate change. A project called Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Africa for Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change has been working with the Ministry of Transport and Aviation, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Office of National Security and the Environment Protection Authority to implement the hardware across the country, as well as training staff in its use for weather forecasting, data collection and analysis.

Several of the projects relied on high levels of community participation, including the introduction of more efficient cooking stoves to reduce the reliance on charcoal for cooking, as well as the introduction of a number of large water restoration and access projects with local communities. While the cooking stove project did have some success in the planting of more sustainable woodlots (for charcoal) as well as advocacy within communities, it has had less success in working with government and has experienced delays. This may further impact future

support to policy development and broader advocacy support. In addition, the goal of producing 14,000 energy-efficient stoves through support to private sector producers remains a far-off goal since production remains reliant on subsidization with little support from financial institutions for stove producers to ensure high production levels.

Finding 19: The Environment and Natural Disaster Management project is an all-encompassing shell project with a project document from 2008 that is mostly financed through core funds. The project has been aligned with a number of environmental, extractive industry and disaster risk mitigation policy support needs. But, again, it is a disparate collection of loosely connected projects supporting a wide variety of activities, implementing partners and outputs that, overall, has little connection or overall strategy towards a common goal. However, it constitutes a considerable UNDP investment in support of the country.

The Environment and Natural Disaster Management project has a project document and outputs that were established at its inception in 2008. The project is, in effect, a holding shell for all things environment- and natural-resources related and has various activities across its annual work plans. The project is one of the largest projects in the portfolio and is the largest single user of core funding, with budgets in 2017 and 2018 reaching \$1.9 and \$1.3 million, respectively. The 2018 annual work plan illustrates the project's broad scope: it has 9 outputs and 48 activities with four implementing partners – the Environmental Protection Agency; the Office of National Security, Disaster Management Department; the National Protected Areas Agency; and the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources, Metrological Department. In 2018, the project's outputs and activities covered support to land policy, the minerals sector and alternative livelihoods for mining communities, environmental sustainability and support to Environment Day celebrations and eco-village development, protected areas support, disaster risk mitigation development at the national and

district levels, waste disposal, disaster response coordination and climate information.⁵⁰

While there is a general theme throughout the outputs and activities, it remains very broad and outputs and related activities are operating on their own, with no linkage to other aspects of the project. Partners reported that, annually, UNDP approaches them for details of where they would like support; UNDP then links project support to those areas where they have adequate financing. This means that available financing drives the prioritization of support rather than the needs and priorities of the country. Given the number of partners, outcome areas and goals of the project, many areas end up with little financial support since the budget is spread increasingly thinly. Such an approach to identifying activities, though linked to government need (of a particular year), will produce a diverse group of activities that are ad hoc and non-strategic and that, overall, will not meet the strategic needs and priorities of the country in terms of disaster risk mitigation and environmental protection. Moreover, the project is not improving coordination in this area among government agencies responsible for the different aspects of environmental protection and disaster risk mitigation.

Many of the project's activities are focused on building the capacity of many of the implementing partners, along with support for implementing stakeholder and interministerial partner meetings. There has been ongoing support for the roll-out of the 2015 national land policy, including popularization of the policy and support to the policy's roll-out plan, under the National Land Policy Reform Unit. Similarly, the project has also supported the roll-out and popularization of the core minerals policy and its strategic plan. In addition, the project has worked closely with communities to develop and support community-based disaster risk reduction volunteer groups, as well as the localization of disaster risk mitigation policies at the local level. However, a considerable amount of support is given to aid partners to finance stakeholder and interministerial and departmental meetings for further sharing of policies, rather than the development of policy itself.

⁵⁰ This is indicative of annual work plans for other years.



CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability NATIONAL OWNERSHIP
sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiveness COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT resp
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3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1: UNDP's programme in the current cycle has faced a number of external shocks and upheavals that have presented considerable challenges to implementation. These include the outbreak of Ebola in 2014, economic crisis due to a drop in the price of iron, floods and landslides in 2017, and general elections in 2018. The country office has been able to respond effectively to these events by adjusting its activities and support, but has struggled in the implementation of its planned goals under the programme outlined in its CPD.

The challenges Sierra Leone has faced since 2014 have been considerable. The impact of the EVD outbreak and recovery efforts have been significant across the country. UNDP strongly supported the response and recovery efforts and is recognized as a leading agency and coordinator of support to the country. In addition to EVD support, the country office responded to the Freetown landslide in 2017, by redirecting some of its resources to that recovery effort. Furthermore, UNDP was a major supporter of the general elections that took place in March 2018. Partly thanks to this support, Sierra Leone was able to organize peaceful and fair elections that were not contested by any party and that led to the successful transition of power from the ruling party to the opposition. However, these challenges have understandably hindered UNDP's ability to fully and effectively achieve the intended objectives under the CPD.

Conclusion 2: UNDP's engagement during this cycle has been broad, but has lacked depth and strategic focus, further limiting UNDP's ability to effectively achieve intended and planned country programme objectives. UNDP could have been considerably more strategic and focused in its support to ensure it meets Sierra Leone's priority needs, but also to make a lasting impact in areas where it chose to work. Equally, UNDP could have captured the broad range of synergies that existed across its portfolio of projects to further improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

In addition to the country context challenges it has faced, UNDP's programme and project approach could have been more efficient and effective in a number of areas. During this programming cycle, UNDP has pursued a variety of projects and activities that are described in the previous section of this report. While the coverage range has been impressive, the programme has lacked depth and strategic focus, with the exception of a few areas, such as elections and the rule of law, where engagement has been more substantial and sustained. A common shortcoming of the programme has been the fragmented nature of activities, organized around multiple small projects that have been run by different teams and have not been coordinated well at the cluster or programme level in order to strengthen implementation and capture synergies.

This lack of depth and strategic focus has also led to the creation of certain institutions and structures that are not fully sustainable, since they lack secure funding and strong government commitment. As noted in this report, some of these structures are stuck in a state of dependency on support from UNDP or other donors and have no clear sustainability path ahead. Some factors identified throughout this report that have led to this lack of strategic approach are the development of activities on the basis of annual work plans or historical project documents, without any links to results frameworks. What's more, clusters or entire programmes often lacked a theory of change, which would have helped to connect all these moving pieces into a single framework. Weak synergies and coordination across projects and clusters, and inadequate planning at the level of projects and the overall programme, were additional factors that inhibited a more strategic approach.

Conclusion 3: The country office needs to strengthen its use of results-based management practices. A number of systemic issues have been identified throughout this report in relation to the poor quality of data and statistics, the lack of results frameworks and theories of change, and the short-term perspective of activities, among others. Although the country office has a good

evaluation plan, often evaluations are weak, and their results are not utilized effectively.

As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, the programme has suffered from inadequate use of evidence-based and results-based management practices. The initial RRF accompanying the country programme for the period was comprehensive and detailed, however results tracking and reporting has focused on just 3 of the 23 indicators detailed in the country programme RRF. Similarly, the adjusted reporting has focused on activity-level data, which tend to overstate impact.

Programme planning and implementation has been driven by a focus on inputs, activities and outputs. This is a systemic issue that is observed across all projects and clusters. Many projects do not have results frameworks and theories of change and lack reliable and consistent data, especially at the outcome level. UNDP has also failed to guide and support implementing partners – both government and CSOs – in adequate reporting techniques. Also, as has already been noted multiple times in this report, project activities often lack a long-term perspective and a clear sense of the goals they are trying to achieve because they are developed on the basis of short-term work plans. Responsibilities for programme development are not clearly identified and are shared haphazardly among project and programme staff, depending on the project or area of work.

As far as evaluations are concerned, the country office has developed a comprehensive plan, but some of the evaluations are weak and do not pass the basic criteria established by UNDP to ensure credibility and usability of recommendations. It is not clear what level of learning the country office and its counterparts are drawing from the evaluations and how recommendations are addressed by the relevant departments. In the coming cycle, the country office needs to focus attention and resources on the strengthening of its results-based management systems and the M&E capabilities of its government and CSO partners.

Conclusion 4: The country office has spent a significant amount of core resources in areas where it has

not been able to leverage additional funds. The country office needs a more strategic approach to its use of TRAC that ensures that this type of funding is used efficiently, sparingly and mainly to catalyse new activities, as opposed to sustaining long-running initiatives, as is now the case.

UNDP Sierra Leone has not been very strategic in its use of core financial resources. The decline in TRAC funding, as well as internal competition for core funding across projects, needs to be addressed through a comprehensive review of activities and more strategic choices in the allocation of support to the government, as well as the allocation of human and financial resources. The country office should reconsider its long-term use of TRAC in several projects, especially those that continue to fund basic recurrent costs such as salaries and rents and that are unable to leverage further funds from donors.

The country office has had in place several high-level technical advisers and specialists, both in the country office and in projects. These resources could have been used more effectively in key technical areas, especially within projects that are considered of strategic importance and where the country office is seeking to deepen engagement and strengthen impact. There has also been a tendency to add more staff to projects, especially through the UNV (UN Volunteers), without a clear vision of where a project is going. Many volunteers, though technically capable and qualified, end up doing administrative rather than technical work. There is also a duplication of roles across projects, which could have been better served through sharing of staff. This is especially the case for M&E and for certain advisory positions. Overall, there are opportunities for the country office to rationalize its human resources and use them more strategically and efficiently, in line with programme priorities and needs.

Conclusion 5: UNDP has been involved in a range of areas and activities in the governance sector in pursuit of its objective of good governance and justice. Its most important contributions have been in the area of elections as well as rule of law and access to justice. Within the governance

sector, there are areas where UNDP is currently well established. However, the challenge going forward will be to consolidate its work by integrating all related activities into holistic programmes that point in one direction and are managed efficiently.

UNDP is widely recognized in the country for its contributions in the area of governance. It has assisted all branches of government and contributed to the strengthening of the system of checks and balances, which is essential for good governance. Interventions have taken place both at the national and subnational levels. In terms of thematic areas, a range of activities has targeted the conduct of free and fair elections, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, rule of law and access to justice, strengthening of the Parliament, review of the constitution, and the development of the media and civil society, among others. UNDP has also contributed to the improvement of service delivery in the public sector, especially in the area of access to justice, and has contributed to highly strategic processes of national importance such as the constitutional review and the formulation of the National Development Plan.

However, its most important contributions have been in the area of elections and rule of law and access to justice. UNDP provided important assistance to the 2018 general elections (presidential, parliamentary and local councils), enabling the country's elections management bodies to conduct free, fair and peaceful elections. In the area of rule of law and access to justice, UNDP has made important contributions to justice institutions (on the supply side) and to citizens, in particular the most marginalized and vulnerable (on the demand side). UNDP's support has resulted in the strengthening of a number of justice institutions, and improved access to justice, accountability and justice service

delivery at the local level. These are areas where UNDP is well established and has strong comparative advantages. However, to stay competitive and deepen its engagement in these areas, UNDP needs to address the activity-based and fragmented nature of its activities by taking a more holistic and programmatic approach. This will help strengthen synergies among the various activities.

Conclusion 6: The country programme's pursuit of inclusive growth and good governance through multiple projects across clusters involving various government and non-governmental actors has enabled UNDP to conduct a wide range of activities related to local governance at the subnational level. This is an area where UNDP can be quite competitive, but it needs to rationalize its activities and integrate them into cohesive area-based programmes that are managed under one strategic framework and by one set of people.

UNDP has done significant work at the subnational level through YEEP and the LGED projects, as well as a number of governance-related activities. Most projects across clusters have had some degree of involvement at this level and in one way or another have contributed to the strengthening of local governance structures. However, UNDP's overall engagement at this level has been largely disconnected, fragmented and unsteady. Interventions have taken place through multiple specific projects or activities, along very narrowly defined and structured thematic areas, and managed by different teams. It is possible to imagine the same local authority dealing with multiple UNDP teams on different issues and along different thematic areas. UNDP needs to rationalize its activities at the subnational level and integrate them into cohesive area-based programmes that are managed under a unified strategic framework and implemented by one set of people.

3.2 Recommendations and Management Response

Recommendation 1.



In developing the new CPD, care should be taken to: reflect UNDP's comparative strengths and identify areas it is able to deliver on effectively; develop clear and supporting theories of change for UNDP's work in the country; and prioritize interventions and resources. Included in the country programme development should be a detailed analysis of the use of core funding and a strategy for leveraging core funding for greater impact. The country programme development process should ultimately strengthen the strategic focus of the programme, develop synergies across projects and clusters, deepen interventions and ensure sustainability.

The country office needs to consolidate its support into more focused areas, recognizing that it cannot address all needs with ever-declining resources.⁵¹ The next country programme period should be one of consolidation and focus, rather than taking up broad new opportunities where UNDP may struggle to deliver. The organization has still to prove itself in many areas of work. The development of the new country programme represents a good opportunity for the country office to address some of these issues by re-assessing its capabilities, re-focusing the programme on key priority areas for the country where UNDP has a clear comparative advantage, and re-aligning financial and human resources accordingly.

Given the range of systemic shortcomings identified in this report, it is recommended that the country office undertake a thorough review of its position and operations in the country, aimed at identifying measures that will help it to create more depth and lasting impact. The review should, among other things, include:

- a. A detailed mapping of all UNDP activities across all clusters and projects, with a clear analysis of the value-added of each intervention.
- b. An assessment of government needs and priorities based on the new Sierra Leone development plan and the SDG agenda.
- c. A mapping of donor operations and plans.
- d. An analysis of current and historical TRAC allocations across projects and an assessment of the usefulness, effectiveness and efficiency of each allocation.
- e. Identification of UNDP's comparative advantages, based on the analysis described in points a, b and c above.
- f. Identification of priority areas for UNDP intervention based on the analysis in point d.
- g. Development of a theory of change that connects the priorities identified in point e.

⁵¹ UNDP's 2018 to 2020 pipeline is mostly 'soft', meaning it has not secured donor pledges for projects. Estimates give a worst-case scenario of \$12 million in funding for 2019 and a best-case scenario of \$16 million. Both may be overly optimistic.

h. Development of a clear sustainability plan and exit strategies for existing projects.

To ensure full understanding and buy-in from staff as to the strategic direction of UNDP Sierra Leone, this process should be undertaken in-house with full participation of the country office staff, including the technical advisory resources already available within the country office. It could be facilitated by external resources, but it should be written and owned by the country office staff. Such a process will help strengthen synergies within the programme and within and across clusters.

As the country office moves forward with the development of projects, there will be a need to involve project partners (government and donors) in more detailed discussions around the development of project documents, rather than delivering project documents for buy-in at the last moment. Future project documents will need to be anchored in this strategic analysis and UNDP's identified and proven comparative strengths. Projects should have clearly defined exit strategies and clear commitments from the government where the need for sustained support is applicable. Furthermore, discussions with the government and the development of projects need to be closely guided by Sierra Leone's new development plan. Some hard choices may need to be made, and UNDP may have to work with fewer partners in order to ensure its work is focused and resources are targeted for optimal impact, rather than spread thinly across activities and partners.

In leading this process of change and repositioning, a more concerted effort is going to be needed by senior management, supported and supervised by the regional bureau, to ensure that these challenges are fully addressed through the new CPD process and that a more strategic approach is taken.

**Management
Response:**
Agreed



The country office agrees with this recommendation and has already taken steps that will contribute to its implementation. From 11-15 February 2019, with support from the UNDP Regional Service Centre, the country office conducted a five-day theory of change development workshop as part of developing the next CPD. The workshop brought together all country office programme staff and selected partners from 30 institutions to review the current portfolio and agree on the priority areas for UNDP support – drawing on the country's recently launched Medium-Term National Development Plan and UNDP's strategic positioning in the country as a lead development partner. The workshop assessed the critical development challenges in Sierra Leone and mapped out pathways for UNDP support to the country's sustainable development efforts. Below are planned and completed actions for achieving this recommendation.

Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1. Complete the theory of change for the next CPD a. Conduct a theory of change workshop b. Develop outcome statements and draft CPD results framework	11-15 February 2019 22 February – 8 March 2019	Programme Management Support Unit (PMSU) Programme clusters	Completed Ongoing	
1.2. Streamlined programme portfolio discussed and endorsed	22 February – 8 March 2019	Programme clusters	Ongoing	
1.3. Develop strategic notes for the two clusters that define the interconnectedness of programme areas and the long-term anticipated change	22 February – 8 March 2019	Programme clusters	Ongoing	

* Implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Recommendation 2.



The country office should further strengthen its results-based systems and practices. These efforts should be driven by the need to establish clarity and a clear sense of priority over what UNDP is seeking to achieve in Sierra Leone.

In line with this and as part of its future partnerships with the Sierra Leone Government and other implementing partners, UNDP needs to integrate and strengthen results-based management, data collection, and improved monitoring and reporting to improve not only UNDP project implementation but also government data collection and monitoring in general. The following are key measures that the country office should consider in its effort to strengthen its result-based management approach:

- Discontinue the practice of funding and implementing activities that are not grounded in results frameworks.
- Strengthen criteria for the development of project documents – both in terms of structure and content (clear identification of results, theory of change, exit strategy, etc.), and in terms of process (who leads the development work, role of government and CSO partners, involvement of donors, etc.).
- Strengthen the data collection and tracking system in the organization.
- Improve clarity over project development and M&E roles in the programme and in projects.
- Provide more structured training on results-based management practices for programme and project staff.
- Build the M&E and reporting capacities of government and CSO partners.
- Strengthen the quality criteria for evaluations and establish mechanisms for drawing lessons from evaluations.
- Strengthen the criteria for the review and acceptance of evaluation reports.
- Establish a system for tracking and managing recommendations and lessons drawn from evaluations. Evaluations should be undertaken with a clear understanding of how they will serve accountability and support learning within the country office.

**Management
Response:**
Agreed



The report recognizes that the country office has a comprehensive evaluation plan and has evaluated a considerable number of its projects. The country office has also retained a third-party monitoring firm, INTERGEMS, that provides independent feedback on the quality of project delivery and impact in communities. In each of the two programme clusters, M&E officers have been hired, in addition to a M&E officer in the PMSU. In July 2018, the country office organized a four-day results-based management workshop for programme staff and third-party monitors to increase capacity in results-based practices. The country office, however, recognizes that these resources need to be better coordinated to maximize the effectiveness of M&E. The country office also recognizes that, during the reporting period, it undertook more crisis response and recovery activities, which derailed the alignment of all projects to the CPD results framework. The country office has now taken some steps to return focus and to be more diligent in linking all projects and activities to the overall CPD results framework.

Recommendation 2 (cont'd)

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
<p>2.1. Establish more coherent M&E capacity in the country office</p> <p>a. Constitute a M&E Group for the country office to be led by the PMSU</p> <p>b. Develop results and resources framework for the next CPD</p>	<p>12 April 2019</p> <p>22 February – 15 March 2019</p>	<p>Senior management</p> <p>PMSU</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Will finalize after the change management is complete</p>
<p>2.2. Conduct results-based management and M&E training for implementing partners on the CPD results and resources framework</p>	<p>20 – 22 March 2019</p>	<p>PMSU</p>		<p>Will be based on the draft CPD results and resources framework</p>
<p>2.3. Conduct quarterly cluster/PMSU monitoring field visits</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>	<p>Cluster team leaders</p>		
<p>2.4. Conduct an impact reporting training for country office staff</p>	<p>29 – 30 April 2019</p>	<p>PMSU</p>		<p>Country office has already made the request in the Integrated Work Plan 2019 (COSMOS)</p>

* Implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Recommendation 3.



The establishment of a new Ministry of Planning and the finalization of a new National Development Plan provides UNDP with an opportunity to consolidate a number of activities, while working to strengthen a key new ministry. UNDP should also strengthen its support to the government and the new administration's commitment to the SDGs.⁵²

Support to the Ministry of Planning, the National Development Plan, coordination of development interventions (through the Development Assistance Coordination Office), the development of a national human development report (ongoing for several years) and, to some degree, the nationalization of the SDGs has previously been ad hoc and based around short-term interventions, suffering from a lack of depth and synergies in many cases. The establishment of a new Ministry of Planning, which oversees and coordinates many of these areas, provides UNDP with an opportunity to reorganize some of these activities in a more coordinated manner. To do this well, UNDP will need to ensure that its support is planned within a strategic framework, avoiding the pitfalls of past projects (outlined throughout this report).

Management Response: Agreed



UNDP has been formally requested to support the government in standing up the delinked Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, which was merged for the past 10 years with the Ministry of Finance. The country office has since seized on the opportunity and has supported the Ministry to design and launch a change management exercise as well as develop the country's Fourth Medium-Term National Development Plan, which was formally launched on 28 February 2018. The success of these initial efforts has strengthened UNDP's position in the implementation of the National Development Plan. In addition, the country office has already signed an understanding with the Ministry to support a range of activities that will strengthen the Ministry and the achievement of the SDGs.

⁵² Sierra Leone has committed to presenting a Voluntary National Review of the SDGs to the High-Level Political Forum in 2019.

Recommendation 3 (cont'd)

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
<p>3.1. Support the design and launch of the Fourth Medium-Term National Development Plan</p> <p>a. Provide technical advisers to the Ministry</p> <p>b. Support the editing and printing of the National Development Plan</p>	<p>6 months</p> <p>1 month</p>	Strategic Advisory Unit (SAU)	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>	
<p>3.2. Support the government in its readiness for the Voluntary National Review of the SDGs</p>	5 months (March – July 2019)	SAU	Ongoing	
<p>3.3. Support the development of a results framework for the Medium-Term National Development Plan</p>	6 months (June – December 2019)	SAU	Complete	
<p>3.4. Support the design and launch of a national M&E architecture for the Medium-Term National Development Plan</p>	6 months (April – September 2019)	SAU		

* Implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Recommendation 4.



UNDP has had a positive experience in recent years in convening and coordinating key stakeholders (including government, donors and UN agencies) in support of the last two elections and during the EVD outbreak. There is an appetite among donors and UN agencies for improved and strengthened development coordination and cooperation within the country, and this presents an opportunity for UNDP to play a greater role.

UNDP partners met for this evaluation and concurred on the point that development cooperation and coordination could be stronger. New developments, such as the formulation of a new development plan and the establishment of a Ministry of Planning charged with development cooperation, offers UNDP an opportunity to focus more on strengthening the government's capabilities to coordinate development assistance as well as the localization of the SDGs. UNDP could coordinate support around a handful of key issues such as the SDGs, governance, youth, environment and poverty.

At the subnational level, UNDP has significant opportunities for supporting local authorities in the coordination of development efforts and the channelling of donor assistance. Furthermore, stronger cooperation could be forged across UN agencies, consisting not only of information-sharing, but also joint action based on each agency's comparative advantages.

Management Response: Agreed



As observed in this report, development partners, especially the donor community, have consistently expressed their appreciation of UNDP's convening role as well as facilitating access to key government partners. This was also observed and recommended in the Change Management Plan. The country office has put in place a plan to harness this opportunity in a range of critical intervention areas. In addition to already existing coordination platforms that the country office is leading and/or supporting, the country office plans to establish two new coordination platforms in line with the implementation of the new National Development Plan and for which there is growing appetite among partners. These include the Development Partners Group (DPG) on Support to the Justice Sector and the Development Partners Group on Strengthening Democratic Institutions. The latter will build on development partners' support to the 2018 election through a Steering Committee. The group will convene around sustaining support to key democratic institutions, such as the National Electoral Commission and the Political Parties Registration Commission, and on the role of security in electoral support. These groups will be supported in the context of an electoral cycle approach ahead of the 2022 and 2023 local council and general elections.

Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
<p>4.1. Establish and launch a DPG on strengthening the justice sector:</p> <p>a. Draft Terms of Reference and share with members of the DPG</p> <p>b. Launch the coordination meetings</p>	<p>15 March 2019</p> <p>April 2019 (once a month)</p>	<p>Governance cluster</p> <p>Governance cluster</p>	Ongoing	

* Implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Recommendation 5.



Interlinked with support to planning is that of ongoing and expanded support to local governance. UNDP is well positioned to develop further support to local governance and to ground several ongoing or planned activities in local governance work.

The subnational level is an area that deserves more attention and strategic thinking by management in the run-up to the development of the new country programme. The area of **local governance** presents many opportunities for high-impact work for UNDP, especially if efforts on strengthening governance at the subnational level are sustained and organized more strategically. One type of activity that seems quite relevant is the strengthening of administrative and service-delivery capabilities of local governments. UNDP could support the **strategic planning process** at the subnational level, linking it to the roll-out of the new National Development Plan and using this process as a basis for other support to local government and communities, through areas such as access to justice, disaster risk mitigation, BDS, the empowerment of women, working with youth, etc. At the same time, the country office should avoid areas in which it has little substantive expertise, such as its current consideration of support to local governments' revenue collection (a silo in itself).

Management Response:
Agreed



The country office agrees with this observation. There are opportunities for the country office to better position itself and attract support if it aligns its support to strengthening local governance. The country office also agrees that supporting the cadastral system, which its local governance support currently focuses on, is not a comparative advantage for UNDP. The country office has already undertaken a thorough overview of the challenges and opportunities for supporting local governance structures for the implementation of the government's 2019-2023 Medium-Term National Development Plan and for localizing the SDGs. The review was undertaken jointly by a local consultant and a local governance expert from UNDP headquarters. The report has identified both upstream and downstream areas for UNDP to better position itself. It particularly notes local planning, strengthening administrative capacity, reinvigorating public-private partnerships, community-based approaches and support to Ward Development Committees. Based on the report, the country office is undertaking steps that will also contribute to achieving this recommendation.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
<p>5.1. Design a support to local governance and SDG localization project</p> <p>a. Review opportunities and challenges in local governance</p> <p>b. Draft project document in consultation with local councils and selected members of ward committees</p> <p>c. Conduct stakeholder validation workshop</p> <p>d. Resource mobilization exercise</p>	<p>December 2018</p> <p>March 2019</p> <p>April 2019</p> <p>May to June 2019</p>	<p>Governance cluster</p> <p>Governance cluster</p> <p>Governance cluster</p> <p>Governance cluster</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p>Awaiting completion of change management</p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p>

* Implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

<p>5.2. Establish a local governance practice area in the governance cluster</p>	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>Governance cluster</p>		
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Recommendation 6.



In terms of positioning, UNDP should further consolidate its work in areas such as elections and rule of law, where it has had real impact and is currently well established; it should also strengthen its presence in areas where there is clear and strong potential for synergies among activities it has undertaken.

The area of **elections** will continue to require support (with upcoming local elections in 2022 and parliamentary and presidential elections in 2023), and UNDP is well positioned to channel some of this support to areas where it can provide value-added. It is important that, in this area, UNDP organize its support through a long-term perspective that is clearly aligned with the electoral cycle. Similarly, **rule of law and access to justice** is an area of ongoing need in the country that presents opportunities for continued engagement. Here UNDP should build on existing achievements and strengthen operations on the basis of the measures proposed in the previous recommendations.

Economic development and entrepreneurship is another area that will require sustained support and where UNDP could provide contributions. However, UNDP should consider having one overarching project combining general BDS and SME support to ensure synergies as well as efficiencies in the use of funds (rather than as separate components of different projects), closely linked to local government. A further area for support is the need for a comprehensive approach to **disaster risk mitigation** and the creation of structures that have a more sustained and strengthened presence (this could also be linked to local governance). UNDP should again be more structured in its support to this area and should avoid a collection of loosely connected support projects, which is now the case.

Management Response:
Agreed



The country office’s support to the 2018 elections is widely recognized as a success story by international observers, civil society groups and all political parties. This professional discharge of the mandate to ensure peaceful and credible elections was vital in re-establishing confidence between the country office and resident donor partners. Commencement of the election-support project was delayed, primarily due to the country office’s loss of confidence among donors. The success of the elections project and the timely delivery of quality reporting has improved confidence in UNDP’s ability to manage and deliver electoral support. The country office needs to build on these gains by maintaining momentum on elections support and by launching an electoral cycle management activity. Similarly, the rule of law and access to justice contributions to sustainable development have been consistently rated by external stakeholders as UNDP’s best-delivered support in governance. The country office is aware of these opportunities and is taking steps to consolidate them.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
<p>6.1. Establish and launch a DPG on strengthening democratic institutions</p> <p>a. Launch the Lessons Learned Report on the DPG’s support to the elections</p> <p>b. Draft a Terms of Reference and share with members of the DPG</p> <p>c. Launch coordination meetings</p>	<p>7 – 15 March 2019</p> <p>25 March 2019</p> <p>April 2019</p>	<p>Governance cluster</p> <p>Governance cluster</p> <p>Governance cluster</p>		

* Implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Recommendation 6 (cont'd)

<p>6.2. Develop and launch a gender justice project and evaluate the Rule of Law programme to align with the new CPD priorities</p>	<p>4 – 20 March 2019</p>			
<p>a. Review opportunities and challenges in gender justice (SGBV, Special Courts on SGBV, women in prison, etc.)</p>	<p>20 March – 15 April 2019</p>	<p>Governance cluster</p>		
<p>b. Draft project document in consultation with selected women's organizations and justice and security institutions</p>	<p>18 April 2019</p>	<p>Governance cluster</p>		
<p>c. Conduct stakeholder validation workshop</p>	<p>May to July 2019</p>	<p>Governance cluster</p>		
<p>d. Evaluate the Rule of Law programme and align with new CPD and National Development Plan priorities</p>	<p>October 2019</p>	<p>Governance cluster</p>		
<p>e. Resource mobilization exercise</p>	<p>May to July 2019</p>	<p>Governance cluster</p>		

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/9403>

- Annex 1.** Terms of Reference
- Annex 2.** Country Office at a Glance
- Annex 3.** List of Projects for In-Depth Review
- Annex 4.** List of People Consulted
- Annex 5.** List of Documents Consulted
- Annex 6.** Summary of Country Programme Document Outcome Indicators and Status as Reported by the Country Office
- Annex 7.** Country Programme Document Results and Resources Framework for Sierra Leone (2015-2018)



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