



**INTRODUCTION**

UNDP welcomes the 2019 Annual report on evaluation [DP/2020/13] submitted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to the Executive Board. IEO’s assessment provides relevant feedback and insights to improve the evaluation function and to strengthening performance in order to enhance results further. The commentaries reflect UNDP’s perspectives covering critical elements of the evaluation function, including drivers and outcomes, as presented in the original report.

The adoption of revised Evaluation Policy [DP2019/29] and the launch of the updated evaluation guidelines in 2019 were essential components for continuing to strengthen the overall evaluation function in UNDP. UNDP values the active role the IEO played in supporting the evaluation capability across the organisation through, jointly with UNDP management, conducting regional workshops and online training sessions. UNDP’s financial investment to the evaluation function increased in 2019, to $25.7 million, up from $22.08 million in 2018.

UNDP will continue with efforts to increase the relevance and effectiveness of the organisation’s learning, programming and decision-making from evaluation evidence. These efforts aim to reinforce management accountability and responsibilities, for improved evaluation planning and implementation, timely management responses and high-quality evaluations. Annual reviews of decentralised evaluation performance by the Organisational Performance Group are reinforcing a strengthened culture for evaluation in the organisation.

**INDEPENDENT EVALUATIONS**

The evaluation on *UNDP’s support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries (2014-17)* [DP2019/4] was presented to the first regular session of the Executive Board in 2019. Due to the importance of the issues raised in the evaluation to UNDP’s work, UNDP management engaged in a highly consultative process with the Executive Board Members, the Independent Evaluation Office and internally across UNDP in the process of developing its management response which was presented to the Executive Board’s annual session in June 2019. An update on the implementation of the management response is provided later in this paper.

Strongly committed to being a learning organisation, UNDP welcomes the **adoption of the revised Evaluation Policy** [DP2019/29] by the Executive Board at the second regular session in 2019, for which UNDP and the IEO submitted a joint management response to the Independent review to the Board. The revised Policy foresees a change in the structure of the evaluation function of the IEO and an increased IEO budget and scope. UNDP management welcomes the IEO’s potential expansion to regional hubs and entrusts that such change will contribute to enhancing the quality of decentralised evaluations and the organisation’s function.

The IEO increased the number of completed **Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs)** from 14 in 2018 to 38 in 2019. Out of the 38 ICPEs conducted in 2019, 10[[1]](#footnote-2) were finalised and published on the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) as of 23 March 2020. Remaining reports are expected to be completed prior to the Executive Board annual session in June 2020. UNDP places high importance on the ICPEs, which provide a comprehensive assessment of programmatic results at the country level and are critical inputs to the preparation of new Country Programme Documents (CPD). The box below provides a summary of some of the key findings from the ten published 2019 ICPEs.

**Box 1 Selected key findings and recommendations from 2019 ICPEs**

UNDP welcomes the evaluation findings which reinforce the organisation’s role as a strategic, reliable and responsive development partner and that its interventions remain relevant and aligned with national development priorities and the UNDP Strategic Plan. The long-lasting partnership, which UNDP has fostered with many Governments, has provided the organisation with unique access to support development in sensitive settings and to respond to countries’ emerging needs and demands. Partners recognised UNDP’s policy advisory support and capacity development efforts, in combination with the ability to convene new partnerships. Through prolonged interventions, UNDP successfully advocated for an integrated approach to development and the inclusion of vulnerable groups, particularly women.

In **Iraq**, UNDP succeeded in delivering its most extensive stabilisation programme to date. The programme overachieved against specific output targets where it addressed the needs of the most vulnerable groups. Given the governmental priorities in **Ethiopia,**UNDP intensified a significant part of its intervention for democratic governance and capacity building where it contributed to political and legislative processes. Through gender-mainstreaming interventions, the ICPE acknowledged that some downstream responses resulted in effective targeting of women in the area of livelihood and diversification. In **Azerbaijan,** UNDP contributed to the improvement of environmental management and sustaining natural resources by protecting biodiversity in marine ecosystems, forest, pastureland and by promoting native crops. UNDP ensured that the interventions reached a wide range of beneficiaries. In **Uruguay**, UNDP introduced alternatives, such as the productive landscape approach, to assist the country’s transition from its current production matrix to a sustainable production model.

The ICPEs also highlighted the importance of strengthening results-based management practices across UNDP’s programme portfolios. Adequate theories of change would contribute to prioritising interventions and resources as well as to identify areas where the organisation could deliver effectively based on its comparative advantages. Efforts are further needed in developing funding strategies and enlarging the donor scope to avoid limited effectiveness and undermining the sustainability of results. Programmes in upper-middle-income and high-income countries in particular, continue facing significant decline in regular recourses, increasing dependency on other resources and consequently creating a risk of narrowed programme focus. Additionally, frequent management changes and organisational challenges have, in a few country offices, hampered programme implementation and potential for collaboration and synergies across projects and long-term sustainability

Given the importance of ICPEs in informing organisational programming and decision-making, UNDP values the IEO’s efforts to achieve complete coverage of UNDP country programmes over the programming cycle. To maintain full coverage, the IEO has introduced a **rapid independent country programme review process (ICPR) for 2020** in addition to the ICPEs. While a lighter and more swift review is appreciated, the in-depth analysis is critical to assess UNDP’s contributions to outcome level change, including outcomes in the Corporation Frameworks.

UNDP participated in the **National Evaluation Capacities Conference**organised by the IEO and Egyptian government in Egypt in October 2019, bringing over 500 participants together to improve the effectiveness around the Sustainable Development Goals.

**DECENTRALISED EVALUATIONS**

UNDP supported the development of the revised **Evaluations Guidelines, launched in** January 2019. The guidelines reflect UNDP’s commitment to evaluation and strengthens the organisation’s approaches to improve the quality, credibility and usability of its evaluations, particularly for capturing lessons learned to ensure that future work is informed and strengthened by past implementation experience. Jointly with IEO, the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support and Regional Bureaux conducted three **regional workshops to strengthen the capacity** of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal points for the best use of the revised guidelines. Additional learning opportunities were provided to UNDP staff through webinars and online training modules to strengthen the quality of decentralised evaluation throughout the organisation. UNDP look forward to working closely with the IEO on providing ongoing capacity building and training on areas highlighted for improvement within the annual report during 2020.

**Evaluation Implementation**

The total number of completed decentralised evaluations in 2019 was 290, a small increase on the 283 evaluations completed in 2018, but still less than the number planned to be completed. These evaluations included 132 project evaluations, along with 126 Global Environment Facility (GEF) terminal evaluations and mid-term review evaluations, five outcome evaluations, and 17 UNDAF, thematic or country programme document evaluations. UNDP notes that along with completing mandatory GEF evaluations, there must be a continued emphasis on ensuring a balance of evaluations across the entire programme portfolio. The graph below illustrates the regional breakdown of evaluations completed.

Figure 1 Regional distribution (in numbers) of the total,290, completed decentralised evaluations conducted in 2019.

UNDP takes note of the continuing gaps between planned and completed evaluations during the year. In 2019, UNDP completed 290 out of the 531 planned evaluation (55 per cent), resulting in a total expenditure of $7.25 million compared to the planned expenditure of $16.8 million[[2]](#footnote-3). The lagging completion rate is affected by issues such as stakeholder approval, administration of project closure, consultant selection processes and funding challenges. UNDP acknowledges the need for more strategic and comprehensive actions to increase the timely completion of planned evaluations. The revised evaluation guidelines provide instructions, examples and templates to support the evaluation processes. UNDP has also strengthened the mechanism to review the soundness and robustness of evaluation plans as part of the quality assurance of new CPDs.

**Quality of evaluations**

The IEO assessed the quality of 201 decentralised evaluations in 2019. The ratings are similar to those in the previous years: 73 per cent of the 2019 reports were considered moderately satisfactory and satisfactory. Nonetheless, UNDP management recognises the need to continue to lift the quality of evaluations: reducing those of unsatisfactory quality and shifting more evaluations into the fully satisfactory quality rating. Compared to the level of 2018, the quality of moderately satisfactory and satisfactory evaluations improved in Africa (80 per cent), Asia and Pacific (79 per cent) and Global (89 per cent).

Figure 2 Number of decentralised evaluations quality assessed: 228 (2017), 254 (2018) and 210 (2019).

The quality assessment plays a vital role as it allows UNDP to identify areas that could benefit from more support, both geographically and by evaluation type. IEO’s assessment reaffirms areas of strength in developing terms of reference and evaluation design and links to national strategies. One area of improvement relates to addressing cross-cutting issues where quality ratings improved by 6 per cent to 66 per cent. However, more efforts are needed concerning the usage of gender-responsive methodologies, linking reports to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and incorporating risk considerations. This analysis will be used to improve the quality of future evaluation reports.

Figure 3, Rating based on the four quality assessment ratings – measuring 201 quality assessed reports.

One of the highest-rated evaluations in 2019 was the project evaluation, “*Final Evaluation for Wetlands Portfolio – National”* conducted by the UNDP in China; three out of the four sections [[3]](#footnote-4) rated as highly satisfactory. The evaluation presented a high quality and logic flow with proper justifications for conclusions and recommendations. The report provided useful lessons for future start-ups, noting the importance of sufficient validation of the project strategy at the project inception[[4]](#footnote-5). Other high-quality evaluations include the “*Mid-Term Evaluation of the Shaping Inclusive Finance Transformations Programme SAARC Region”* conducted by UNCDF, “*Evaluation Finale du projet «Diversification des opportunités économiques pour la promotion des coopératives artisanales et l’accès aux marchés nationaux et Internationaux”*, conducted by UNDP in Burundi, and the “*External Review and Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project - Afghanistan Access to Justice (AA2J)”* conducted by UNDP in Afghanistan.

As part of its efforts to improve the quality of decentralised evaluation, UNDP undertook steps to establish a generic **vetted roster of evaluation experts** in 2019. UNDP advertised a call for qualified evaluators in November 2019, which resulted in over 130 applicants. The roster aims to address the demand for vetted, quality evaluators and the issue of delayed evaluation reports due to long procurement processes experienced by many Country Offices. The evaluation roster is managed by the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support. A similar roster was established for Mid-Term Evaluations/Mid-Term Reviews (MTEs/MTRs) for vertical funds[[5]](#footnote-6) financed projects[[6]](#footnote-7) in 2019. Centrally managing selected MTRs using vetted experts is expected to improve the quality of reports and help ensure their timely submission.

**INVESTMENT IN EVALUATION**

As guided by the revised Evaluation Policy, UNDP increased its financial investment on evaluation from $22.08 million in 2018 to $25.7 million in 2019. UNDP’s allocation to the IEO increased from $9 million in 2018 to $10.9 million in 2019, reflecting 0.25 per cent of UNDP’s programmatic expenditure in 2019.

Based on the self-reported Results-Oriented Annual Report data, evaluation-related expenditures (UNDP staff costs and additional evaluation costs) increased from $6.4 million in 2018 to $7.24 million in 2019. The number of reported dedicated M&E staff was higher than in previous years, although it is recognised that 20 per cent of the allocated time was dedicated to evaluation, whereas greater emphasis was given to monitoring tasks. While monitoring and evaluation are mutually supportive, there is a distinct difference between the two functions.

**Status of implementation of management responses to independent and decentralised evaluations**

The IEO conducted a total of 58 independent evaluations between 2015 and 2019, out of which 91 per cent had a management response. Four of the evaluations without a management response are ICPEs, while one is an Assessment of Development Results (ADR). UNDP completed 69 per cent of planned key actions in 2019 compared to 66 per cent in 2018, while 14 per cent were ongoing, 2 per cent had not initiated, 14 per cent were overdue, and 1 per cent was no longer applicable[[7]](#footnote-8). Out of 58 independent evaluations, 24 evaluations (41 per cent) have implemented all management actions.

The total number of completed decentralised evaluations over the same period was 1,557, out of which 94 per cent had management responses. UNDP completed 70 per cent of the planned key actions (compared to 66 per cent in 2018), 14 per cent were ongoing, 6 per cent had not initiated, 1 per cent were ongoing without a due date, 5 per cent were no longer applicable, and 6 per cent were overdue.

UNDP continues to make good progress in implementing management actions and will continue to make sustained efforts to address overdue key actions.

**CONCLUSION**

The Organisational Performance Group reviewed UNDP’s evaluation performance in October 2019. It endorsed actions to strengthen the evaluation function and to increase learning as well as requested relevant bureaux to follow-up on evaluation-related challenges in coordination and consultation with the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support and the IEO as needed.

Evaluation plays a critical role in UNDP’s programme delivery as it supports the organisation to deliver evidence-based programmes and to remain agile. UNDP is continuing to take actions to improve the quality of decentralised evaluations, as well as to strengthen their utility for organisational performance and the relevance of UNDP support.

**KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED, AND LESSONS LEARNED – SELECTED THEMATIC EVALUATIONS**

This management commentary focuses on four evaluations to reflect on how lessons learned from the evaluation and the implementation of management actions have assisted the organisation’s programmatic and operational decision-making. This includes: *Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Anti-corruption and Addressing Drivers of Corruption*; *Evaluation of UNDP Support to Poverty Eradication in Least Developed Countries; Evaluation of UNDP’s Inter-Agency Pooled Financing Services;* andthe *Evaluation of UNDP inter-agency operational services***.**

UNDP has also undertaken a gender-responsive analysis of lessons learned from all Independent Evaluations to inform the implementation of its Gender Equality Strategy and implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The full set of evaluations conducted by the IEO and UNDP programme units and their related management responses are available in the [ERC](http://erc.undp.org/index.html;jsessionid=2825BA456DA1408C7BC53F6267CDC59E).

**Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Anti-corruption and Addressing Drivers of Corruption**

*Completed in December 2016*

The 2016 evaluation of UNDP’s Contribution to Anti-Corruption and Addressing Drivers of Corruption conducted by UNDP’s Independent Evaluation Office highlighted the need for linking anti-corruption approaches to other development programming, prioritising anti-corruption and governance risk assessments, including, increased support at the local level through social accountability initiatives, mobilising more resources for anti-corruption programming, strengthening capacities at the global and regional levels to support country-led initiatives.

The evaluation findings assisted UNDP to incorporate comprehensive anti-corruption approaches into UNDP’s strategic plan 2018-2021. For example, Signature Solution 2, *Governance for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies*, addresses corruption risks to development and building anti-corruption capacities in institutions by strengthening processes to achieve the SDGs. Also, the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 has a dedicated output on anti-corruption[[8]](#footnote-9).

Based on the evaluation’s key recommendations, UNDP continued strengthening its anti-corruption efforts to integrate anti-corruption solutions in service delivery by engaging with communities including women and youth groups, particularly at the local level. UNDP supported countries in the Asia-Pacific, Arab States, Europe and the CIS regions to mitigate corruption risks in service delivery sectors (e.g., health and education) and to build the capacity of anti-corruption institutions to prevent corruption. In Thailand, UNDP supported the implementation of the new Public Procurement Act in 2019, which contributed to government savings of $2.5 billion, equal to a 50 per cent pension increase for 9 million people. UNDP supported more accountable and efficient systems for health delivery in 138 countries. In 2019, UNDP, the Global Fund and the World Health Organization launched the Anti-Corruption, Transparency and Accountability Alliance for Health to address the $455 billion global losses annually from healthcare fraud and abuse.

UNDP has increasingly harnessed the benefits of technology and innovation to mitigate corruption risks in service delivery, public funds and infrastructure projects. In Papua New Guinea, the support provided by UNDP enabled citizens to voice corruption-related complaints via mobile SMS message. UNDP supported the expansion of the Phones Against Corruption (P@C) mobile platform in more than 30 government departments and 15 provinces to strengthen accountability in the use of public funds. In the Philippines, UNDP supported the implementation of the DevelopmentLIVE app in 300 schools and 300 local governments units to enable citizens to monitor progress and provide real-time feedback on SDG-related local infrastructure projects, with 98 per cent of citizens being satisfied with the interface.

UNDP continued strengthening its role as a lead player on global knowledge and advocacy on anti-corruption. In 2018, UNODC and UNDP developed a ‘[Manual on Corruption Surveys](http://www.anti-corruption.org/2018/10/26/manual-on-corruption-surveys/)**’**, which highlights the value of producing experience-based statistical information on corruption. The tool is intended to support evidence-based policymaking and inform the design, implementation and monitoring of policy and programmes in the fight against corruption, particularly by measuring SDG indicators 16.5.1 and 16.5.2.

In 2019, UNDP and UN System Staff College (UNSSC) rolled out a five-week online course; ‘[Anti-Corruption in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](https://www.unssc.org/courses/anti-corruption-context-2030-agenda-march-april-2020/)’ in two editions. The course aimed to provide guidance on integrating anti-corruption in the SDGs and implementing anti-corruption targets of SDG 16.

**Evaluation of UNDP Support to Poverty Eradication in Least Developed Countries**

*Completed in December 2018*

UNDP welcomed the evaluation of its support to poverty reduction in LDCs as a unique opportunity to conduct extensive consultations internally with its staff and externally with member states, Executive Board Members and IEO. With the recognition that there are striking differences within the least developed countries’ category (out of the 47 LDCs, 17 are middle-income countries, 9 are small island developing States, 17 are landlocked, and 20 are considered fragile), UNDP has refocused its poverty offer to provide the analytical tools and technical support to assist countries to develop policies and capacities to advance sustainable and inclusive growth in line with its Strategic Plan (2018-2021), its Signature Solution 1 on Keeping People out of Poverty; and the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs.

Building on the evaluation’s recommendations, UNDP worked to revisit its global narrative on poverty eradication and inequality, continued to work on its next-generation offer; including a focus on the changing nature of social protection to better integrate multiple vulnerabilities like gender, climate change and disaster risk reduction; and leveraging and investing in multidimensional poverty. A set of deep-dive inclusive growth policy offers have been developed and disseminated to inform the next generation of programming in country offices (e.g. multidimensional poverty and inequality measurements, development planning, social protection, jobs and livelihoods future of work, women and economic empowerment, extractive industries and trade and value chains). These are meant to become living documents to adapt to the changing needs of countries to respond to emerging poverty and inequality challenges.

Following up on the recommendation to ensure adequate investment in technical poverty-related areas and capacities, UNDP continues to help governments develop inclusive policies and expand local capacities for embedding a multidimensional perspective of poverty across national policymaking. In 2019, UNDP, in partnership with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), Oxford University, published a [Handbook on How to Build a National MPI](https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/how-to-build-a-national-multidimensional-poverty-index.html). The Handbook aims to build the capacities of countries in developing national multidimensional poverty measures in accordance with SDG target 1.2 to track multiple sets of deprivations relating to health, education, basic standards of living, employment and other relevant dimensions of poverty to complement existing monetary poverty measures. As of March 2020, [UNDP launched a free five-week Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWQbaBkxSfQ&feature=youtu.be) on “Designing a Multidimensional Poverty Index”, co-developed by UNDP and OPHI. The course will help practitioners and policymakers learn to develop a holistic, multidimensional poverty measure. So far, [2000+ participants have registered.](http://bit.ly/PovertyIndexMOOC)

As a follow-up to the recommendations of the poverty evaluation, ongoing efforts include advancing policy and programmatic offer on women’s economic empowerment; and enhanced vertical funds’ support for sustainable livelihoods and rural development including through broader partnerships (e.g. a collaborative framework with FAO is being discussed).

**Evaluation of UNDP’s Inter-Agency Pooled Financing Services**

*Completed in August 2018*

The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office is the United Nations (UN) centre of expertise in pooled funding. A UN system-wide asset hosted by UNDP, it is the only UN unit exclusively dedicated to the design and administration of multi-stakeholder pooled financing instruments. Since 2004, the MPTF Office has supported the UN in launching over 200 pooled funds covering the full humanitarian-development-peace spectrum.

The 2018 independent evaluation concluded that pooled funds have become a well-established mechanism that is critical to the current UN reform process and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The evaluation recognised that the MPTF Office “sets the standard for administrative agent service of all agencies” and confirmed that the firewall between MPTF Office as an Administrative Agent and UNDP as a participating UN organisation has worked as it should. The results of the 2018 evaluation, including related Executive Board decision, and the 2019 Evaluation of Norway’s multilateral Partnerships Portfolio *The World Bank and UN Inter-Agency Trust Funds*, have informed several strategic MPTF Office management initiatives since mid-2018. The office has institutionalised multi-stakeholder discussion fora on pooled financing, as requested in the Executive Board decision. This informal consultative body meets periodically - two fora were held in 2019 and additional two are planned for 2020.

The recommendations from UNDP’s independent evaluation have further been incorporated in the MPTF Office’s update of the digital management platform, the MPTF Office Gateway, to be launched in 2020. One key element is a new Results-Based System (RBM) which has been embedded in the new MPTF Office Gateway to enable monitoring of programmatic and financial performance indicators. Financial data is reported according to the UN data standards for financial reporting and IATI standards. The mainstreaming of the UN data standard on the SDGs ensures that all interventions at project- and fund levels are linked to the SDGs. Fund-level indicators make sure that the results to which the United Nations contributes directly and are attributable to Fund interventions, are visible. Further, the standard operational indicators measure the operational performance of each Fund and the overall MPTF Office portfolio against defined key performance indicators. An additional element of the new Gateway is the introduction of a grant management module, which enables pooled fund secretariats to track results of projects towards fund and operational performance indicators. Contributions to gender equality will be tracked through a gender equality marker at project level, and with a new section on funds in the pipeline, stakeholders will be informed of new opportunities to invest and participate in pooled funds in the development.

Lastly, in line with the management response, the Office is taking the lead within the context of the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) on the follow-up of the funding compact commitment 14, which refers to the common management features of pooled funds. These features, also mentioned in the evaluation recommendations, refer to clearer theories of change; solid Results-Based Management systems; and operational effectiveness/reporting/visibility/transparency standards. The last feature is the planning and funding for joint and system wide evaluations that meet UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards.

**Evaluation of UNDP inter-agency operational services***Completed August 2018*

UNDP welcomed the recommendations of the evaluation report on inter-agency operational services which has assisted the organisation to improve its business model and streamline business processes for operational services. UNDP remains committed to the UN Secretary General’s reform agenda and continues to support the United Nations System Development Reform actively. Beyond its financial contribution, UNDP has actively provided policy and operational support as part of the 4+1 agencies, co-leading the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Business Innovations Group (BIG) on various fronts and as an integral part of the Secretary General’s efforts to ensure common Business Operations Strategy (BOS), common premises, and other operational initiatives UNDP continues to engage proactively in interagency collaboration.

As recommended by the evaluation findings and as the main service provider to the Resident Coordinator system, UNDP rolled out a web-based Service Portal in June 2019, which serves as a single-entry point for Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) and UNDP Country Offices (COs) for initiating, processing and tracking service requests, and in accessing financial information. The portal offers space for feedback on services received, with UNDP rated at 4.24 out of 5 stars by its users. UNDP also served as the operational backbone of the United Nations, disbursing $3 billion in payroll, over half on behalf of partner agencies; providing $95 million in travel services and $618 million in procurement; and managing more than 200 shared services.

UNDP has substantially contributed to the development of updated BOS guidance. Following its launch by the UN Development Coordination Office in October 2019, UNDP has further developed a dedicated BOS digital platform. The BOS platform includes reporting capabilities that allows Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams to establish baselines, assess impact and progress on their BOS implementation, compare countries and regions in terms of BOS impact, and assess actual efficiency or quality gains. The platform also significantly cuts the time in the development of a Business Operations Strategy from an average of 6 months to 8 weeks. Building on the evaluation recommendations, UNDP finalised its new digital strategy and commenced implementation. The strategy responds to governments’ increasing demand for support in IT capabilities, while it will help UNDP to deliver more effectively, including through client-facing platforms such as the global service tracker.

Building also from the related Office of Audit and Investigations findings, UNDP accelerated its operational services and strengthened its clustering initiative. The global shared services initiative/clustering is consolidating 57 country office processes in finance, human resources and procurement, which will address up to 65 per cent of country-level audit issues.

**Gender responsive evaluations**

Lessons learned from the evaluations of UNDP’s work on gender equality and, women’s empowerment shows that UNDP has been able to strengthen its gender-responsive development performance due to three key factors[[9]](#footnote-10). Firstly, systematic gender analysis throughout the programme cycle has been crucial in addressing structural causes of gender inequality and achieving transformative results, as evidenced by the Gender Equality Seal certification process. Secondly, interventions that shifted from the dominant angle of counting women as beneficiaries towards making them managers and decisions-makers have been instrumental in enabling women’s agency and transforming power relations. Thirdly, a synergy between gender-specific interventions and addressing gender concerns in developing, planning and implementing policies and programmes has been most conducive to ensuring best results.

At the same time, the lessons learned pointed to further actions needed to achieve impactful and transformative outcomes in gender equality and women’s empowerment. These include: (i) strengthening awareness of gender roles, responsibilities and power relations throughout all CPD priorities, projects and programmes; (ii) putting in place a more gender-responsive results framework with better integration of gender considerations in all interventions – from planning and design to implementation and assessment; and (iii) improving the linkage between project interventions and enabling policy processes, as noted in the evaluation of UNDP’s work on poverty reduction in LDCs.

1. Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Maldives, Mozambique, Panama, Seychelles and Uruguay [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. IEO Annual Report on Evaluation 2019, point 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. 1. Evaluation structure and design (15 per cent), 2. Evaluation report & methodology (30 per cent), 3. Cross-cutting and gender issues (15 per cent), and 4. Evaluations results, findings, conclusions and recommendations (40 per cent). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. ERC Quality assessment <https://erc.undp.org/qa/reports/viewassessmentdetails/4383> - 2020-03-16 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. GEF, Green Climate Fund/GCF, Adaptation Fund/AF [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The roster currently has 41 vetted candidates [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Figures based on ERC data as of 17 March 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Output 1.2.3 Institutions and systems enabled to address awareness, prevention and enforcement of anti-corruption measures to maximise the availability of resources for poverty eradication [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. These lessons learnt are derived from a review of evaluations of UNDP’s work on gender equality and women’s empowerment conducted between December 2019 and February 2020. The methodology of the review entailed a desk review and a mapping exercise of 49 evaluations covering the period of 2017-2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)