

EVALUATION OF

UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENING
NATIONAL CAPACITIES

OWNERSHIP



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FOREWORD

A central element of development effectiveness is national capacity to achieve the goals and aspirations of the people of a country. Consequently, this has been an important dimension of both bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. In the United Nations system, capacity development has a special significance, as it underpins the mandate of all organizations in the UN development family. The United Nations does not support countries through the injection of financial resources but rather by developing national capacity so that countries can do things for themselves.

Capacity development has been an ever-present constituent of UNDP's mandate, strategic framework, and way of working. The UNDP Strategic Plan for 2008-2011 identifies capacity development as the overarching contribution of the organization and the 'how' of what it does. Capacity development is no longer to be regarded simply as an 'approach' or 'development driver' but instead is the 'expected development outcome' featured in all UNDP focus areas. This evaluation assesses the role and contribution of UNDP in enhancing national capacities through the lens of its support to governments in formulating and managing national development strategies.

The evaluation understands capacity development as support to enhance the sustained ability of national institutions to do things for themselves. In assessing UNDP's contribution, a key ingredient is an understanding of national perspectives on how national capacities are identified and developed. A variety of sources have been used to collect evidence, including four in-depth national case studies, an analysis of UNDP's project portfolio in the area of capacity development, 45 country-level Assessments of Development Results conducted by the Evaluation Office, a review of relevant

literature and documentation, and extensive interviews within and outside the organization. The evaluation analyses this evidence and identifies how and to what extent UNDP contributes to capacity development. The report makes recommendations for UNDP's future work based on the assessment of what has, and has not, worked.

The evaluation finds that UNDP's internal guidance on capacity development approaches clearly reflects lessons learned from the organization's extensive experience in capacity development. Significant investment has been made in developing guidance, tools and instruments and integrating them into UNDP internal systems and procedures. There is recognition across the UN system of the leading contribution that UNDP has made towards understanding capacity development. However, this has been largely a supply-driven response. Much less investment has been made in engaging in a dialogue with national partners on the broader issues of capacity development and in developing a related demand for effective capacity development.

Overall, the evaluation found that UNDP has made substantial contributions to supporting countries in formulating and managing national development strategies and that this support has been generally considered relevant and effective. While contributing to national capacity, UNDP has not, however, consistently engaged governments in addressing the longer term requirements of capacity development. Lessons that UNDP itself has identified are yet to be integrated fully into the design of its projects. This is often because all partners have focused on meeting immediate needs and many staff are of the view that any capacity related support is capacity development. Country circumstances also play a major role in creating or limiting opportunities for UNDP to engage governments in a

dialogue on capacity development. The organization has not sufficiently analysed why instances of good capacity development practice, at both regional bureau and country office levels, have occurred and has not looked at implications for lesson learning and replication with adaptation to different national contexts.

The evaluation concludes that UNDP has not yet made the shift to the nationally-led change process for capacity development identified in the strategic plan. The organization is highly responsive in supporting government partners to meet immediate priorities and day-to-day requirements but has not transformed its support into effective capacity development. In many instances, UNDP has missed opportunities to understand the complexities of the endogenous national process and to help governments move the national capacity development agenda to a broader and more comprehensive level.

In moving forward, the evaluation recognizes that investment made by UNDP in capacity development, including conceptual work, and international recognition will allow the organization to be placed to take a lead role, both at the country and global levels, to enhance capacity development.

The evaluation recommends that UNDP should prioritize implementation of the principles embedded in the strategic plan across all

countries. Capacity development guidelines should be written to maximize coherence with government processes. UNDP should systematically assess good practices and develop knowledge of why these have taken place. Capacity development should not be treated as a practice or focal area. While specialized expertise may be required for analysis, codification and guidance, capacity development needs to be seen as integral to the work of UNDP in all focal areas and at all levels of programming, country, regional and global.

This evaluation has underlined the importance of an endogenous approach not only in conducting an evaluation but also in addressing capacity development. I hope that it will be useful in helping UNDP enhance its work in developing national capacity by engaging in a fuller dialogue with national partners and by integrating capacity development more effectively in all its work. I also hope that this evaluation will provide some insights for national governments and the development community in their common purpose to create sustainable national capacity that can promote human development and respond to the aspirations of people.



Saraswathi Menon
Director, UNDP Evaluation Office

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	ix
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	xi
CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 The Evaluation Questions	2
1.3 The Evaluation’s Approach and Methodology	3
1.4 Limitations to the Evaluation	5
1.5 The Report Structure	6
CHAPTER 2. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, NATIONAL CAPACITY, AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT	7
2.1 What is a National Development Strategy?	7
2.2 What is National Capacity?	8
2.3 What is Capacity Development?	9
CHAPTER 3. FINDINGS ON NATIONAL CAPACITY IN THE AREA OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES	15
3.1 National Development Strategies	15
3.2 Progress and Challenges Identified in the Use of National Development Strategies	21
3.3 The Role of National Capacity in Formulation and Oversight of National Development Strategies	22
CHAPTER 4. EVIDENCE ON UNDP’S CONTRIBUTION	27
4.1 What Has UNDP Done in the Area of National Development Strategies?	27
4.2 How Relevant Was UNDP’s Support?	32
4.3 How Effective Was UNDP’s Support?	35
4.4 How Efficiently Was UNDP’s Support Delivered?	43
4.5 Did UNDP Support Have a Sustained Effect and Contribute to the Adaptability and Resilience of the National Systems?	43

CHAPTER 5. INTERNAL FACTORS EXPLAINING UNDP’S PERFORMANCE IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT	47
5.1 Internal UNDP Measures	47
5.2 Alignment of the External Environment with Internal Systems and Processes	48
5.3 Clarity of Goals and Policies	50
5.4 Business Processes	52
5.5 Alignment of UNDP Structures	55
5.6 Resources	57
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	61
6.1 Conclusions	61
6.2 Recommendations	62
ANNEXES	
Annex 1 Terms of Reference	65
Annex 2 Evaluation Approach and Methodology	75
Annex 3 Reports from Botswana, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia and Togo	85
Annex 4 The Portfolio Analysis	87
Annex 5 Key Events in the Development of UNDP’s Response to the Capacity Development Agenda	95
Annex 6 People Consulted	99
Annex 7 Documents Consulted	105
BOXES	
Box 1. What Does an Open Systems Perspective Mean For This Evaluation?	3
Box 2. What is the Centre of Government?	8
Box 3. How Capacity Development Has Been Treated in United Nations Documentation	9
Box 4. UNDP’s Policy Guidance Reflects Lessons Learned on How to Approach Capacity Development	12
Box 5. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and National Development Strategies	18
Box 6. National Human Development Reports’ Significance in Relation to National Development Strategies and Capacity Development	19
Box 7. UNDP Support for MDG Costing	30
Box 8. Addressing Capacity Development and Relevance as Part of UNDP Programming Procedures	34
Box 9. Capacity Development Facilities	39
Box 10. Principles That Should Drive Capacity Development Approach	40
Box 11. Monitoring Changes in National Capacity and the Effectiveness of Capacity Development Interventions	51

FIGURES

Figure 1.	Adherence to Capacity Development Principles	43
Figure A1.	A Systems Perspective of Contributing Towards Building National Capacity for National Development Strategies	75
Figure A2.	The National Development Strategy Business Process at Country Level	77
Figure A3.	Adherence to Capacity Development Principles Analysis of UNDP Project Documents	92
Figure A4.	Percentage Compliance for Project Documents with Centre of Government	93

TABLES

Table 1.	Number and Percentage of Projects Supporting Centre of Government Role in Development and Management of National Development Strategies Across UNDP and By Bureau	27
Table 2:	Degree to Which, Where Relevant, Capacity Development Has Been Reflected Within the Organization's Business Processes and Support Staff Taking a Systems-Based Approach to Capacity Development, Based on the Principles Outlined in the 2008 Practice Note	53

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AusAID	The Australian Government's Overseas Aid Programme
ADR	Assessment of Development Results
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
BOM	Bureau of Management
CDG	Capacity Development Group
CoG	Centres of Government
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
ERBM	Enhanced Results Based Management
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MYFF	Multi-Year Funding Framework
NHDR	National Human Development Report
OECD (DAC)	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Development Assistance Committee)
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBA	Regional Bureau for Africa
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
RBAS	Regional Bureau for Arab States
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
ROAR	Results-Oriented Annual Report
RSC	Regional Service Centre
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignments from the Core
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDG	United Nations Development Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Capacity development has consistently been identified as a central goal of development cooperation in the United Nations system. General Assembly resolutions responding to the 2004 and 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews reaffirmed the centrality of national capacities in addressing poverty and pursuing sustained and equitable economic growth and sustainable development. They also highlighted capacity development as a central goal of the United Nations system. UNDP has directed massive efforts at supporting capacity development over an extended period of time. More recently, its 2008 strategic plan identified capacity development as the overarching contribution of UNDP. While previous evaluations provide evidence of UNDP's work on capacity development, no comprehensive assessment has been made of its efforts in this area. This is what led the Executive Board, in May 2009, to approve an evaluation of UNDP's contribution to strengthening national capacities.

The General Assembly resolutions responding to the 2004 and 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews, the 2006 United Nations Development Group policy statement and UNDP's own internal policy guidance all view capacity development as a tool to develop the ability of national partners to do things for themselves or do things better, without the United Nations having to play the same role again. This is the definition used in this evaluation. This evaluation therefore makes a distinction between (i) capacity development, which is concerned with the sustained ability of national institutions to do things for themselves and (ii) the broader concept of national capacity support, which encompasses all assistance delivered to get things done to meet internal and external demands; it does not necessarily focus on developing the sustained abilities.

The evaluation also adopts the perspective of the strategic plan that capacity development is a means, which underscores the need to examine capacity development as it plays out in one area of UNDP's work. The evaluation therefore selected UNDP's performance in supporting the national development strategy process as the lens for examining its overall approach to capacity development. This work, supporting countries to formulate policies and develop national strategies, plans and management systems, was presumed to represent a large part of UNDP's portfolio. This area is also important to governments, which continue to ask for UNDP support. The evaluation is thus important for developing an understanding of UNDP's work in the area and of how the organization can best support governments and national efforts in a sustainable manner.

A review of literature showed no common definition or understanding of a national development strategy. The evaluation therefore used the definition and understanding of the national development strategy adopted by each country in the case studies. To identify the national development strategy, the evaluation started by identifying the government's process to define long-term national goals and translate them into a medium-term planning framework that guided resource allocations.

The evaluation is both retrospective and prospective. It takes stock of the past while looking into the future with respect to how UNDP contributes to national capacities and the effectiveness and future sustainability of its capacity development support. The evaluation assesses the relevance of UNDP's work on capacity development with respect to national priorities and the UNDP mandate; the effectiveness of UNDP's contribution to capacity development; and the efficiency of UNDP's institutional and programming

arrangements relative to its role as a partner for capacity development. National experiences and UNDP support between 2000 and 2009 were examined.

Over the past 26 years, UNDP has invested significantly in learning how to approach capacity development and, more recently, in integrating what it has learned into its policy guidance, systems and procedures. This level of sustained investment and attention is unique among the United Nations agencies. The importance of capacity development is increasingly signaled in the statements of senior management and is identified as UNDP's overarching contribution in the current strategic plan.

In 2002, UNDP created an advisory team in the Bureau for Development Policy supported by regionally based capacity development advisors. This cadre has played a significant role in developing internal capacity and promoting a shift to approaches that experience has shown will be more effective. Demand by country offices for support from these advisors has increased and exceeds their capacity. Alternative approaches to meet this demand are now being developed at country and regional levels. Training courses have been developed to support staff in using the guidance. The need to identify national capacity constraints and respond accordingly is included in programming and project guidance. Analytical tools to help identify the key constraints and design appropriate responses have also been developed.

UNDP issued policy guidance on internal capacity development in 1994, 1998 and 2008. This guidance clearly indicates the need for a transformation in how UNDP manages its relationships with national partners; effective capacity development is not achieved just through better technical analysis and application of tools. While central to the 1998 policy guidance, this insight was explicitly codified in the 2008 UNDP Practice Note on Capacity Development, which sets out 11 principles that should inform the relationship between

UNDP and national partners. These principles highlight:

- the importance of national leadership and the use of national systems;
- the reality that capacity development is a long-term and unpredictable process requiring persistence, and that it evolves through a mixture of long-term and short-term results;
- the need for a comprehensive understanding of the situation and for interventions designed to address both positive and negative motivations for change;
- the importance of moving beyond approaches that concentrate on enhancing individual skills, and therefore a focus on training.

Tools and frameworks for analyzing and understanding these principles are found in the guidance issued in 1998 and 2008. How far UNDP has progressed in implementing these principles is central to this evaluation.

The evaluation used a multi-method approach. National consultants and a core team carried out four case studies of UNDP support to national development strategy processes, in Botswana, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia and Togo. These case studies used a national perspective to assess UNDP's performance. They started with self-reflection exercises by national stakeholders that described the changes in the 'endogenous' processes for formulating and managing national development strategies in the four countries. They also identified the degree to which successes or problems were primarily due to national capacities.

UNDP and other external partners figured in this work only when national stakeholders chose to highlight their role. Performance was not judged against predefined measures of success. This approach was taken because policies and plans in these countries, and indeed elsewhere, define results at outcome or impact level, effectively leaving a 'missing middle' of intended national

capacity results. Instead, performance was judged against the degree to which UNDP contributed to the endogenous process described by the national stakeholders, and hence from the national perspective.

The evaluation also relied equally on meta-analyses of evidence from (i) the 45 Assessments of Development Results completed by the UNDP Evaluation Office between 2003 and 2010 and (ii) the 15 assessments that specifically evaluated UNDP support to national development strategies. Complementing the case studies and the meta-analyses were (i) interviews with a range of UNDP staff at headquarters and in regional and country offices; (ii) a review of the wider literature carried out to capture more broadly experience in supporting development of national development strategies and in capacity development; and (iii) a portfolio analysis of how capacity development was reflected in the design of a random sample of UNDP projects active between 2004 and 2009. This multi-method provided a substantial basis to validate the evidence and substantiate the findings.

FINDINGS

UNDP has contributed substantially to country efforts to develop and manage national development strategies. Support has been project specific and has been relevant and effective.

UNDP has not, however, engaged governments in addressing the longer term requirements of capacity development. Analysis of the endogenous process shows that UNDP has been responsive by supporting governments to address immediate demands and day-to-day requirements, including responding to external partners. Thus UNDP has provided extensive project-based support, and national partners have found this support to be relevant and well done. Very few specific activities or support initiatives failed to deliver against expectations. Project support contributed to the delivery of national plans and/or affected their quality, although not always directly or immediately. UNDP advocacy through products such as national human development reports and Millennium Development Goal reports also

helped to broaden the range of issues discussed nationally.

However, strengthening the ability of national partners to do things for themselves or do things better without the United Nations having to play the same role again is not a priority of UNDP support. This is observed at two levels. The evidence from the endogenous process highlights the fact that governments see capacity development as important for achieving national goals. They acknowledge the importance of capacities for enhancing the quality of national development strategies and are aware of the capacity constraints in formulating and managing these strategies. The pressures of everyday management tend to distract people from the longer-term imperatives of capacity development. UNDP has not identified how to use its strong relationship with governments to engage with them on the longer-term implications of not addressing capacity development and then reflecting this in the types of support developed.

The evaluation finds that country circumstances play a major role in determining opportunities for UNDP to engage governments in capacity development. These circumstances include the commitment and degree of cooperation within the government; UNDP's relationships with the units that drive government-wide reforms; and the degree to which UNDP's established national partners see capacity development as part of their responsibilities. Also important is the degree to which governments are willing to engage with UNDP on sensitive issues and whether they think that UNDP has something to offer.

These facts are borne out in UNDP's contrasting experiences in Botswana, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia and Togo. In Paraguay and Togo, UNDP and the governments have recently designed projects aimed at addressing fundamental drivers hampering government capacity. In Botswana and Saudi Arabia, UNDP was seen by governments as a service provider, and therefore not relevant to internal government consideration of such issues. After five years of discussion, UNDP

has shifted this perception in Botswana and started to develop support within the government; this has not happened in Saudi Arabia.

The design of its projects shows limited evidence of UNDP efforts to apply the principles of effective capacity. In general, there were no well-defined or appropriate exit strategies. UNDP projects and programmes remain narrowly focused in terms of the types of capacity they seek to develop. Most support comprises either long-term technical assistance or, more commonly, a mix of short-term consultants, training and support for consultation exercises. Functions carried out through long-term technical assistance are rarely taken over by nationals at the end of assignments. Rapid turnover of national staff was a common reason given for the lack of impact from training, although the team did not find evidence of evaluations of training effectiveness. Projects were also rarely designed to identify and enhance access to national knowledge or expertise outside the government. For short-term consultants, assignments were usually focused on delivery of a product. Structuring work to increase its longer-term impact on capacity development was not a priority.

These problems were all identified by UNDP in the 1990s and were the major driver for the development of new guidance in 1998. Their continued prominence in the portfolio is the major indicator that the lessons identified in both the 1998 and 2008 internal guidance have not yet been consistently implemented across the organization. It should be acknowledged, however, that UNDP's internal investment in strengthening its own capacity has mostly been made in the past four years.

There are examples of innovative and effective UNDP capacity development support. In Benin, Bhutan and Montenegro assistance was clearly demand driven. In Afghanistan and Yemen there is clear evidence of capacity development at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels. Innovative modalities of South-South technical assistance in the form of coaching were reported favorably in a major civil

service reform and development programme in Afghanistan. But these examples are exceptions, not the norm.

UNDP has not sufficiently analysed examples of good capacity development practice at regional and country levels or their implications for replication. At country level, partners have not invested in supporting effective learning from experience. This can take place through joint reflection between stakeholders about outcomes, about what works and why, and about how positive change is taking place.

Interviews suggest two factors that are significant for successful identification and integration of capacity development into UNDP's support: First, country offices that can develop the opportunity to have detailed and frank discussions with government and can then access suitable expertise, whether in UNDP or through consultants, have the most success in integrating capacity development into project and programme design. Second, successes result from championing of the agenda by senior UNDP management at country level. But UNDP at corporate level has not invested in verifying these observations. This is most striking in instances where the organization has identified examples of good practice but has not seriously analysed why these exceptions to the norm have taken place and whether they offer lessons that could be replicated elsewhere, either by UNDP or by governments.

There is good internal guidance reflecting what effective capacity development is and there is international recognition of UNDP's work. However, there are limitations in the utility of the guidance for effective support to governments. UNDP's work in capacity development is well regarded by international development partners. The guidance produced reflects globally learned lessons and the international consensus on good practice for enhancing sustainability. The guidance has become progressively more comprehensive. However, the utility of the guidance is affected by two main factors. First, it is more complex than needed, making it difficult for staff

to apply. Examples of good use of the guidance were identified, but interviews with staff in regional and country offices indicated that many found the language overly technical and difficult to understand. (The Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS has responded by preparing supplementary material using simpler language.) The time taken to translate guidance into languages has also hampered its utility.

Second, UNDP's capacity development guidance is not presented in a way that makes it easy to use in working with governments. It is supply driven rather than demand driven, and thus in discord with government processes. The guidance treats capacity development as a unified and comprehensive issue. But this is not how it is addressed by governments; a range of government organizations address different aspects of the capacity development agenda, either as part of their core function or as part of a reform process. This lack of congruence limits its utility.

Capacity development is a means to address poverty and pursue sustained and equitable economic growth and sustainable development; it is not the expected end result. This reality conflicts with the structure of UNDP's internal advisory support and guidance. Its results reporting also create barriers. Capacity development is explained as the *'how'* of UNDP's approach. It is thus treated as a means in UNDP's strategy documents including the present strategic plan. This type of conceptualization is not reflected in the structures established. If capacity development is viewed as a means, the expectation follows that advisory work would be integrated into practice areas, and expertise on capacity development would be developed within practice areas. Instead, capacity development advisory teams have been established at regional and headquarters levels. In so doing, UNDP has organized its corporate response in the same way as for its thematic work in the various practice areas. Progress has been made in integrating capacity development into the work of the broader cadre of advisory staff in these practice areas, but this has been at the discretion

of the individual managers. It has not been a systematic response to a corporate agenda.

The programme and project monitoring systems of national partners and UNDP focus on tracking results, as do performance reviews of country offices and staff. This acts as an impediment, as capacity development is not a result but a process. Its lack of visibility in monitoring and reporting systems therefore reduces the scope to identify instances of good practice or to reward those using good practice. In terms of what should be monitored and reported, the lack of a consistent understanding of capacity development across the organization is a significant barrier. Currently, many within the organization believe that all UNDP contributions to countries also develop national capacity, which is contrary to what is implied within the organization's own guidance.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: UNDP has not made the shift to the nationally-led change process for capacity development identified in the strategic plan.

UNDP is faced with the challenge of responding to government demand and government ownership of the development agenda and process while also addressing corporate demands and the global normative agenda, including on capacity development for sustainable development. It has accomplished the first; it is highly responsive in supporting government partners to meet immediate priorities and day-to-day requirements. But it has not fully accomplished the second or sought ways of balancing how it responds to both demands. At this stage, UNDP's efforts are focused on the mechanical process of developing tools and instruments in a supply-driven mode and integrating them into UNDP internal systems and procedures. The main focus is not on transforming how UNDP manages its relationships with national partners, which is what would be expected if the lessons reflected in UNDP's own guidance were being applied.

UNDP's effectiveness in contributing to capacity development depends on the degree to which its partners demand support in this area and are aware of the lessons learned on how best to address national capacity constraints. These conditions are not met. Partners perceive UNDP's comparative advantages in terms of its impartiality, the long-term relationship, its access to international expertise in substantive areas, its willingness to provide support and the possibility of using UNDP to circumvent administrative constraints in national governments. UNDP has made only modest efforts (through corporate advisory cadres) to ensure that national partners are aware of the principles that should underlie UNDP's management of its relationship with governments, how these principles might affect their relationship with UNDP or whether they agree with this change in approach.

Conclusion 2: UNDP misses opportunities to understand the complexities of the endogenous process and to help governments advance the national capacity development agenda to a broader and more comprehensive level.

Understanding the complexities of the capacity development process as well as the diverse and fast-changing conditions in countries is vital if UNDP is to better position itself and strategically address its mandate for capacity development. International experience shows the limitations of the 'planned' approaches to capacity development, which have been the norm in international development cooperation, and of UNDP reliance on a set of tools that do not necessarily capture the national perspective and systemic constraints. UNDP is missing opportunities at programme and project levels to identify and highlight government opportunities to meet both immediate demands and medium- or longer term capacity development needs.

Conclusion 3: UNDP does not have learning mechanisms in place to capture emerging innovations and lessons on the ground and to develop, disseminate and scale them up.

UNDP does not systematically learn from successes and then seek to systematically replicate them. It can showcase a number of instances of support reflecting good practice and 'what works best' in regional bureaux and country offices. Given its universal presence on the ground and its collaboration with national partners, UNDP is in an excellent position to work with these partners, including universities, to develop analytical systems and to compile knowledge of what works, why and how. UNDP's promotion of South-South cooperation also provides good opportunities for learning from each other.

Conclusion 4: Given its conceptual work and guidance on capacity development and the international recognition of this work, UNDP is well placed to take a lead role to enhance capacity development at country and global levels.

UNDP's role in capacity development now must move to a more demand-driven model and to an emphasis on work with national partners, using the principles of its own guidance. Doing this in partnership with other United Nations agencies and development partners presents several advantages worth exploring.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: UNDP should prioritize implementation of the principles embedded in the strategic plan across all countries.

UNDP should build on its analytical work and successful programmatic experience to shift to an approach fully led by national governments that responds to immediate government needs while maximizing the contribution to capacity development. At the operational level, implementation of the principles for managing the relationship between UNDP and national partners is the most important priority, rather than further refinement of tools and guidance. This requires ensuring that governments and other national partners are aware of and buy into the proposed changes in the nature of the relationship with UNDP. It also requires ensuring that partners are aware of what expertise

on capacity development they may access through UNDP. Internally, this approach requires UNDP to highlight the importance of implementing the principles and identifying how to better support their implementation at country level.

Recommendation 2: Capacity development guidelines should be written to maximize coherence with government processes.

Guidelines will only be effective if staff understand why they are important for the work they do and for the requests of government and other partners. Guidance must therefore be drafted to respond to this reality and its value in government processes, where capacity development is rarely addressed as a discrete issue. UNDP should also ensure that future guidance helps staff distinguish clearly between capacity development and support that contributes to ongoing national activities. This would directly address the belief of many in the organization that they already address capacity development and therefore they don't need to consider changes in how they work.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should systematically assess good practices and develop knowledge of why these have taken place.

Governments face increasingly complex national capacity challenges, while the limitations of traditional 'planned' approaches to capacity development are becoming more evident. These trends call for continuous learning. They present clear opportunities for both governments and UNDP to identify why capacity development has succeeded and the implications for replication. This should become UNDP's priority for work in support of capacity development. It will require dedicated resources. It will also require development of new approaches for learning lessons beyond those provided by traditional monitoring and evaluation systems, which focus on end results. Finally, it calls for enhancing knowledge management across units, regions and country offices to ensure dissemination of good practices and lessons.

Recommendation 4: UNDP should develop the capacities and competencies of its staff and managers in country offices to identify opportunities to integrate capacity development into their programme and projects.

Capacity development cannot be reduced to a blueprint or checklist of necessary actions. It requires acknowledging that UNDP works in environments in which outcomes and objectives are often ill-defined, consequences unpredictable, options limited and failure a cost of doing business. It therefore calls for placing a premium on informed judgment, which is difficult to track under an organization's management information systems. Required competencies also include flexibility, business orientation in exploiting situations and the drive and perseverance to get things done with governments. It also means not being prescriptive about process in order to avoid the danger of reinforcing rigid and formulaic approaches.

UNDP therefore needs to ensure that its internal reporting and management systems recognize this changed orientation. Country offices and regional bureaux have started developing diverse approaches to accessing the expertise needed to bring in experience from elsewhere and to develop specific plans of action with national partners based on lessons learned. This experience should be assessed to identify approaches that should be implemented more widely across the organization.

Recommendation 5: UNDP should ensure that capacity development at regional and headquarters levels is not treated as a practice area.

UNDP should retain its internal expertise in capacity development at headquarters and regional levels. This expertise is a comparative advantage, and it is essential if the organization is to enhance its effectiveness as a global partner in capacity development and learn from examples of good practice. Making the change required by the guidance necessitates firm integration of capacity development into the work of the

practices and the broader advisory cadre at regional level. This is also likely to decrease the proliferation of centrally produced guidance that uses different terminology and frameworks to address the same basic issues, and hence should reduce confusion for those who use the guidance.

This approach will ensure that capacity development is properly addressed in UNDP's ongoing engagement with governments. It will enable UNDP to build on its strengths and past work to more effectively develop national capacities to achieve human development.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

1.1 BACKGROUND

Enhancing national capacities has consistently been identified as a central goal of the United Nations system's development cooperation. In the past decade, General Assembly resolutions responding to the 2004 and 2007 United Nations Triennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews have reaffirmed the centrality of national capacities in addressing poverty and the pursuit of sustained and equitable economic growth and sustainable development. UNDP has provided substantial support to capacity development over an extended period. The 2008 Strategic Plan identified capacity development as the overarching contribution of the organization. While there is evidence from UNDP evaluations on the organization's work on capacity development, there has been no comprehensive assessment of its efforts in this area.

This evaluation falls under the 2009-2010 programme of work for the UNDP Evaluation Office, which was approved by the Executive Board in its decision 2008/31. It is the first corporate-level evaluation that focuses explicitly on capacity development and on 'how' UNDP contributes to results. The role and contribution of UNDP in enhancing national capacities for formulating and managing national development strategies are examined and based on the evidence of what has, and has not worked, it concludes with a set of policy-relevant and forward-looking recommendations.

Central to the evaluation's approach is the national perspective on how national capacities are developed. The study is founded on the view that most national capacity is developed as people, organizations, and indeed society work out how to take advantage of opportunities available and find and implement solutions to the problems in achieving what is wanted. From this perspective, capacity development is happening all of the time and the vast bulk of capacity is developed independently of support from external parties, whether the United Nations or donors. This perspective actually underpins much of the work carried out over the past twenty years on effective development of national capacities.^{1 2} In terms of examining the United Nations' contribution to capacity development in a particular area, the evaluation was designed to recognize this fact and hence started from an understanding of endogenous ongoing national processes.

Developing sufficient understanding of the endogenous processes was challenging. It is also important to be clear that this exercise was not intended to be an evaluation of the government and civil society by UNDP's Evaluation Office. National consultants in this evaluation therefore assumed a central role in supporting the analyses by national stakeholders of the endogenous processes in a number of countries. They also played a significant role in the overall evaluation analysis and development of

¹ For example, Principle 9 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) makes explicit reference to such endogenous processes: 'States should cooperate to strengthen endogenous capacity-building for sustainable development by improving scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge, and by enhancing the development, adaptation, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including new and innovative technologies.'

² The same perspective is seen in Fukuda-Parr, S., C. Lopes and K. Malik, *Capacity for Development: New Solutions to Old Problems*, New York/London: UNDP/Earthscan, 2002. The study, supported by UNDP, is explicit in the present UNDP Strategic Plan, which states that 'In all cases, UNDP focuses its support on the development of national capacities, which must be led by and grounded in endogenous efforts in order to be meaningful and sustainable'.

the recommendations, bringing their greater ability to understand these endogenous processes and the overall national context into the centre of the work.

The resolutions of the General Assembly responding to the 2004 and 2007 United Nations Triennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews, the 2006 United Nations Development Group (UNDG) policy statement, as well as UNDP's own internal policy guidance converge in their view of capacity development. According to this view, capacity development is intended to develop the ability of national partners to do things for themselves, or do things better, in the future without United Nations intervention. This is the definition used in this evaluation. In so doing, this assessment makes a distinction between 'capacity development' and the broader concept of national capacity support. Whereas the first is concerned with the sustained ability of national institutions to do things for themselves, the latter encompasses all assistance delivered to get things done to meet internal and external demands and does not necessarily focus on developing sustained abilities.

UNDP's internal capacity development policy guidance, developed in 1994, 1998, and, most recently, in 2008, clearly indicates the imperative of a transformation in how UNDP manages its relationships with national partners for an effective capacity-development approach. Improved capacity, in other words, is not primarily achieved just through better technical analysis and application of tools. While central to the 1998 policy guidance, this insight was explicitly codified in the 2008 UNDP Practice Note on Capacity Development, which sets out eleven principles that should inform the relationship between UNDP and national partners. These principles highlight the importance of national leadership and the use of national systems. They also underscore the long-term but unpredictable nature of the capacity development process and how it requires persistence,

and development through a mixture of long- and short-term results. The principles also indicate that capacity development requires a comprehensive understanding of the situation and that interventions should be designed to address both the positive and negative motivational factors for change. Finally, they identify the importance of moving beyond approaches that concentrate on enhancing individual skills and a focus on training. The guidance issued in 1998 and 2008 provide tools and frameworks for better analysing and understanding these principles. How far UNDP has progressed in implementing these principles is central to this evaluation.

1.2 THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation has focused on answering three key overall questions:

- i. From a national perspective, what have been the successes and problems in formulating and managing national development strategies in selected programme member-states?
- ii. Is there evidence that (a) UNDP's country programmes and (b) the projects of UNDP's global and regional programmes have enhanced national capacities to develop and execute national development strategies identified as needed by the country?
- iii. What is the capacity of UNDP to be an effective partner in capacity building at the country level?

Primarily, national experiences and UNDP support between 2000 and 2009 were examined, but where relevant and feasible, prior support was included under the evaluation. For UNDP, support from the country office, regional bureau and corporate levels were evaluated. The organization's support to national capacity in post-conflict contexts was not examined, as it would justify an evaluation of its own. The resources, moreover, were not available to incorporate it into this work.

1.3 THE EVALUATION'S APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation focused on gathering evidence of what has and has not worked and then developing a set of recommendations relevant throughout the organization. The overall evaluation approach and methodology are conceptually straightforward and follow the logic of the three evaluation questions. However, a national perspective and a systematic analysis of the endogenous process necessitated a departure from the approach used in the UNDP Evaluation Office's previous thematic evaluations. This makes it consistent with the current Evaluation Office focus on enhancing the validity of evaluation evidence from a national point of view.

First, an inductive, rather than a deductive approach was used in this evaluation.³ This was partially because governments had not

pre-defined what changes in national capacities for formulating and managing national development strategies were generally needed. Nor had they tracked the performance of capacity development initiatives in this area. Furthermore, research and evaluation of capacity development increasingly show that evaluations using pre-defined logic models that assume clear and direct cause-and-effect relationships between capacity development initiatives and changes in national capacity rarely provide an accurate and credible understanding of what has happened, and why. Experience instead shows that evaluations that use what is called an 'open systems' perspective are more likely to provide such credible and robust evidence.

The commonest approach would be to evaluate what has happened in a sample of countries and then generalize the conclusions on the basis that they were statistically representative of all

Box 1. What Does An Open Systems Perspective Mean For This Evaluation?

An open systems perspective defines an organization in terms of inter-related subsystems. Organizations are made up of individuals (who are systems in their own right) who belong to groups or departments (which again are systems) that in turn are possibly organized into divisions and so on. If the organization is defined as the 'system', then the other levels—individuals, groups or departments, and possibly divisions—are all sub-systems. The perspective is 'open', because the direct interactions between an organization and those outside, as well as with the broader context and environment, are deemed important for the configuration and operation of the internal sub-systems.

In this evaluation, the organizations within the government concerned with formulating and managing the national development strategy would be the 'system'. Each organization would then be a 'sub-system' within this overall 'system'. There would be varying levels of sub-systems within each organization. The national development strategy formulation and management process would be defined as a set of 'business processes' that operate both within individual organizations and frame interactions between them. This system is the endogenous system. The United Nations organizations or other partners are thus part of the external environment that interacts with this endogenous system.

Use of this perspective requires the evaluation to start with the endogenous system, since this is where national capacity needs to be developed. It also means: (i) understanding that there is no such thing as a 'perfect' system (in this case for formulation and management of a national development strategy) or ideal against which one should assess relevance, effectiveness and adaptability; (ii) recognizing that a 'system' adapts constantly over time to the external environment within which it exists and that change and adaptation usually take place in a non-linear, long-term, and often-unpredictable manner; (iii) judging performance of the system requires understanding how effectively it interacts with the external environment; and (iv) that changes in one part of the system may have unpredictable effects elsewhere in the system. Finally, there are no blueprints.

³ A deductive approach starts from a theory and hypothesis, such as summarized in a results framework, and then looks for evidence to confirm or disprove this theory/hypothesis. An inductive approach works the other way, moving from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories.

the countries. Statistical sampling was therefore not the approach used in this evaluation for generalization for a number of reasons. Each of the over 100 programme countries in which UNDP operates is unique and there are no ideal systems. Data do not exist to stratify countries by either their approach to national development planning, level of national capacity, or intentions for developing their approach to national development strategy formulation. Nor are there data that would have allowed the evaluation team to stratify countries based on different types of response by UNDP over the past decade. For these reasons, an explanatory case-study approach, in which the focus was on identifying the factors that most influence UNDP's performance in developing national capacity, was used. Conclusions from the work at the country level were then generalized through the 'replication logic'—the more times the same response and issue were observed leading to the same outcome, the greater certainty there was that this is something general across the organization, irrespective of the national context. A more detailed and technical description of the evaluation approach and methodology is provided in Annex 2.

Detailed case studies of the successes and problems in formulating and managing national development strategies were carried out in four programme-member states—Botswana, Paraguay, Togo and Saudi Arabia. The number of countries included was dictated by the time and funding available to the evaluation team. The actual countries were identified through key informants, who classified those in which: (i) there was a national interest in strengthening the operation of the centre of government; (ii) UNDP had provided support to this area; and (iii) it was thought that there was some positive outcome. This initial process was complemented by examination of information available on the country programme websites, followed in some cases by interviews with staff in the country offices. The selection process excluded countries where the volume of external evaluations was considered excessive and where the Evaluation Office's wider programmes were already leading

to a significant burden on the UNDP country office. This constraint meant that most lower-income countries were excluded.

In all four countries, the collection of evidence and analysis was guided by a set of propositions and questions structured around the generic strategy, planning, development and implementation cycle (see Annex 2). Short country case study reports were produced and discussed with in-country stakeholders, but most of the detailed evidence was summarized in a set of evaluation matrices, based on the questions, to allow more systematic and credible cross-country analysis.

In each country, the process started with the self-reflection processes to identify the evidence of the successes and problems with the national development strategy. The degree to which these successes or problems were primarily due to national capacities was then identified. At this stage, the focus was entirely on what had happened within the national endogenous system (Evaluation Question 1). UNDP and other external partners only figured in this work when the national stakeholders chose to highlight their role. Based on national stakeholders' analyses, whether and how UNDP had contributed to the identified changes in national capacities was identified (Evaluation Question 2). UNDP's performance was evaluated and judged against the commonly used criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The significant difference, however, was that performance against these criteria was based on evidence from the self-reflection exercise rather than pre-defined measures of success.

A number of other sources of evidence were used to either corroborate or question the findings of country-based work and thus ensure that they were credible, robust and replicated. This enhanced the ability of the evaluation to make broad and credible conclusions on UNDP's performance and the reasons as the basis for the recommendations. Other sources of evidence included:

- i. meta-analyses of evidence from (a) the forty-five Assessments of Development Results (ADRs) completed by the UNDP Evaluation Office between 2003 and 2010, and (b) the fifteen that specifically evaluated UNDP support to national development strategies;
- ii. interviews with a range of UNDP staff at the headquarters, regional and country office levels;
- iii. a review of the wider literature carried out to capture experience more broadly in supporting development of national development strategies and in capacity development; and
- iv. portfolio analysis of how capacity development was reflected in the design of a random sample of UNDP projects active between 2004 and 2009.

1.4 LIMITATIONS TO THE EVALUATION

It is important to start from the opportunities available to the evaluation. These included the willingness of national-level partners to give their time when there was no immediate benefit to themselves or their governments; the significant body of evidence already available on how UNDP works, and the strengths and weaknesses of internal approaches to strengthening the organization's own internal capacity to be an effective partner; and an active debate within the organization around the issue of national capacity and capacity development.

The focus on national development strategies meant that the team did not evaluate cases where UNDP is perceived to have made the greatest contribution to national capacity. These are most likely to have been in the areas of capacity to deliver against plans and service delivery.⁴ However, this does not detract from the value of the evaluation, as its ultimate purpose was to examine UNDP's overall ability to be an effective

partner in capacity development through the lens of its work in one particular area.

Limitations to the evaluation were identified during the internal Evaluation Office quality assurance process and by the Independent Advisory Panel. Where possible, these were addressed. The following are the limitations:

- The evaluation was structured around a national perspective, starting with the national endogenous process in four selected countries. An attempt was made to expand the number of cases by using existing evaluations of UNDP performance in four other countries—Afghanistan, Ecuador, Benin and Montenegro—and strengthening understanding of the national perspective and endogenous process through telephone interviews with key nationals. This approach failed due to time constraints and difficulties in identifying and then contacting key national informants.
- Power, politics and the chemistry of inter-relationships between stakeholders mean that in reality there is not one national perspective, but a number of such perspectives. Recognizing this was an important facet of interpreting the results from the self-reflection exercise. There are also a significant number of countries where the international donors and multilaterals have a significant role in both shaping and influencing what happens in the endogenous process. More work on how these interactions impact upon the endogenous process is needed.
- UNDP management identified a number of instances of support that it thought illustrated both best practice and where there was a significant UNDP contribution. It also noted significant support to regional initiatives. This work impacted outside the four main case study countries and therefore could not be directly evaluated. A lack of credible and

⁴ As will be demonstrated below, these fields are among those in which Regional Service Centres report most demand from country offices.

impartial evidence on the performance of these instances available from either UNDP or other secondary sources of data also restricted opportunities to reflect this experience in the evaluation.

- There was neither the time nor the money available to evaluate all that UNDP had done, especially at the regional level.

1.5 THE REPORT STRUCTURE

The report has six chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides an overview of how national capacity, capacity development and national development strategies are understood

in this evaluation. Chapter 3 presents the main findings from the country-level self-reflection work, telephone interviews and review of secondary literature of country-level experience of national development strategies and the degree to which changes in national capacity have contributed to the success or failure of this approach to planning. Chapter 4 lays out the degree to which there is evidence that UNDP has made a contribution. Chapter 5 examines the internal factors explaining UNDP's performance, as identified in Chapter 4. The final chapter includes the major conclusions and recommendations. To aid the reader, chapters 2 through 5 conclude with a summary of key findings.

Chapter 2

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, NATIONAL CAPACITY, AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The evaluation focuses on a subject area where international consensus on meanings are lacking. This applies to the understanding of the terms ‘national capacity’, ‘capacity development’ and even ‘national development strategy’. This evaluation did not pre-define what either a national development strategy or national capacity is, but instead started from how they were understood by stakeholders at the country level. For capacity development, the evaluation used a definition that reflected the understanding of capacity development found across key relevant United Nations documentation. This chapter provides an overview of how the three concepts are understood in this evaluation.

2.1 WHAT IS A NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY?

The literature shows no common definition and understanding of a national development strategy. Within the United Nations, at different times, resolutions have called for use of national development strategies to meet different needs. At the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, governments undertook to develop and adopt national sustainable development strategies as a key component of implementing the goals of Agenda 21.⁵ Paragraph 26 of the 2004 General Assembly Resolution 59/250 on the other hand: ‘Recognizes that capacity development and ownership of national development strategies are essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and calls upon United Nations organizations

to provide further support to the efforts of developing countries to establish and/or maintain effective national institutions and to support the implementation and, as necessary, the devising of national strategies for capacity-building.’

The adoption of a national perspective precludes the need for a single definition of a national development strategy. Rather it entails taking the definition and understanding of the term from within each country for the purposes defined by the government. The evaluation therefore starts by identifying the process used by a government to define long-term national goals and how these are translated into a medium-term planning framework that guides resource allocations.

The formulation and oversight of implementation of national development strategies are clearly functions of government agencies commonly termed the centre of government. Therefore, the capacity of agencies at the centre of government to fulfil these roles is the evaluation’s major focus.

The literature further shows that this is an under-researched and evaluated area, especially in terms of what has happened within endogenous approaches to national strategy formulation and oversight across countries. Reviews of planning models used in the 1950s are found, but they are not particularly relevant to current strategy and planning approaches.⁶ More recently, there has been extensive research literature on experience with the development and implementation of

⁵ Section 1, Social and Economic Dimensions, Article 21 ‘Calls on governments to create sustainable development strategies to integrate social and environmental policies in all ministries and at all levels, including fiscal measures and the budget’.

⁶ See, for instance, Higgins, Benjamin, *Economic Development* (2nd edition), London: Constable and Company, 1958, p. 373 or ‘Programming Techniques for Economic Development’ Bangkok: UNECA, 1960, Chapter IV.

Box 2. What Is the Centre of Government?

While varying from country to country, and over time, centre of government agencies would commonly include Offices of the President or Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning/Planning Commission and the Ministry of Social Planning (particularly in Latin America). Some countries' constitutions provide for a Cabinet having a policy- and strategy-determination, resource-allocation and implementation-management role. The Cabinet Secretariat often resides in the Offices of the President or Prime Minister. Given the importance of UNDP capacity development support to governments for strengthening their ability to track progress against nationally derived MDG goals and targets, central statistics offices are also included in this definition for the purposes of this evaluation. The role of parliaments in strategy and budget scrutiny is also taken into account. What unites all of these agencies is that they are not directly involved in the implementation of government strategies and policies, which instead is the role of the sector-level ministries.

planning approaches associated with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Introduced in 1999, this approach has undoubtedly influenced approaches to national strategy formulation in approximately 70 countries, principally but not exclusively in sub-Saharan Africa and South and South East Asia.⁷

There is also considerable material reviewing the experience and performance of technical assistance in developing capacity in specific issues related to the performance of national development strategies—for example, in terms of strengthening statistical data collection. However, this literature mainly takes an external perspective. It does not appear to directly assess how the external support has affected whatever endogenous process may have been in place or assess against this endogenous process. What particularly appears lacking is a distinct body of knowledge or distillation of experience on the endogenous operation of the centre of government, especially in terms of its role in formulation and oversight of national development strategies, and how national capacity affects performance in this system.⁸ What work has been carried out on the centre of government appears to be as part of that on public administrative reform in the 1990s, and there is little evidence of more recent work in this area.⁹

2.2 WHAT IS NATIONAL CAPACITY?

General Assembly resolutions clearly acknowledge the link between national development and national capacity.¹⁰ However, those documents

⁷ See, for instance, World Bank, 'Results-Based National Development Strategies: Assessment and Challenges Ahead', a review prepared for the Joint Venture for Monitoring the Paris Declaration by the Operations Policy and Country Services Vice Presidency of the World Bank, December 2007.

⁸ Some work was carried out in response to requests from countries part of the former Soviet Union and in some developing countries throughout the late 1990s and the present decade to support cabinets of government. See Ben-Gera, M. 'Coordination at the Centre of Government: The Functions and Organisation of the Government Office—Comparative Analysis of OECD Countries, Central and Eastern European Countries and Western Balkan Countries', Paris: OECD Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) Paper No 35, 2004, and Manning, N. et al, *Strategic Decision Making in Cabinet Government*, Paper 19935 Sector Studies Series, Washington DC: World Bank, 1999.

⁹ For example, the World Bank's web pages for Administrative and Civil Service Reform dealing specifically with centre of government issues have not been updated since February 2001. Only one international consultancy firm (Adam Smith International) could be identified that had a specific service product for centre of government work, and then primarily in terms of policy formulation and coordination, not national development strategy issues. A critical review of donor performance in supporting governance (including the centres of government) in developing and transitional countries from the 1980s is Jenkins, K. and W. Plowden, *Governance and Nation-building: The Failure of International Intervention*, London: Edward Elgar, 2006. The authors (highly experienced at the centre of government in UK) deplored the apparent inability of donor agencies to learn from experience of endogenous political processes and highlighting that failure to recognize historic and cultural contexts has led to repeated failures to improve the quality of government.

¹⁰ There is also a long history of Governing Council (former name of the UNDP Executive Board) and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) decisions relating to national capacities (which reflect Member States' thinking). The 1970 'Capacity Study' (the so-called 'Jackson Report') proposed new procedures for planning and operating, the core component of which was the country programme. Recommendations were submitted for consideration and subsequently adopted by the Governing Council, ECOSOC and the General Assembly. These resolutions came to be known as 'the Consensus' on the Capacity of the UN Development System and ushered in a series of amendments of UN development systems operations and structures.

do not define the exact meaning of ‘national capacity’ and ‘capacity development’. The 2006 United Nations Development Group Position Statement¹¹ does go some way towards defining national capacity:

“The OECD DAC has defined ‘capacity’ as the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully and ‘capacity development’ is understood as the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. While there is general consensus on this definition, within any given country context there are different levels of capacity—national, sub-national, local—and different stages

of development in different sectors that finally determine the capacity development response.”

2.3 WHAT IS CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT?

As shown in Box 3, the resolutions of the General Assembly responding to the 2004 and 2007 United Nations Triennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews, the 2006 United Nations Development Group policy statement, as well as UNDP’s own internal policy guidance all view capacity development as intended to develop the future ability of national partners to do things for themselves, or do things better, without the United Nations having to play the same role again. This is the definition used in this evaluation.

Box 3. How Capacity Development Has Been Treated in United Nations Documentation

A concern that capacity development strengthen the ability of governments, and nations, to carry forward and adapt the same tasks and processes in future, without UNDP, or other United Nations agencies, repeatedly playing the same role, is a consistent theme through United Nations documentation, as shown below.

The 2008 General Assembly resolution¹² (A/RES/62/208) on the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review, in paragraph 39 ‘Calls upon United Nations organizations to adopt measures that ensure sustainability in capacity-building activities, and reiterates that the United Nations development system should use, to the fullest extent possible, national execution and available national expertise and technologies as the norm in the implementation of operational activities by focusing on national structures and avoiding, wherever possible, the practice of establishing parallel implementation units outside of national and local institutions’.

The 2006 United Nations Development Group Position Statement on capacity development explicitly states that ‘The overall goal for the UN Country Team at country level is to support national counterparts develop their capacities to lead, manage, achieve and account for their national development priorities. This is especially so for those related to the MDGs and internationally agreed development goals, as well as human rights obligations in ratified UN conventions and treaties’ and that ‘The potential actions ... should be geared towards developing the capacity of national partners to do it for themselves, rather than the United Nations doing it for them’.

Finally, this issue was flagged in UNDP’s 1998 guidance which stated that ‘A danger in many situations lies in the over bureaucratization of the capacity initiative which, as an organizational entity, becomes a permanent fixture of the landscape—it takes on a life of its own, continuing to be dependent on substantial (and invariably, external) resources. As such, it may become resistant to further change and eventually unsustainable. Therefore an important part of the capacity planning process is to determine how the initiative (its mission, objectives, outcomes) can become sustainable, how it can remain relevant by responding to changes in the system as and when they occur, and how it would no longer need external assistance’. This risk, in turn, has been addressed in both UNDP’s 2003 Programming Manual and the successor 2008 Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures, as part of the assessment of sustainability during the project design phase.

¹¹ UNDG, ‘Enhancing the UN’s Contribution to National Capacity Development - A UNDG Position Statement,’ UN Development Group Office, October 2006.

¹² UN, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the 2007 Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, A/RES/62/208, March 2008.

The wider literature shows a discourse concerning ‘national capacity’ and ‘capacity development’ framed as part of the debate about aid effectiveness, most recently in the context of implementation of the Paris Declaration. The most accessible documentation on these issues has been produced by international agencies and northern research organizations, almost inevitably written from an external perspective. Until recently, they almost invariably focused on the challenges and experience of external capacity development support.¹³ This literature consistently emphasizes the importance of national ownership and use of national systems. It often recognizes the importance of external interventions supporting endogenous processes. Yet those processes and national perspectives as the basis for defining what is important are rarely discussed in detail. The 2008 1st Phase evaluation of the Paris Declaration can be considered an exception, as it included a number of evaluations commissioned by governments that looked at their own systems from the national perspective.¹⁴

In the immediate post-colonial period, newly independent governments attempted to move beyond colonial ‘law and order’ administrations towards more public service-oriented locally accountable systems. Glaring weaknesses were revealed in the ‘stock’ of educated work force able to take over from colonial administrations. Major training programmes were launched to equip nascent independent administrations with

technically competent staff. The results were disappointing.¹⁵

In the 1970s, ‘human resource management’ paid greater attention to how public officials were selected, recruited, motivated, managed and evaluated. The International Monetary Fund and multilateral development banks designed structural economic and public-sector reforms in the 1980s, as a response to mounting international economic crises. Structural adjustment lending imposed strict conditions on the size and role of the public sector. Retrenchment and privatization, outsourcing or ‘agencification’ of government functions were the standard prescriptions.

In this context, a wide range of public-sector reform, organizational development, and broader institutional development initiatives were launched and continued until the mid-1990s. Evaluations of their effectiveness were near-uniformly negative. While they were ambitious, aiming at wholesale reform, they also failed to understand or take into account major factors affecting public-sector performance. Host governments and politicians often lacked ownership of reforms.¹⁶ The significance of historical, political and cultural factors had been woefully underestimated, as had been the strength of opposition to reform. Little attention was given to public information and accountability, not only in terms of the rationale for reforms, but on the levels of service which members of the public had a right to expect. Seminal analysis

¹³ UNDP’s programme with over 30 governments in Africa to review the effectiveness of technical cooperation, and establish national policies and priorities, under the National Technical Cooperation Assessment and Programmes (NaTCAP), appears to be an exception, as it aimed to provide analyses and data on the successes and failures of technical cooperation, as seen from the recipients’ points of view. The results of these experiences were published in Berg, E., *Rethinking Technical Cooperation: Reforms for Capacity-Building in Africa*, New York: UNDP and Development Alternatives International, 1993.

¹⁴ Wood, B., Kabell, D., Sagasti, F., Muwanga, N., ‘Synthesis Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration’, Copenhagen, July 2008.

¹⁵ Reilly, W., *Training Administrators for Development*, London: Heinemann, 1979, notes ‘during the 1960s administrative training was a booming industry ... with training centres and institutes growing at a phenomenal rate ... It was seen as a panacea.’ (Yet) ‘early expectations were not fulfilled’... ‘if training is to help an organization become more effective the total administrative system must be conducive to staff development’... ‘by ensuring that training is treated as an essential ingredient amongst others in the process of administrative improvement’. (pp.18-19) Even a very recent review of World Bank capacity building in Africa also noted that ‘internal evaluations show that the World Bank Institute’s training activities produce only modest learning gains’. (World Bank, ‘Capacity Building in Africa’, Operations Evaluation Department, 2005, p36).

¹⁶ Nunberg, B., *Re-thinking Civil Service Reform: An Agenda for Smart Government*. Poverty and Social Policy Working Paper, Washington DC: World Bank, 1997.

also showed the significance of the ‘specificity’ of functions and of incentives to performance.¹⁷

New assessment tools were developed within the International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors in an attempt to understand the dynamics of public-sector organizations. Experience with their application, and influence on design and implementation of reforms revealed major shortcomings, partly rooted in the institutions that had helped develop the tools.¹⁸

Training, human resource development, institutional development, governance and, ultimately, capacity development are inter-related themes. While the terminology and focus may have changed over time, the essential ‘messages’ about what constitutes effective institutional/capacity-development have been long recognized. Reviews of the literature in the early and mid-1990s derived lessons from (often negative) public sector institutional capacity development experience, and put forward principles for guiding more effective capacity development practice:¹⁹

‘Capacity development activity is long-term (hence donor commitment needs to be long term too); that it is not amenable to precise programming: a learning process approach is essential; it is not a mechanical activity: considerable capacities for adaptation and change on the part of those delivering capacity development services (consultants, technical assistance, donors) is required; donor knowledge of the political, social, and

cultural context is vital; it involves a change in social relationships between the actors involved: there will be winners and losers and this will inevitably produce resistance; real commitment at top management levels is therefore needed if the process is not to be obstructed by those resisting change; it needs proactive leadership: champions are needed on both the host and donor sides.’²⁰

Recent studies indicate the potential relevance of ‘complex adaptive systems’ approaches to capacity development efforts. A recent five-year assessment by the European Centre for Development Policy Management defined ‘capacity’ as ‘that emergent combination of attributes, assets, capabilities and relationships that enables a human system to perform, survive and self-renew’. Based on 18 case studies of organizations and networks around the world, the study concluded that there are multiple dimensions of ‘capacity’ identified in five ‘core capabilities’.²¹ These multiple dimensions are not amenable to ‘linear’ (‘if this, then that’) thinking. Organizations are not machines; their nature is more akin to living organisms. This perspective has been conceptualized in a body of management literature known as ‘complex adaptive systems thinking’. This school of thought sees capacity as being associated with multiple causes, solutions and effects, some unintended. Interaction between stakeholders over time significantly affects outcomes, yet these dynamics are often uncontrollable and unpredictable. From this perspective, detailed

¹⁷ Israel, A., *Institutional Development: Incentives for Performance*, OUP/World Bank, 1987.

¹⁸ ‘Effective Implementation: Key to Development Impact’ (the ‘Wapenhans Report’) Report of the World Bank’s Portfolio Management Task Force 1992, World Bank, Washington D.C. and ‘Project Quality: An Agenda for Action’ Proceedings of the Regional Workshop on Improving Project Quality’ Asian Development Bank, Manila, 1994.

¹⁹ Chopra, R. K., ‘Aid in the Nineties: Institutional Development—Lessons of Experience’, Paper delivered at the National Advisory Council for Development Cooperation, The Hague, August 1990. The author then was head of OED in World Bank.

²⁰ Moore, M., ‘Institution Building as a Development Assistance Method: A Review of the Literature and Ideas’, a report to the Swedish International Development Authority, Sussex: IDS, 1994 cited in David Watson, ‘Public Sector Institutional Strengthening’, Synthesis Paper for the DAC Steering Committee on Evaluation of Participatory Development and Good Governance, London, August 1995.

²¹ Baser, H. and P. Morgan, ‘Study Report: Capacity Change and Performance’, ECDPM Discussion Paper 59B, Maastricht, 2008.

Box 4. UNDP's Policy Guidance Reflects Lessons Learned on How to Approach Capacity Development

The three sets of guidance issued on capacity development by UNDP (1994, 1998 and 2008) have several commonalities: (i) all identify three levels for capacity development (the 1994 and 1998 guidance identify several more dimensions within organizational and environmental levels); (ii) the 1998 and 2008 guidance both stress the use of a systems perspective (cognizant of interrelationships between levels), and the need to undertake assessments of existing and needed capacities (and gaps between them) with this perspective in mind; (iii) some of the 'factors affecting success' of the 1998 guidance are similar to the 'principles' articulated in 2008 (which respond to 2008 General Assembly resolution²² (A/RES/62/208) on the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review); and (iv) both stress the importance of sustainability of capacities.

The 2008 Practice Note varies from the previous guidance in the following ways: (i) it distinguishes and defines functional and technical capacities, and discusses four dimensions (institutional arrangements, knowledge, leadership and accountability); underlines the three purposes functional capacity serves: management, accountability and learning, and (ii) has a greater focus on monitoring and evaluation by emphasizing the importance of balancing the desire for quantification of progress with the qualitative dimensions of monitoring and evaluation which comes from participatory approaches. It also attempts to improve its usefulness for readers (it includes a 'frequently asked questions' section and a resource guide).

All of the UNDP guidance produced over the past 16 years is in line with the lessons learned and highlighted by the development cooperation agencies, and broadly reflects international consensus on what constitutes good practice. It has become progressively more comprehensive (especially since the advent of the Capacity Development Group), specific (especially in the Guidelines on Capacity Assessment 2008); visually striking (a colourful 'Primer' was produced in 2009); and case study evidence-oriented (20 brief 'Stories of Institutions' was produced in 2010).

The 'Principles' pay due regard to the complexity of contexts which prevail in international development, including some of the current international challenges such as climate change (recent guidance has been issued in approaching 'Climate Resilient Human Development'). The guidance resonates with UNDP Results-Based Management performance management systems, stressing managerial responsibilities for understanding change processes; measuring results, and learning from empirical evidence, based on an inter-relationship of inputs/ activities, outputs and outcomes.

However, Results-Based Management and the essentially 'linear' logic inherent in it is at variance with some of the implications mentioned above of the currently emerging debate among practitioners on complex adaptive systems approaches. All development cooperation agencies are struggling to foster 'cultures' or 'climates' of performance and learning, which are oriented to outcomes against which the agencies are held accountable to their funders and governors. Several bilateral organizations are experimenting with alternatives to logical results framework analysis in their capacity development efforts. 'Both AusAID and BMZ reported that they had abandoned logical frameworks in planning programmes. BMZ uses 'results chains' (sketching how change is envisaged); only outcome targets and indicators are pre-determined. AusAID, too, only sets objectives, and broad parameters. In both cases, details of implementation (inputs, activities, outputs) are to be worked out by the implementing teams and their partners. These can and should be adjusted over time according to conditions and changes in needs.'²³

²² United Nations, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the 2007 Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, A/RES/62/208, March 2008.

²³ See for GTZ, Hummelbrunner, R., *Beyond Logframe: Critique, Variations and Alternatives* in Nobuko Fujita (ed) *Beyond Logframe: Using Systems Concepts in Evaluation, Issues and Prospects of Evaluations for International Development, Series IV*, Tokyo: Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development (FASID), March 2010, available on the FASID website. The quotation is from personal communication between David Watson and Patricia Lyon of Australian Agency for International Aid and Michaela Zintl of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ) in preparation for the chapter on 'Measuring Capacity Development' in the forthcoming SNV/Earthscan book 'The Practice of Capacity Development: A Resource for Professionals' (provisional title).

performance (or capacity) improvement plans are less easy to make. The study observed that capacity tends to ‘emerge’ over time, affected by many factors, and is an ‘emergent’ property. Critics of the planning- and control-oriented ‘reductionist’ approaches also argue that preoccupation with monitoring progress in relation to pre-determined ‘indicators’ detracts attention from less tangible and more relational/attitudinal dimensions of capacity and from broader learning from experience. In many cases, unanticipated results or insights may prove more important to development effectiveness than what was ‘planned’. Accountability and empowerment emerge as key drivers in much of the recent capacity development literature.²⁴

UNDP issued policy guidance on capacity development in 1994²⁵, 1998²⁶ and then again in 2008²⁷. The 1998 and 2008 sets clearly reflect

the lessons learned and highlighted above (see Box 4). UNDP’s work in capacity development is also well regarded by international development partners.²⁸

The challenge for stakeholders—host country governments, development partners, and consultants—lays not so much in approaching capacity development, especially as an external party, but in operationalizing the lessons learned. As observed in the 2005 evaluation of World Bank capacity development experience in Africa, ‘the process of capacity building has evolved in step with changes in overall practice of providing development assistance rather than being based on the accumulated knowledge of what works well in meeting different kinds of capacity needs under diverse conditions. In short, capacity building has not developed as a well-defined area of development practice’.

²⁴ See also IDS Bulletin Vol. 41 No. 3 May 2010 ‘Reflecting Collectively on Capacities for Change’, the editors’ introduction notes: ‘[W]e argue that a commitment to (the promise of building self-reliance, national ownership and sustainability) demands a significant shift in the way development is framed and practiced, and (we) aim to contribute to the necessary reframing of capacity development for emancipatory social change (change which results in a shift in power relations in favour of marginalized or less powerful groups) ...’

²⁵ UNDP, ‘Capacity Development: Lessons of Experience and Guiding Principles’, December 1994.

²⁶ UNDP, ‘Capacity Assessment and Development in a Systems and Strategic Management Context’: Technical Advisory Paper No. 3., Management Development and Governance Division, Bureau for Development Policy, January 1998.

²⁷ UNDP, ‘Practice Note—Capacity Development’, New York: UNDP Capacity Development Group, October 2008.

²⁸ For example, interviewees at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development stated that the OECD/DAC considers that **UNDP has a central role to play in capacity development**. UNDP is seen to be ‘more on the side of partner countries than on the side of donors, and that’s a huge advantage. UNDP has accumulated a lot of experience’. The inventory shows ‘UNDP being more focused and better organized than anyone else’.

Chapter 2: Key Findings

1. The emphasis in the current evaluation on understanding national perspectives on, and endogenous processes of, capacity development in national development strategies is rare in the literature. Most previous work has been carried out from the perspective of exogenous players and the application of analytical tools they designed.
2. The literature on the sequential emergence of training, human resource development, institutional development, governance and capacity development in development cooperation over the last 50 years indicates that they are essentially inter-related. The 'messages' about what makes for effective practice have been long recognized.
3. Literature emerging over the last decade reflects the organic nature of organizational systems, and raises fundamental questions about the feasibility and merits of tightly planned capacity development initiatives and strategies, and of quantitative measurement of capacity against pre-defined indicators.
4. Problems of poor capacity development outcomes, in terms of their sustainability, were all identified by UNDP in its work in the 1990s and were the major driver for the development of new guidance in 1998.
5. UNDP's work in capacity development is well regarded by international development partners. Guidance produced reflects globally learned lessons and the international consensus on what constitutes good practice for enhancing sustainability.
6. UNDP's policy guidance takes a systems perspective (cognizant of interrelationships between levels) and treats it as a coherent policy agenda.
7. The challenge for stakeholders—host country governments, development partners, and consultants—lays not so much in how to support capacity development, especially as an external party, but in operationalizing the lessons learned.
8. Recent emphasis has been on effective learning from experience through joint reflection between stakeholders about outcomes, 'what works and why' and how positive change is taking place.
9. Power relations, equity, voice, empowerment and accountability, which can all be seen as aspects of an organization's culture, are becoming key concepts in approaching capacity development processes.

Chapter 3

FINDINGS ON NATIONAL CAPACITY IN THE AREA OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

This section addresses Evaluation Question 1—‘From a national perspective, what have been the successes and problems in formulating and managing national development strategies in selected programme member-states?’ It discusses findings on the evolution of national development strategies and the role of national capacity in their formulation and management. Evidence is mostly drawn from self-reflection work carried out in four programme-member states (Botswana, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia and Togo), takes the national perspective and focuses on the endogenous processes. Details of the four country case studies can be found at the web link listed in Annex 3. UNDP and other external partners figure in this work only when the national stakeholders chose to highlight their role. The fifteen ADRs where UNDP was identified as engaged with capacity development for national development strategies were also reviewed. In these, discussion of whether there was an endogenous process, and how UNDP support was related to it, was not in the Terms of Reference. But endogenous national development planning systems were discussed in seven reports—Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Montenegro, and Viet Nam.

3.1 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

ESTABLISHED ENDOGENOUS PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES EXISTED IN THE CASE-STUDY COUNTRIES

Indicative planning frameworks and strategies, derived from endogenous planning approaches,

exist in all four case-study countries. Endogenous planning approaches in Saudi Arabia and Botswana are well established and robust and have evolved over the past four decades. Initially, these approaches may have been established with significant external technical assistance, but their evolution over time has been clearly managed by the concerned governments. In Paraguay, there has been considerable evolution over the past decade, following the transition to democracy in 1989. Again, the planning process is endogenous, and there is evidence of the government, sometimes with support from others, drawing on the experience of counterparts in the region.

The picture is more complex in Togo. Shedding a Soviet-style central planning approach, the country moved to Public Investment Programmes in the 1980s as part of a structural readjustment programme. While the Public Investment Programme may have initially been imposed from outside, the government has continued to use this approach, even after the political crises of the 1990s led to a withdrawal of much of the international community. Thus, this approach can be considered endogenous. The re-engagement of the international community from the mid-2000s saw the introduction of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and a renewed focus on the national strategy development processes. However, it has raised the challenge of aligning the existing endogenous and new planning approaches in a context where government capacity is weak.

THESE ARE MANAGED BY THE CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES BUT ROLES BETWEEN THEM CHANGE

In all four cases, the national development strategy process was managed by the agencies at the centre of government.

- In Botswana, a special Presidential Task Group was established to manage the broad-based consultations underpinning ‘Vision 2016: Towards Prosperity for All’. This longer-term development vision sought to articulate where the nation would like to see itself after 50 years of independence. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has taken the lead in coordinating the development of successive five-year National Development Plans, and has managed this largely as a technical exercise. The role of the Office of the President in the development of the latest plan has increased.
- In Paraguay, roles and responsibilities have been more fluid, with the establishment and development of different agencies. Responsibility is split between the Ministry of Finance (Technical Secretary of Planning) and the Social Cabinet under the President of the Republic. The Ministry of Finance has established a Social Economy Unit to act as the Social Cabinet counterpart. In terms of development strategy, the Social Cabinet, which has seen a progressive increase in ministerial representation and authority, is more important. There is no overall medium-term plan, and development issues have been addressed through a range of initiatives under each new President. However, successive plans have in the past decade largely built on previous priorities and programmes rather than representing radical changes.

- In Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Economy and Planning takes the lead in coordinating development of the successive Five-Year National Development Plans. This ministry also played a key role in facilitating *Vision 2025* in 2004, which now provides the framework for successive five-year plans to 2025. However, there are indications of other long-term planning processes within the government and that coordination between these processes remains under-developed.
- In Togo, the Ministry of Development has formally been charged with formulating strategies, but the Ministry of Finance has consistently led implementation of the Public Investment Programme and the development of the PRSP. Overall lack of capacity has been acknowledged as having impeded government engagement in developing the PRSP.

Evidence of changing roles between centre of government agencies in managing the endogenous planning process was also noted in some UNDP Assessments of Development Results (ADR).²⁹ In Ecuador, where national planning processes have been in place intermittently since the 1980s, modifications in roles and responsibilities were introduced in 1993 when a Planning Office was established under the Vice President together with a National Council for Modernization. Both were abolished in 2007 and a National Planning Secretariat was formed. This came after a decade that lacked a National Development Plan because of political instability. In Afghanistan, the ADR noted concern—within a very centralized administration—at ‘the proliferation of units related to policy and strategic issues ... including for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (which has a Secretariat and Oversight Committee that coordinates ANDS implementation’.

²⁹ The ADR evaluation format was introduced by UNDP in 2001. The ADR aims to provide an independent assessment of the attainment of intended and achieved results as well as UNDP contributions to development results at the country level. Fifteen (out of 42) ADRs completed by the UNDP Evaluation Office between 2003 and 2010 included consideration of where UNDP had supported aspects of capacity development in national development strategies with some of the organizations at the centre of government in those countries.

THE USE OF A LONG-TERM VISION AS PART OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IS SEEN AS USEFUL

Stakeholders in all four case countries acknowledged the value of a longer-term perspective than used in the five-year national development plans. Botswana, Paraguay and Saudi Arabia have developed long-term visions, and Togo has recently sought assistance to do so—UNDP support was scheduled to start in September 2010. Longer-term visions were considered useful in creating greater political consensus among the key stakeholder groups of the overall developmental priorities.

Little cross-country analysis appears to have been carried out on the usefulness to governments of long-term visions. What is available is written in the context of assessing MDG usefulness and tends to suggest that governments do find long-term vision useful. For example, a recent seven-country case study indicated that ‘National Development Strategies—longer term visions on achieving MDGs by 2015—is a common agenda driven by local commitment to the MDGs and supported by UN engagement in promoting that agenda. This recent development of National Development Strategies ... has provided an opportunity for governments and their citizens to lay out MDG-focused development priorities in a slightly more independent way than the PRSP processes ... would allow ... As PRSP processes become more rooted in national processes, not Bretton Woods Institution conditions, the scope for them to reflect the UN agenda is strengthening since that agenda, unlike PRSP processes, is ... mandated through national agreement to MDGs.’³⁰

Where such a vision exists, governments face the main challenge of using it to influence the medium-term national development planning process. Literature review and consultations reveal little cross-country analysis of government

experience on the successes and failures of linking long-term visions with medium-term planning frameworks (beyond the PRSP experience or encompassing national development plans and other frameworks). Furthermore, apart from the protracted debate on the utility of the PRSP approach, there is no cross-country analysis of government experience (especially in terms of the role of the centre of government agencies and connection into the political process) with using medium-term planning frameworks.

PRACTICE VARIED IN LINKING POVERTY STRATEGIES WITH THE OVERALL MEDIUM-TERM PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The four countries varied in how poverty was addressed in their medium-term planning frameworks. Togo’s recent PRSP is accompanied by a three-year Priority Action Plan (which exists confusingly alongside three-year Public Investment Programmes). In Paraguay a strategy addressing poverty inequality and social exclusion was prepared in 2005 (and a Social Equity Fund a year later). While poverty has been an implicit development objective for over 40 years in Botswana, the first poverty reduction strategy was not produced until 2003. Even so, this was not mainstreamed into subsequent national development plans. Such a strategy is only now starting to positively influence the National Development Plan. A National Poverty Strategy was prepared in the middle of the decade in Saudi Arabia (although its extreme poverty rate was claimed to be only 1.6 percent at that time), but has no official status.

PRSPS HAVE NOT ALWAYS RECOGNIZED THE EXISTENCE OF AN ENDOGENOUS PLANNING PROCESS

For the past 10 years, the concept of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers has dominated commentaries on economic and social develop-

³⁰ Greeley, M., ‘Synthesis Report: Findings and Recommendations from a Seven Country Study of UN Engagement in Poverty Reduction and National Development Strategies’, Report prepared for UNDP, March 2008, pp.14-15

ment planning approaches. Box 5 illustrates the links between this limited approach to national development strategies and capacity development.

These findings are supported by evidence from the ADRs where UNDP had engaged in capacity development for national development strategy processes.³³ In most of these cases, the national context was one in which a PRSP approach had been introduced and the relevant ADRs commented upon whether the Poverty Reduction Strategy had then evolved to be more comprehensive and reflective of the national context. For example, Benin's Growth Strategy for Poverty

Reduction 2007-2009 builds more linkages than its PRSP-style predecessors between MDGs and cross-cutting themes of gender and human rights. Governance and equity are given priority.

MDGS AND NATIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS INFLUENCED DISCOURSE IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Governments' commitment to achieving the MDGs can affect the priorities set out in the national development strategy at three levels—in the long-term vision, in the medium-term (3-6 years) planning framework, and in the poverty reduction strategy (if separate from the

Box 5. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and National Development Strategies

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers have influenced approaches to national strategy formulation in approximately 70 aid-dependent developing countries, principally but not exclusively in sub Saharan Africa and South and South East Asia. They have been used since 1999, when the World Bank introduced them in the context of debt relief under the HIPC2 initiative. Development partners thereafter virtually regarded them as a condition for lending and donations for poverty reduction.³² A literature identifying shortcomings in the use of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers has subsequently emerged.³³

The World Bank has acknowledged their limitations, stating that '...many PRSPs would benefit from a more explicit link between goals and policies needed to achieve them. While the MDGs can be a good starting point for defining a country's development priorities, few countries have fully customized them to local circumstances'.³⁴ Experience also shows that PRSPs have rarely been adapted to the endogenous planning processes already in place. Recent research has been inconclusive on the connection between involvement of cabinets of government, and the subsequent financing of PRSPs through state budgets.³⁵ It was clear that 'PRSPs for the most part however rarely dwell on the policymaking processes of government, and only a few make reference to the cabinet'.³⁶ Another study saw little connection between PRSPs in Africa and priorities for capacity building activities.³⁷

³¹ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Cambodia, Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Jordan, Laos, Montenegro, Rwanda, Viet Nam, Yemen.

³² 'The core of the PRSP concept is to reduce the number of uncoordinated demands made on recipient governments by focusing on country-led criteria and processes' (Booth 2003 cited in J. Chandler, 'Meeting the MDGs: UN Capacity Development for National Planning', IDS February 2009 (mimeo) p.5).

³³ Easterly, W., *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, OUP, 2006.

³⁴ World Bank & IMF, 'Synthesis 2005 Review of PRS Approach: Balancing Accountabilities and Scaling Up Results', p.3.

³⁵ Garnett, H. and W. Plowden, 'Cabinets, Budgets and Poverty: Political Commitment to Poverty Reduction' in B. Levy and S. Kpundeh (eds) *Building State Capacity in Africa: New Approaches, Emerging Lessons*, WBI Development Studies Series, Washington DC: World Bank, 2004.

³⁶ Ibid, p.149.

³⁷ See 'Capacity Building in Africa', OED, World Bank, 2005: 'The Poverty Reduction Strategy process has the potential to help authorities better prioritize capacity building activities, but appears to have been used in this way in only a few countries'. (p.xiv)

medium-term planning framework). However, it is important to start from the main finding of the case studies. The main factor dictating the priority given to poverty reduction was the degree of political commitment from the

President (Botswana and Paraguay) and the King (Saudi Arabia). The MDGs' main value was in terms of opening up discourse within the country on poverty.

Box 6. National Human Development Reports' Significance in Relation to National Development Strategies and Capacity Development

The first National Human Development Report was produced in Bangladesh in 1992. Since then over 650 NHDRs (some disaggregated to sub-national level) and nearly 40 regional reports have been produced. They have helped 'bring to light disparities and broadened policy discussions by bringing in traditionally excluded perspectives.'³⁸

Recent analysis of these reports identified numerous examples of impact in the following categories, all relevant to national development strategies and capacity development: through evolution of the human development approach in national contexts; measurement of human development nationally; capacity development (especially in circumstances where socio-economic analysis capacities are limited) including cases of reports inspiring independent groups to adopt similar methodologies to advocate change towards human development; revision of national policies and budget allocations more reflective of human development priorities; enhanced media attention to development issues, and establishment and development of multi-disciplinary networks.

Factors affecting the influence of reports on policy include whether the report is timely and focused on critical or sensitive issues relevant to the country context; the extent to which it engages national stakeholders and reflects their concerns, and whether the report contains convincing data and perspectives (especially if it offers information not otherwise available).

A 2006 Evaluation Office study of NHDRs confirmed significant achievements, especially in view of the meagre resources devoted to the function, the limited time since their inception and the constraints the function has faced at national and global levels. 'NHDR is UNDP's only instrument available for defining what the goal of human development entails at the national level and analysing obstacles to achieving it.'³⁹ Subsequently, a policy has been formulated and promulgated, and more resources provided to NHDR-related capacity development and its maintenance.

Discussions with the Resident Representative in Cairo during the present evaluation confirmed the importance of UNDP's Egypt Human Development Report (eleventh since 1994, on the subject of youth and their aspirations) in positioning UNDP in the field of influencing national development strategies through elevation of key neglected or sensitive issues onto the national agenda. He had just launched the latest report to a gathering of over 1,000 people in the presence of the Prime Minister. Poverty, gender, and decentralization had all been covered previously. Now the Economic Development Ministry routinely measures indicators and progress at the Governorate levels, not just nationally. There was clear evidence that this had positively influenced resource allocation in favour of the neediest Governorates. It also serves to 'give UNDP a seat at the table' in discussions of development cooperation priorities, crucial for such a resource-constrained agency. It had enhanced the influence of the Resident Representative in his Resident Coordinator function in chairing development partner/government dialogue and formulation of a Cairo Development and Aid Effectiveness Agenda. This is expected to facilitate a government-led, government-owned situation assessment; Cabinet endorsement of key implications and better management of future policy implementation (via Results Based Management in government) and joint action planning, essentially providing a substitute for the next UN Development Assistance Framework (the previous UN Development Assistance Frameworks having been impaired by lack of government engagement from inception).

³⁸ 'Influence of Regional, National and Sub-national HDRs', Paola Pagliani for the National Human Development Report Office UNDP (undated, but 2010). A similar more limited exercise was undertaken in 2004/2005 in the publication of 'Ideas, Innovation and Impact: How HDRs influence change' by HDRO, UNDP.

³⁹ UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of National Human Development Report System', New York, 2006 (p.vi).

From the limited treatment given in the ADRs to the question of MDG coverage in national development strategies, it appears that countries had been positively influenced by UNDP assistance in compiling and publicizing National Human Development Reports (NHDRs) in Benin, Republic of Congo, Cambodia, Bhutan, Jordan, Laos, Montenegro, Rwanda, Viet Nam, Ecuador, Yemen and Ethiopia. National debate stimulated by NHDRs was noted in Montenegro, Rwanda, and Ecuador. After UNDP support to the NHDRs in Jordan and Laos, both countries had undertaken analyses and publications themselves. Similarly, ownership had been enhanced through a MDG costing study in Benin. In Rwanda and Viet Nam, economic development rather than poverty reduction have been prioritized, affecting how the MDGs have influenced the discourse. However, the Viet Nam ADR also noted the strong national ownership and adaptation of MDGs as national targets since 1999 in the form of Vietnam Development Goals, and how the NHDRs had been used as a core document in a recent donor/government Consultative Group meeting. In Cambodia, an additional MDG was established for mine clearing. Box 6 provides some background on National Human Development strategies, and how other evidence casts light on their significance in a variety of fields relevant to national development strategies, and related capacity development.

The literature on MDGs is extensive and preparation for the September 2010 United Nations Summit prompted a series of papers reflecting on the way ahead.⁴⁰ However, one of the few empirical studies on integration of MDGs into PRSPs concluded that this process has proceeded unevenly, based on an analysis of the response of 22 national governments (as well as that of 22 development partners' development policy frameworks). While economic growth

for income poverty reduction and social-sector investments are prioritized, hunger, nutrition, the environment and access to decent work and technology were neglected. 'Governance' was stressed in MDG achievement, but economic governance, rather than democratic processes, was prioritized.⁴¹

GLOBAL ISSUES AND CRISES WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN NATIONAL VISIONS AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The possible impact on case-study countries of global economic resource and environmental issues and crises is considered an element of vision formulation. However, as national visions are rarely updated, global issues and crises are most directly addressed in the analysis underpinning the medium-term planning frameworks. The clearest example is the case of Saudi Arabia, where the current 10th National Development Plan has been informed by research into global economic and other critical issues: food supply, international finance and climate change. Paraguay's planning has taken on board the position of the country in relation to global and regional issues. In Botswana, while possibly inspired by peers in the Far East to galvanize national attention around a longer-term development discourse, the tenor of recent plans is informed by the global economic downturn as well as anticipated reduction of diamond revenues.

While difficult to prove and open to interpretation, the limited evidence from the four case studies suggests that as development issues became more 'messy' and complex there has been a migration of responsibility for policy planning and coordination away from Ministries of Planning and Finance towards the Offices of the President or Prime Minister. This raised the question as to whether 'the limitations of planning' are becoming evident in addressing these notoriously complex issues.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Sumner, Andy and Claire Melamed (eds) 'The MDGs and Beyond', IDS Bulletin Volume 41 Number 1, January 2010.

⁴¹ Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko, 'Are the MDGs Priority in Development Strategies and Aid Programmes? Only a Few Are!', International Poverty Centre Working Paper No 48, October 2008, p.1.

One of the main messages emerging from the recent Capacity is Development Global Event in Marrakech was: 'There are close links between domestic policy agendas and global development trends and challenges. And change is needed in domestic capacities to adapt and respond to global issues which have now become an integral part of various domestic development agendas. Successes have been demonstrated by global or national institutions that 'buck the trend,' such as those behind Malawi's management of food security, or those behind Rwanda's and Liberia's transitioning to peace, or those behind Aceh's recovery from the tsunami'.

3.2 PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN THE USE OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT MATTERED

In case-study countries, this factor affected: (i) the length of time serious consideration had been given to equitable national development (i.e., Paraguay, where a military regime ruled the country up to 1989); (ii) how and whether governments respond to emergent issues and pressures (i.e., Botswana, where the media is becoming bolder in scrutinizing and exposing shortfalls in service delivery, and the new President has taken into his office some key strategy functions from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning); (iii) availability of resources for development (i.e., Togo, where the reason for the aid 'embargo' during 1992-2004/2005 was related to the undemocratic actions of the then President); (iv) the significance of national plans in overall national resource allocation (i.e., Saudi Arabia, where the significance of national plans is diluted by the unknown volume of resources handled off-budget); and (v) the relative influence of Ministries of Planning, or Finance and Office of the President in directing national strategy and resource allocation (all four cases).

Politics was also commonly a significant factor in ADR analyses of national planning processes. New governments in Benin, Cambodia, and Ecuador all changed planning models and systems. The centralization of administration and organizational fragmentation surrounding the Presidency affected the significance of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

CROSS-SECTOR COORDINATION VARIED AMONG COUNTRIES

This varied in significance and effectiveness in the case-study countries. Paraguay and Botswana demonstrated increased emphasis on this function. In Paraguay, the five-member Social Cabinet established in 2003 has been expanded to 24 members with its own technical secretariat under an influential minister. New impetus has been given in Botswana to coordination through the creation of the National Strategy Office in the Office of the President. Although it is too early to tell, the increased role for the Office of the President may serve to improve inter-ministerial coordination. In terms of coordination roles, in Saudi Arabia, the evidence is that inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms for development of the 5-Year Development Plans are becoming more effective, but performance of the responsible committees is variable. Enhancing the effectiveness of these committees mostly lies outside the control of the Ministry of Economy and Planning, which is mainly responsible for the provision of technical analysis. Finally, in Togo, the effectiveness of the centre of government and coordination has been adversely affected by: (i) low capacity within the civil service; and (ii) overlaps in the relative roles of the President and Prime Minister in these processes.

The ADRs also show instances of improvements in other countries in this area. For example, reported improvements in aid coordination were observed in Republic of Congo and Rwanda. In Afghanistan, despite improvements in aid coordination, the ADR opined that greater analysis was sorely needed of the underlying conflict in the country, and better coordination of peace efforts

would consolidate any progress towards MDG attainment. In Montenegro, coordination was effective due to the strengthened capacities of the Office of the Prime Minister. There had been progress with policy coordination, according to the ADRs, in Viet Nam and Bhutan, but in both cases, major questions were raised about capacities to implement agreed development policies.

LINKS BETWEEN PLANS AND BUDGETS VARIED AMONG COUNTRIES

Although weak in the first year of the PRSP, the link has been strengthened in Togo. This is partly because releases against the International Monetary Fund's Poverty Reduction Growth Facility loan include budget allocations against the PRSP targets as benchmarks. A new budget circular directs spending ministries to prioritize PRSP programmes. In Saudi Arabia, annual budget allocations against plans are managed by the Ministry of Finance and appear subject to revision by the King, in response to representations directly to him. The National Development Plan, therefore, is not the major factor driving such allocations.

ADR evidence is patchy on this question. Only in one ADR case—Yemen—could it be questioned whether allocations had reflected the plan proposals, although the regional bureau suggests that there are similar issues in Sudan and Iraq. However, a review of the existence and status of results-oriented national development strategies carried out in 62 low-income and fragile states concluded that in the majority of cases, the link between the strategy and budget was weak.⁴² In Afghanistan, intensive support had been given in both planning agencies and in the finance ministry and this had borne fruit in terms of the financing of MDGs in budgets. In Benin, newly established MDG Units in several key ministries had assisted in reflecting the goals in budgets. In some of

the other ADR countries—Ecuador, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Montenegro and Laos—analytical 'tools' had been developed to assist with monitoring subsequent allocations to (and progress with attainment of) MDGs. In Laos, the government had introduced 'Round Table' meetings to both monitor MDGs and stimulate donor attention.

THERE WAS USUALLY CIVIL SOCIETY AND PRIVATE-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING PROCESSES

Generally, this was a feature of National Development Strategy formulation and monitoring across case countries, barring civil society participation in Saudi Arabia. Gaining and maintaining interrelationships between government, civil society and private-sector players were deemed important. In the ADRs, there is mention of large-scale consultations as an element of National Development Strategy preparation in Benin, Yemen, Bhutan, and Montenegro. Jordan's civil society has faced limitations from which it is only recently beginning to emerge. It is noteworthy that a civil society research institution produced the country's second NHDR.

3.3 THE ROLE OF NATIONAL CAPACITY IN FORMULATION AND OVERSIGHT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

NATIONAL CAPACITY AFFECTS THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

National capacity affected the formulation and oversight of national development strategies in all four case-study countries. In Togo, the lack of national capacity across the government was cited as a major reason for poor engagement and ownership of the PRSP. Performance in Paraguay has been contingent on the quality of civil service staff and adversely affected by: (i) difficulties in attracting high-calibre staff

⁴² World Bank, 'Results-Based National Development Strategies: Assessment and Challenges Ahead', a review prepared for the Joint Venture for Monitoring the Paris Declaration by the Operations Policy and Country Services Vice Presidency of the World Bank, December 2007.

to the civil service; (ii) the rapid staff turnover within the civil service; and (iii) the advent of a new President every five years which triggers a significant change of staff at the senior levels in the civil service, making it difficult to maintain institutional memory. In Saudi Arabia, difficulties in recruiting and retaining high-calibre Saudi nationals has led to development of a range of coping strategies, often involving the use of skilled expatriates. In Botswana, the commonly expressed view is that the problems that exist are in the main not the result of poor policies but largely the result of a failure to implement the existing policies. National capacity constraints for formulation and oversight of national development strategies are therefore understood and addressed as part of broader initiatives to enhance government performance. Of particular importance is the increasing focus on management for results, which portends a transformation in the way the government works.

Countries featured in ADRs over the past decade also illustrate the significance of national capacity as an influence on national development strategies. Viet Nam's planning and strategy formulation capacities emerged relatively well. There was considerable evidence of receptivity to new approaches and ideas based on experience from elsewhere (or indeed from pilot projects in the country). There was a major issue, however, with the capacity of the central government to implement strategies and policies despite years of assistance with public administration reform. To some extent, decentralization over the past decade has put more of the onus of implementation on provinces. The ADR noted how ownership of efforts to enhance Provincial Human Development Indices in Viet Nam was enhanced after UNDP published comparative data on provincial performance. This spurred competition between provincial government assemblies, thereby motivating the search and ownership of development assistance.

Similar findings were highlighted in the eight country studies carried out as part of the 2008 1st Phase evaluation of the Paris Declaration.

In all cases, capacities for operational strategies, sub-national work, and coordinating donors was limited and staff had multiple responsibilities, with some taking precedence. While there were unresponsive civil service systems and high staff turnover, short-term pressures set limits on the capacity for aid effectiveness and the requisite capacity building.

THERE ARE PLANNED ENDOGENOUS INITIATIVES TO DEVELOP CAPACITY, BUT NOT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

While capacity issues are at the centre of many of the technical challenges, addressing national capacity constraints for formulating and maintaining oversight of the national development strategies was not a high priority in any of the case-study countries. Priorities for national capacity development instead were for implementation and service delivery (Botswana and Paraguay) and public administration and financial reform and economic stabilization (Togo). Interviews with Regional Service Centre personnel in Eastern and Central Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia-Pacific indicated that capacity development at local government level in development strategy formulation and management, especially for MDG delivery, was the priority for governments, even if not highlighted in the four case studies.

BUT DEALING WITH THESE NATIONAL CAPACITY CHALLENGES IS OFTEN NOT THE PRIORITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Botswana's commitment to the rollout of results-based management and monitoring and evaluation across government is regarded as a long-term change process, requiring persistence and prioritization by senior managers. But outside of this example, the focus of officials within governments was consistently on delivery of results or products or managing processes within the agreed time scales. This was common across all four countries, as was a common view that capacity development meant training. Across

the four countries, national capacity targets and indicators were absent from the governments' results frameworks. Nor did managers appear to have opportunities to take stock of what had and had not worked in terms of developing capacity. This conclusion echoes that of the 2008 Synthesis of the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, which, in discussing aid effectiveness, noted the need for national governments to ensure that responsibility for development and aid is shared more widely among different parts and levels of government, as well as among legislatures, civil society and the private sector, and citizens at large.

THERE IS OFTEN NO POWERFUL CHAMPION TAKING A NATIONAL-CAPACITY PERSPECTIVE WITHIN GOVERNMENT

In the country cases, no national capacity 'champions' with a formal responsibility for national capacity were clearly identifiable. In Botswana the recently enhanced role of the Office of the President in driving the national development strategy might be interpreted as signalling an emergent 'champion' of service-delivery improvement and tackling implementation capacity constraints. Elsewhere, agencies such as the Ethiopian Ministry of Capacity Building and the Rwandan Human Resources and Institutional Capacity Development Agency may play such roles.

This is not to imply that governments should have such champions, but rather to point out that for external agencies, which have a focus on developing national capacity, finding the natural counterpart within government is open to question. This is

especially important given that senior staff in the four case-study countries, overall, focused on delivery of results and products and management of processes within expected time schedules. While aware of the national capacity constraints, the concerned people treated these as being almost as outside their control and instead were looking for solutions to immediate problems.

NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES ARE RARE

There is no evidence in the four case-study countries of specific capacity development strategies to strengthen national development strategy formulation and oversight. Indeed, there were no over-arching national capacity development strategies in these four countries⁴³ or formal monitoring mechanisms for tracking changes in national capacity. Indeed, there was limited evidence of analysis of baseline situations (through, for example, capacity assessments) and explicit capacity development goal setting. The exception was Togo, where a wide-ranging cross-sectoral capacity assessment was conducted in 2006 after a 13-year aid embargo. However, responsibility for aspects of developing capacity within government was distributed and fragmented across a number of agencies, with no single body responsible to ensure coherence.

In the countries covered by ADRs, only Rwanda appeared to be in the process of developing a national capacity development strategy. Ethiopia has developed sectoral strategies (for example, in the education sector in 2006) to complement its ongoing Six-Component Public Sector Capacity Building Programme and National Policy on

⁴³ More broadly, while the 2004 General Assembly Resolution 59/250 calls upon United Nations organizations to provide further support to the devising of national strategies for capacity building, the only country in which such an all-encompassing capacity development strategy appears to exist is Liberia, where the strategy was formalized in 2009. UNDP's Practice Note on Capacity Development (2008) states that 'A national capacity development strategy helps to institutionalize a country's focus on and investment in capacity development and the activities to support it, within the framework of a poverty reduction strategy, national development strategy or sector plan. Through systematic identification of capacity assets and needs and allocation of roles and responsibilities (who does what) for meeting those needs and leveraging the assets, a national capacity development strategy helps to efficiently deploy resources and investments in capacity development in conjunction with a country's overall development framework. Such resourcing and operational responsibility allocation allows a country to carry the capacity development agenda forward in the long-term and provides a birds-eye-view picture to senior policy makers and managers about needs and priorities in the arena of capacity development'.

Capacity Building (2002). The Regional Service Centre in Johannesburg is managing a new regional capacity development project (2009-2011) which includes support for the preparation of 16 national capacity strategies. Staff remain sceptical of feasibility, considering that it took Liberia several years to develop its national capacity development strategy with UNDP support.

ENDOGENOUS ENVIRONMENTS AND CHALLENGES FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ARE BECOMING MORE COMPLEX

Considering the environment within which capacity development is happening, the following characteristics are evident:

- high-level objectives for national capacity that are loosely defined, if defined explicitly at all, and multidimensional;
- where the relationships between these goals (mostly tacit in nature) and specific actions are imperfectly understood, knowledge comes mostly from the process, and formal capacity assessments are rare;
- limited options for change are believed to be available;
- the environment is uncertain: not only do people not know what will happen, but they are also oblivious of the range of things that might happen;
- simplification of what is a complex environment, with many inter-related variables, depends on judgment and knowing the context;
- global challenges and public goods affect the national context and the nature of capacity challenges.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The recent capacity development literature indicates that there are major capacity implications of global public goods including disease control, international security and policy, climate change, migration, and human rights. 'Capacity issues will therefore move rapidly beyond narrow questions of programme implementation and take on broader geostrategic significance.' ('Synthesis Report on the ECDPM Capacity Study', 2008, p.121).

Chapter 3: Key Findings

1. All four case-study countries formulate a national development plan or strategy, and acknowledge that planning and budgeting is a core function of the centre of government.
2. Longer-term visions are considered useful in all case-study countries.
3. Plans have been formulated through long-established endogenous processes and their quality and scope have improved over time.
4. There is recognition in the recent capacity development literature of the significance of global factors and international public goods on the current and future challenges for capacity development. Some of these issues are reflected in national visions and development strategies. Mounting complexity of these global challenges on the national context or environment in which capacity development takes place, calls into question the future validity and feasibility of relying on 'linear' capacity development programming models international development partners commonly use.
5. The roles of centre of government organizations involved have changed over time in most countries studied.
6. Governments see capacity development as important for achieving national goals. They acknowledge the importance of capacities for enhancing the quality of national development strategies and are aware of the capacity constraints for the formulation and management of national development strategies. But the priority for senior managers is getting the job done rather than developing capacity. The pressures of everyday management tend to detract from the longer-term imperatives of capacity development.
7. There are planned endogenous initiatives to develop capacity, but they are not specifically focused on strengthening the national development strategy. Rather, capacity constraints in implementation and service delivery are the main priority.
8. Governments do not address capacity development in their planning systems as a comprehensive agenda, but as a response to specific issues.
9. A range of government organizations address aspects of the capacity development agenda. The degree to which these form a coherent overall process is a function of the efficacy of internal government coordination mechanisms.
10. National capacity targets and indicators were absent from the governments' results frameworks. Nor did managers appear to have opportunities to take stock of what had and had not worked in terms of developing capacity.
11. Governments generally do not appear to use national capacity development strategies for ensuring coherence across the work within government, or more broadly.

Chapter 4

EVIDENCE ON UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION

Based on the analysis presented in Chapter 3, this chapter evaluates whether and how UNDP contributed to the identified changes in national capacities. UNDP's performance was evaluated and judged against the commonly used criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The significant difference, however, was that performance against these criteria was based on evidence from the self-reflection exercise rather than pre-defined measures of success. Also examined is the degree to which UNDP has followed the capacity development approaches its internal policy guidance advocate.

4.1 WHAT HAS UNDP DONE IN THE AREA OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES?

A significant part of UNDP's work consists of support for organizations at the centre of government to better fulfil their roles in the formulation and oversight of national development strategies. This conclusion is supported by evidence from three sources. Results from a portfolio analysis (see Annex 4) suggest that a significant number of UNDP projects active between 2005 and 2009 were focused in this area, as summarized in Table 1.

A recent review⁴⁵ of UNDP's work on public administration and local governance also concluded, 'UNDP has long provided assistance

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Projects Supporting Centre of Government Role in Development and Management of National Development Strategies across UNDP and by Bureau

Region	Number of projects reviewed	Number of projects judged to have a significant capacity development component	Percentage of projects judged to have a significant capacity development component
Regional project	1	0	0%
RBA	26	5	19%
RBLAC	24	2	8%
RBEC	14	1	7%
RBAS	12	2	17%
RBAP	19	1	5%
Total	96	11	12%

⁴⁵ UNDP, 'Public Administration and Local Governance: An Overview of Trends and Developments', paper prepared by the Bureau for Development Policy, New York, January 2010.

to the centre of government, a field which has considerable strategic potential in terms of supporting the overall direction and management of government policy'. Also, support in this area was identified in 15 out of 42 ADRs. Most of the ADRs give the clear impression that UNDP was a, if not the, major development partner working with the centre of government in supporting national development plans and development strategy formulation. This was the case in Benin, Bhutan and Jordan. In Afghanistan, given the magnitude of the tasks, and the very low capacity level in the early years of the decade, the support to the centre of government came from several other agencies, notably the World Bank. In several countries, UNDP has provided support for significant periods on a continuous basis. Even through periods of crisis, continuity has been a significant feature in UNDP's position in Rwanda, Viet Nam and Ethiopia.

In all four countries where case studies were carried out, UNDP's engagement in the national development strategy agenda was mainly driven by the governments' needs. In Saudi Arabia, UNDP support in this area was its most important field of work in terms of funding. It also reflected UNDP's long-established relationship with the Ministry of Economy and Planning. In Botswana, which has a well-established planning approach, UNDP support reflected a strong relationship with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. In Togo, supporting the international community's re-engagement with the government has been the major driver for UNDP over the past six years. Finally, in Paraguay, UNDP's support has reflected: (i) the need to move into upstream policy advice and away from funds administration in response to both government and regional bureau pressure; and (ii) support for governments' wish to define development strategies after the country's transition to democracy in 1989.

There is little evidence that this support was a direct response to a corporate agenda in any of the four countries. This may partially reflect the fact that UNDP's work on national development strategies

was not explicitly reflected in the corporate results frameworks between 2000 and 2007, even if UNDP at the country level has had long-term relationships with Ministries of Planning and been involved in supporting national development strategies for decades. There is also little evidence of key messages from senior management to the country office level of the importance of UNDP's work on national development strategies during the period under evaluation.

ENHANCING POLICY ANALYSIS AND USE

In Botswana, through its poverty programme, UNDP provided technical support aimed at strengthening the capacity of the relevant division in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to analyse poverty data as well as to implement the Government's National Strategy for Poverty Reduction. Through the same programme, UNDP also helped to develop the capacity of the Central Statistics Office to carry out statistical analysis of poverty data, building on existing survey instruments, notably the Housing, Incomes and Expenditure Survey.

In Saudi Arabia, the 8th (2005-2009) and 9th (2010-2014) Five Year Plans address issues formerly deemed politically and religiously 'sensitive', such as poverty reduction, population policies and balanced regional development. Long-term technical assistance was key in developing the analysis underpinning how these issues were addressed in the five-year plans and, more generally, in bringing in international experience and challenging Saudi preconceptions of how things should be done. UNDP's technical and advisory support had also been instrumental in changing national mindsets in favour of public policies geared towards improving the nation's position in the global HDR and other international rankings, such as the Global Competitiveness Forum and the World Bank's Doing Business report. Consequently, the five-year planning process has undergone a paradigm shift to embrace the concept of human development in its broader sense instead of concentrating all public efforts on economic

growth. The 9th National Development Plan repeatedly refers to the urgent need for improvement across all of the factors that affect Saudi competitiveness. The 8th and 9th Plans have also increasingly addressed changes in the global environment, such as food prices, finance and climate change, often using experts mobilized by UNDP's project with the Ministry of Economy and Planning.

Starting in 2001, UNDP provided consultancy and administrative support during the early stages of the process of analysing and then developing the initial Poverty Reduction Plan in Paraguay. It also contributed to the coordination process for the elaboration of the current plan (Plan 2020). Significant changes of personnel after each Presidential election (especially after the most recent one) impairs institutional memory in Paraguay. Therefore, UNDP has also moved to help preserve institutional memory in this area through a number of interventions, including: (i) briefing Presidential candidates on the National Development Strategy before the 2003 election; (ii) ensuring distribution of analysis and the plans to all relevant ministries; and (iii) supporting Presidential Transition Teams in 2003 and 2008. UNDP has also produced two MDG reports for Paraguay, which were intended to maintain discussion of achievement of the MDGs in Paraguay, and supported the Office of Human Development since its establishment in 2005 to produce analysis and reports that national stakeholders acknowledge to be impartial and apolitical.

The Programme of Capacity Building in Togo has been ongoing since 2004 and has, among other things, provided analysis of progress against the MDGs and a Human Development Report, which have both helped to frame the new PRSP. UNDP also supported collection of national statistics (implementation of the 4th Census,

still in preparation, and a core welfare indicator survey) and development of a statistical function within government and incorporation of gender issues into the PRSP and national policies.

SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNING TOOLS AND FRAMEWORKS

To track implementation against plans in Paraguay, UNDP has supported development and implementation of several management information systems, including for: (i) monitoring social expenditure in the government budget that offers parliamentarians an overview of how the budget is allocated, which is important given their role in agreeing the budget⁴⁶; (ii) monitoring progress against the 2020 Vision and which is primarily intended to support the President in his role as head of the social cabinet⁴⁷; and (iii) the expansion of the initial list of beneficiaries under the monetary transfer system to include other programmes and ministries through the creation of a 'unified' list, which will be then managed by the corresponding government agency⁴⁸.

Within the UNDP Botswana governance programme, started in 2007, and under the overall management of the Office of the President, UNDP has supported: (i) introduction of integrated results-based management systems across government; (ii) strengthening of the capacity of the Vision Council to monitor and evaluate implementation of Vision 2016; and (iii) strengthening of local governance and development of a decentralization policy. It is important to emphasize the leadership exercised by the Government of Botswana in programme implementation and the fact that UNDP presence in the implementation process is quite muted⁴⁹. In this sense, the governance programme has functioned primarily as a 'facility' offering a range of technical and financial inputs

⁴⁶ Social Expenditures in the Budget: Investing in People.

⁴⁷ The Governance Management System (SIGOB).

⁴⁸ The Information and Management System for Beneficiaries (SIGBE).

⁴⁹ UNDP is expected to perform a quality assurance role through its participation in the Steering Committee and at the technical level through back-stopping by the programme officer.

to enable the Government to implement a range of initiatives that form part of its wider public-sector reform efforts.

UNDP support has been delivered mostly through its project with the Ministry of Economy and Planning in Saudi Arabia. In this context, long- and short-term project consultants have played a significant role in developing the economic models that underpin the National Development Plans and in developing the performance monitoring and evaluation systems. Possibly the most high-profile result has been development of the petroleum model, which projects the economic implications under various scenarios for future oil revenues and the implications for planning and budgeting. This model was developed by a long-term technical expert to the Ministry of Economy and Planning and is now used by the Petroleum Ministry.

For Togo, UNDP supported development of the Priority Action Plan, which is the PRSP implementation plan. To further support implementation, staff in the Ministry of Finance's Budget Division were trained in use of Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks, with the future intent being to roll out the training into to key line ministries.

UNDP supported MDG costing in three of the four case-study countries—Botswana, Togo and Paraguay—carried out as part of projects managed out of the respective regional bureaux. These regional projects were a direct response to the 2005 World Summit resolution 'To adopt, by 2006, and implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.'⁵⁰ Saudi Arabia incorporated MDG costing into the preparation of the latest National Development Plan, but without UNDP regional support.

FACILITATING ACCESS TO EXPERIENCE FROM ELSEWHERE

This was important in both Paraguay and in Saudi Arabia. In Paraguay, the UNDP office promoted South-South cooperation, bringing senior advisors into the internal workshops for planning and implementation of the National Development Strategy, as well as organizing trips for senior government staff to countries in the region to observe successful experiences. In Saudi Arabia, UNDP supported a review of the national development planning approach under which a senior Malaysian planner made recommendations. Many of these

Box 7. UNDP Support for MDG Costing⁵¹

Between 2002 and 2005, under the Millennium Project, UNDP developed a methodology for costing achievement of the MDGs but support for national development strategies was not highlighted as a corporate priority. This appears to have been a response to the 2005 World Summit Outcome resolution 'To adopt, by 2006, and implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals'.

In response, using funds from the regional cooperation frameworks, the UNDP Regional Bureaux for Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and Africa, launched projects to support countries to carry out costing of the MDGs. In each region, a different costing approach was developed. In all three cases, the support to implementing the approach was designed as a technical exercise. Training of government staff was included in response to official requests. The Asia and Pacific region went further by also designing and using a simple capacity development assessment tool. The effectiveness of training has been circumscribed by the turnover of staff within the governments, experience shows. Project support has now ceased in Latin America and the Caribbean region, is winding down in the Asia and Pacific region, but is ongoing in the Africa region.

⁵⁰ See United Nations, '2005 World Summit Outcome', Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 60/1. A/RES/60/1. 24 October 2005, Paragraph 22.

⁵¹ See also paragraph 101 on the effectiveness of this capacity development in case countries.

recommendations can be seen in the content of, and planning approach used in, the 9th and 10th Plans. In Togo, UNDP has brought in experts from countries in the region to support the elaboration of the PRSP. A former Prime Minister of Senegal has advised budget administration. Finally, through the global Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals Programme, attempts have been made to mobilize high-profile nationals from the Togolese diaspora.

SUPPORTING PLANNING PROCESSES

UNDP support to PRSP development in Togo was vital, given the lack of capacity within the government. The organization's support should be understood within the context of the withdrawal and progressive re-engagement of the international community. Togo experienced severe restrictions on international cooperation following political and social crises, leading to a crisis in public finances and a rapid increase in government debt. UNDP, as one of the only international organizations maintaining a presence in the country and with the government, played a significant role in supporting international re-engagement. This started in 2004, with a UNDP/World Bank document⁵² laying out a joint strategy and a framework for strengthening donor assistance over the next two years and development of a strategy to strengthen national capacity. An interim PRSP was signed in 2008, while the full strategy was finalized and adopted in June 2009, covering 2009-2011.

UNDP has implemented a number of programmes directly relevant to developing the capacity of government in the area of national development strategies. These have included: (i) The Programme of Capacity Building ongoing since 2004; (ii) the Programme for Public Administration Reform; and (iii) a capacity-building programme with Parliament. The first of these programmes has dealt most directly with national development strategies,

targeting strategic national capacities at the centre of government (including supporting development of the PRSP and participation by civil society in its preparation, providing analysis of progress against the MDGs, supporting collection of national statistics and development of a statistical function within government, incorporation of gender issues into the PRSP and national policies, and developing a system for aid management). Administrative reform is a critical imperative in Togo, as modernization and streamlining are prerequisites to the success of the capacity development programmes. Enhancing the capacity of Parliament contributes to national strategic capabilities by enabling parliamentarians to better exercise their role in oversight of policies and development strategies.

In the case of Paraguay, UNDP supported the initial poverty reduction strategy by assisting the government in the participatory phase, organizing workshops and diverse events designed to make the process inclusive. The President recognized this effort in the foreword to strategy's final version. With the change in government in August 2008, UNDP once again worked with the National Development Strategy counterparts in facilitating access to national and international consultants and supporting the internal process. On the MDGs, UNDP has initiated the inter-institutional process for a new report that will be published by the government. The organization is committed to publishing annual reports to maintain the spotlight on these issues.

SUPPORTING THE DRAFTING OF PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Through the Governance Programme in Botswana, UNDP helped to organize multi-stakeholder thematic working groups in preparation of the 10th National Development Plan. UNDP also financed the inputs of experts to the National Strategy on Poverty Reduction in 2003. UNDP Botswana has also assisted the government in the

⁵² Document de reengagement, Cadre Conjoint de Renforcement de l'Assistance Internationale. Republique Du Togo. World Bank/UNDP, November 2004.

preparation of Strategic Frameworks for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment.

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MORE WIDELY

In both Paraguay and Togo, UNDP has recently started projects that aim to support the governments in dealing with more system-wide challenges that have adversely affected administrative performance. However, in both cases, it is too early for the projects to deliver substantive results.

In Botswana, the Governance Programme supports the government's wider efforts to improve service delivery through public service reforms. This includes introducing results-based management, including monitoring and evaluation, review of the Public Service Act, succession planning at senior management levels and review of the decentralization policy.

4.2 HOW RELEVANT WAS UNDP'S SUPPORT?

UNDP support in the four country case studies was relevant to the needs of national partners, although, except in Botswana, the partners rarely defined their needs in terms of enhanced national capacity or capacity development. Rather, needs were in most cases expressed by national partners in terms of delivery of specific products or support to complete a process within a given time-frame. The difference between Botswana and the other three countries appears to reflect the fact that in Botswana, UNDP's support was nested within an overall government-led reform effort and the product of a long and, in part, productive initial process of discussion of what UNDP might do. Within UNDP's own programme documentation, the issue of national capacity was addressed as a constraint to achieving substantive development goals highlighted as national priorities. It was not addressed as an end in itself.

None of the ADRs questioned the relevance of the support UNDP had provided at the centre of government for purposes of national development plan production and/or strategy formulation. They concluded that the support was relevant to national objectives and those in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. However, the Benin ADR mentioned that identification of UNDP projects appeared to be more ad hoc than based on dialogue with the government (this was related to the need to pursue donor-funded activity). The Afghanistan ADR questioned UNDP's relatively passive stance in the first half of the decade in relation to other development partners (functioning merely as an administrative agency for their funded development programmes).

Nor did the ADRs mention any assessments, prior to commencement of support at this level of government, of the problems faced by, respective roles and current capacities of, and inter-relations between, the stakeholders at the centre of government. There was no discussion in the ADRs of whether in retrospect UNDP had inadequately exploited its comparative advantage because it had positioned itself with an inappropriate primary partner at centre of government (i.e., one which lacked the authority within government structures necessary to influence national development plan content or resource allocation). None of the ADRs implied that better results could have been expected if the primary partner had been another government agency. Only in Benin was the placement of the coordinator of an institutional reform (public service development) project apparently inappropriate (in UNDP, rather than in the Presidency or Ministry of Reform).⁵³

Partners did not approach UNDP because of a perceived expertise in capacity development but rather because:

⁵³ 'Strategic Positioning' had a specific definition in the ADRs Terms of Reference which solicited evidence on this point: it tended to mean relevance, responsiveness, contribution to promotion of United Nations values, and extent of strategic partnerships.

- UNDP was seen as impartial (all four countries);
- relationships were often long established between UNDP and the partner;
- UNDP had access to international expertise that was wanted;
- using UNDP allowed the partner to mobilize needed support without having to deal with constraints within the governments' own administrative systems; and
- UNDP was likely, subject to the availability of funds, to agree to provide support.

In Togo, but also to a lesser extent in Paraguay, UNDP had contributed to the definition of those needs. In contrast, UNDP country offices in Saudi Arabia and Botswana found engaging with the governments in definition of needs more challenging. This partly reflected the fact that in both cases, the governments funded most of UNDP's work. This meant that UNDP was, perhaps inevitably, viewed as a service provider. One key government informant characterized the relationship as one in which the government told UNDP what it wanted, and UNDP then indicated what it could provide. In Saudi Arabia, there is evidence of UNDP's attempt to indirectly open a dialogue through consultancy inputs that would have led to the definition of organizational needs within the Ministry of Economy and Planning. However, these inputs were never implemented, as they were not seen as a priority within the ministry. In Botswana, UNDP proposed the establishment of a self-standing governance programme to address some of the cross-cutting governance and capacity issues identified. Agreement on the precise nature and scope of the programme, however, took several years of negotiation with the government to ensure that it responded to country context and priorities agreed between national stakeholders.

The ADRs indicate that UNDP appears to have benefited from partners' perceptions of its distinct comparative advantages compared to

bilateral agencies, and the World Bank. The most commonly cited comparative advantage is its perceived 'neutrality' in what is still seen as a politically sensitive area of work, where unbiased advice, technical assistance and management support services are much appreciated. This was explicitly the case in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Jordan, Laos, Montenegro, Rwanda, Viet Nam, and Yemen.

However, the ADRs of Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Viet Nam observed that UNDP could have achieved more from its perceived comparative advantage, particularly by working more 'upstream' in the sphere of policy advice, instead of persisting with a role ostensibly dominated by project management tasks and (in the Ethiopian case) 'bulk' training activity.

The other aspects of comparative advantage related to 'neutrality' include the duration of country presence and relationship (and therefore familiarity with national development history), as well as the trust which has been built up over time between the government and UNDP. This was noted particularly in the ADRs of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Ecuador (where it enabled UNDP to be a 'broker' of development cooperation between several other sources), Ethiopia and Montenegro. Several ADRs noted an apparent risk or 'downside' of a long relationship with and trust between UNDP and the government in the form of a perceived tendency to skew the country programme towards government partners rather than civil society or the private sector. This was commented upon in Botswana, Ecuador, Ethiopia (where opportunities for greater civil society engagement in monitoring national development plans could have been seized upon amid the fraught relationship between the government and civil society), Jordan, Rwanda, and Viet Nam. The Afghanistan ADR noted that UNDP had achieved a broader spread of partners in the post-2001 period after having focused exclusively on government agencies.

No ADR noted any instance of a country office using its established relationships with the government for frank dialogue on the negative consequences (on capacities or programme effectiveness) of government policies or practices.⁵⁴

Within the United Nations programming approach and UNDP guidance, relevance is discussed at a number of places in the programming cycle (see Box 8). While the guidance suggests the use of formal capacity assessments, such as that introduced within UNDP in 2008,

these had not been used in any of the four case-study countries. In addition, little evidence was found in either a review of recent UNDP country programme documents or the ADRs that formal capacity assessments were used to explore relevance.⁵⁵ In part, this reflected a deliberate effort to avoid commissioning additional and potentially onerous research and to rely as much as possible on information available from the government's own analytical work (Botswana) or programmes already under implementation (i.e., in Togo and Paraguay). The exception is at

Box 8. Addressing Capacity Development and Relevance as Part of UNDP Programming Procedures

UNDP country offices, under the organization's programming procedures, have three formal opportunities to engage with partners in defining what support is most relevant.

- First, as part of the cyclical United Nations programme development process (the development of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the supporting Common Country Assessment process). Guidance for the United Nations programme development process was updated in February 2007, when the revision included explicit guidance to United Nations country teams on how capacity development should be integrated into the analytical process (Common Country Assessment) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Given the normal planning cycle, evidence that the guidance has been operationalized should be found in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks agreed in 2009 and 2010. Review of these documents shows little evidence of formal capacity assessment processes being used.
- Second, during development of the UNDP Country Programme Document and supporting Action Plan (CPAP). UNDP's own programming guidance of 2003 and the 2007 revision explicitly states consideration of capacity development when defining the country programme. The CPAP is the operational master plan that guides the development and delivery of projects, linking programme management to project management in the endeavour to manage for results. The CPAP should use the results of the assessment of capacity needs and define capacity development needs and actions. An indicator of this will be the percentage of total programming driven by capacity development strategies based on total programme funds. Progress indicators must also be defined at the programme level and capacity development actions must be costed. Given the normal planning cycle, evidence that the guidance has been operationalized should be found in country programme documents endorsed by the UNDP Executive Board in 2009 and 2010. Review of these documents shows little evidence of formal capacity assessment processes being used.
- Third, as part of definition of inputs under a project or annual work programme. UNDP's own programming guidance of 2003 and the 2007 revision both suggest use of capacity assessments as part of project formulation/design. The UNDP Capacity Development Group maintains a database of completed capacity assessments.

⁵⁴ There was a 'diplomatic silence' in the ADR on the issue of politically motivated transfers, appointments and dismissals in the civil service in Ethiopia. The only reference in the ADR was that the 'policy-related' capacity constraints in the civil service (connected with motivational factors and incentives) had not been discussed by the country office, even when major efforts were being made to train individuals in the civil service.

⁵⁵ This does not mean that formal capacity assessments are needed in all situations. The administration of assessment instruments that are perceived as intrusive or simply inappropriate can end up undermining ownership and commitment for change, so their use needs to be carefully considered in each situation.

the project level, where there is some evidence of formal capacity assessments.⁵⁶ As will be discussed later, the lack of formal capacity assessment does not mean that either country offices or partners are unaware of where the gaps lie in national capacities, but rather means that the opportunity may be lost to systematically assess what the most relevant response to those gaps might be.

In terms of whether UNDP works with the most relevant partners, the ADRs indicate that patterns of collaboration tend to be relatively long-standing. Changes in roles and responsibilities within government were observed in all of the four countries, which required some re-appraisal of which agencies within government would be most relevant to work with. In the cases of Paraguay and Botswana, UNDP has responded to these changes. In Saudi Arabia, the evidence suggests that UNDP may have been aware of the need to build partnerships with other organizations, beyond its traditional partner, but has not done so.

4.3 HOW EFFECTIVE WAS UNDP'S SUPPORT?

In this section, effectiveness is examined against three measures.⁵⁷ Did the support meet the expectations of the partners and contribute to what was perceived as needed? Within the

projects, was the support effective at developing national capacity? If UNDP had approached the identification and design of the project interventions differently, would this have enhanced its overall effectiveness?

DID THE SUPPORT MEET THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTNERS AND CONTRIBUTE TO WHAT WAS PERCEIVED AS NEEDED?

Across the four country cases, UNDP's project support was generally found to have been effective in meeting the partners' expectations. Examples of specific activities or support failing to deliver against expectations were rare. In Botswana, some observers were disappointed that the country office did not seem to play an active role in routinely distilling or relaying international (UNDP and other agency) experience that might be relevant.

WITHIN THE PROJECTS, WAS THE SUPPORT EFFECTIVE AT DEVELOPING NATIONAL CAPACITY?

Addressing this question is complicated by the lack of a common understanding of what national capacity is and therefore what capacity development implies. Country office staff, and many others, both national stakeholders and across UNDP, interviewed as part of the evaluation argued strongly that everything UNDP

⁵⁶ A list of capacity assessments provided by Capacity Development Group indicated that over 60 assessments have been carried out internationally (up to 2009) on a variety of issues mainly at the sector, thematic or organizational levels. In some cases, the motive was to form the basis of a capacity development strategy (Rwanda, Occupied Territories). There is no consolidated information available on how these assessments have been used or taken forward thereafter.

⁵⁷ The generally accepted definition of effectiveness in development evaluation is 'the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance'. This is the definition found in the 2006 OECD DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. The United Nations Evaluation Group's 2005 Evaluation Standards implicitly use the same definition, as they call for evaluation against the same evaluation criteria as defined in the OECD DAC guidance—relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability. Against this definition, it is impossible to directly judge the effectiveness of UNDP's support in developing national capacity for national development strategies, because in general: i) the intended outcomes were often not defined in terms of changes in national capacities; (ii) where objectives were set in terms of national capacity, indicators to define the intended change were not defined and then tracked; and (iii) in the absence of formal assessments of capacity, it is challenging to retrospectively define the status of national capacities before particular interventions were implemented. This situation reflected three things. In general, government results frameworks did not define results in terms of changes in national capacity. Despite the need to define such objectives/indicators at the project level being identified in UNDP's internal programming guidance, this was not enforced as part of UNDP's own internal quality enhancement and assurance processes. Lastly, support for the national development strategy process was often not treated as a discrete programmatic area, but was instead nested within the broader governance and poverty programme areas.

did contribute to national capacity.⁵⁸ At one level, they are correct. The support outlined in Section 4.1 did contribute to delivery of the plans or/and affect their quality, although not always directly or immediately. UNDP advocacy through products such as the National Human Development Reports and the MDG reports also helped to broaden the range of issues discussed in the national discourse. In Paraguay and Togo, UNDP also supported engagement by a wider range of stakeholders in development of the national strategies. Therefore, in terms of having a ‘better’ national development strategy, it could be argued that national capacity to achieve the agreed national development goals was strengthened.

Such a perspective has two problems. From a UNDP management point of view, a definition that encompasses everything has limited value for management, as it does not allow managers to judge what should not be done. Second, the resolutions of the General Assembly in response to the 2004 and 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews, the 2006 United Nations Development Group Policy Statement and UNDP’s own internal guidance all suggest that capacity development also requires strengthening the national capacity to carry out the same tasks and processes in future, without UNDP having to play the same role again (see Box 3).

If judged against the criteria that the support should be geared towards developing the ability of national partners to do things for themselves or do things better, rather than the United Nations

doing it for them, the effectiveness of much of UNDP’s support across the four case-study countries can be questioned. It is also notable that exit strategies were not a significant factor in the dialogue between the country offices and government partners. Across all four countries, support has been in terms of technical assistance mobilized at the request of government to carry out certain actions. In a number of instances, a full-time technical adviser was mobilized, but in the majority of situations, funding was used to procure short-term consultants as well as finance specific activities such as training and consultation. The common failure to reach a state in which the national partners do, or improve, things for themselves appears to reflect a failure to implement the lessons learned in the past on how to approach capacity development and a focus, by the government partners, UNDP and the consultants on ‘getting the job done’.

In Togo, there is little evidence that support over the past few years has strengthened internal capacities within the government to formulate the next PRSP that should start in 2012. This reflects the persistent lack of capacity within the government, which in turn reflects the impact of the previous crises and a lack of resources within government. It also reflects the priority given to development and agreement of the PRSP, which was key to regularizing relationships with the international community and triggering access to donor and development bank funding. In Paraguay, the high turnover of staff has made it difficult to maintain capacity. This is shown by the value given by all stakeholders to UNDP supporting the

⁵⁸ The Marrakech (2010) Global Event Capacity is Development commissioned two background papers on state capacity and human development. One (‘State Capacity for Development’ by Atul Kohli) took a historical perspective of the significance of political and bureaucratic variables as determinants of state capacity for development. It argued that our understanding of the more specific determinants ‘remains murky’ in part because development is a multi-dimensional process of change. Growth and redistribution are one trade off: on which the analysis focused, concluding that capacities needed for one are not the same as for the other. The challenge of achieving both—to attain human development—hinges at least in part on the long-term process of building functioning bureaucracies at apex and local levels. This requires political commitment. The second (‘The Capacity Continuum: Tracking the Capacity of State Institutions in Driving Human Development’ by Tsegaye Lemma and Mathew Cummins) carried out an empirical analysis of the relationship between state institutional capacity (using the Government Effectiveness Index as a proxy) and the Human Development Index across countries over a decade. They found the relationship strong and positive. They put forward as an analytical tool a ‘Capacity Continuum’ to support policy makers in prioritization of policies and investments. It postulates a quadrant of four broad categories of countries according to whether high or low state capacity is matched by high or low human development.

transition teams after each Presidential election. National stakeholders observed that the high turnover of people, both within government and of those contracted under projects, affected sustainability. When projects ended, consultants did not usually enter government service for a number of reasons, including wage differentials and working conditions and a tendency for some within government to prefer to recruit those that they trust. These challenges are recognized in both countries and initiatives within the governments to address them have started recently.

Botswana offers contrasting experiences. In the case of UNDP support under its poverty programme, capacity development objectives were defined in broad terms, anticipating capacity change at both individual and organizational levels. At the individual level, the intention was to enhance the skills of selected technical officers within the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and the Central Statistics Office to undertake policy analysis and data collection. However, the contribution to individual capacity development was limited partly due to difficulties in retaining trained staff, particularly in the case of the Central Statistics Office. Another reason was the difficulty in arranging an understudy for the long-term technical advisor recruited to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. While capacity development was the espoused objective of technical assistance support, in practice, host institutions were anxious to draw on this assistance as an extra pair of hands to help get work done. Building sustainable capacity became a secondary objective as the focus fell on short-term deliverables. Thus, national capacities were developed as a clearer strategy to address poverty issues was developed, a framework set in place to organize the work of multi-stakeholder committee on poverty reduction, and improvements made to the principal survey instrument used for poverty analysis. However, the ongoing capacity of government to fully utilize these technical and organizational advances has been limited.

The experience in Saudi Arabia raises the issue of whether capacity development is expected from UNDP support, which is also partly the case of Botswana. In both the Saudi and Botswana situations, significant numbers of foreign nationals work within the government, mostly on contract to the Governments. In terms of building the capacity of the Saudi Ministry of Economy and Planning's national staff, there is little evidence that this has happened. Funds allocated for training have largely remained unused, while there is little evidence that the mentoring role envisaged in the ToRs of consultants employed was actually carried out. The ministry management, however, does not consider this a 'failure' because it does not see capacity development as part of the UNDP project's role.

In Botswana, Togo and Paraguay, regional programmes supported MDG costing exercises. In the Botswana and Paraguay cases, national stakeholders perceived the support as ineffective. This was partially because the exercises were not timed to feed into the national medium-term planning cycle. The work, furthermore, was carried out by consultants as a technical exercise and was not integrated into the endogenous processes. Therefore, in both cases, the costing had no effect upon the national development plans.

The evidence in the ADRs for countries where UNDP was engaged in national development strategy support was, in many cases, disappointing in terms of capacity development effectiveness. This was the case regardless of whether the ADRs were produced after the guidance on capacity development had been issued. Exceptions were in Benin, Bhutan, Montenegro (where the assistance was clearly demand driven), Afghanistan (with some qualifications regarding the intensity of highly paid technical assistance used), and Yemen (where there was clear evidence in the ADRs of capacity development at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels and effective inter-connection). In some cases (e.g., Laos) favourable comments were made on capacity development achievements, without analysis of

the factors responsible. Innovative modalities of South-South-based technical assistance in the form of coaching were reported favourably in Afghanistan (in the major civil service reform and development programme).

In the Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, and Rwanda there was evidence of classic ‘old-fashioned’ capacity development. The package comprised training, equipment, and technical assistance with little regard for the institutional environment (policy and legal frameworks), or organizational constraints (especially incentive structures) which tend to affect the effectiveness of inputs delivered. In Rwanda, opportunities for direct UNDP collaboration with the agency responsible for capacity development strategy formulation had been (inexplicably) missed.⁵⁹

While the ADRs generally brought to light many examples of the ‘old fashioned’ attitude, there was also some encouraging evidence of more holistic (albeit challenging and problematic) approaches to capacity development. Twelve country programmes were criticized for the rigid uncritical (and un-monitored: see Section 5.3) application of ‘traditional’ approaches. On the other hand, some country offices were praised for major investments *across all levels* in coherent capacity development programmes (but still with uneven success, for a variety of reasons). Afghanistan, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Serbia, Egypt and Peru were praised for their responsiveness and potential effectiveness in capacity development programming.

There was only one ADR country—Montenegro—where a capacity development ‘facility’ was established. It was proving very effective, for a variety of reasons. See Box 9 for a summary of why, and factors affecting its success.

The above findings of the effectiveness of UNDP’s project support in terms of developing capacity are

striking only in terms of illustrating that many of the lessons learned in the past are still to be applied. The question therefore is what might have been done differently, and would this have made a difference?

In practice, projects that are developing national capacities for national development strategies would generally aim to produce the same range of outputs/products as identified under Section 4.1. Project support would continue to be a mixture of long- and short-term technical assistance, logistical and administrative support, and provision of access to experience from the wider world. Therefore, what needs to be different? UNDP’s present guidance identifies two main types of capacity that can be developed—functional and technical. It also identifies four key drivers on which a capacity development initiative should be developed—institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability. The evidence suggests that projects and UNDP engagement have focused narrowly in terms of the range of types of capacity that it has sought to develop. Across the country case studies, it has mainly focused on developing functional capacity to formulate policies and strategies and gap filling of technical capacities. However, no examples of support addressing all four drivers were identified. Rather, it had narrowly focused on one: knowledge. In addition, support has not been fully embedded in a comprehensive approach to partnership with government that would have facilitated a strategic and systematic approach to capacity development.

UNDP’s principles for capacity development (Box 10), which are in line with the wider body of experience, would suggest that effectiveness is contingent on the relationship between UNDP, as an external actor, and those within the national endogenous system. This then affects the choice of what support is provided, how it is integrated into the endogenous process and expectations on what is likely to change.

⁵⁹ A decision had already been made—according to the ADR—to support this strategy development in future.

Box 9. Capacity Development Facilities

A Capacity Development Facility is an integrated support programme (sometimes involving pooled donor funds) to assist countries (especially those in transition or post-conflict situation) with the process of capacity development geared directly to the achievement of national goals.⁶⁰ There is no standard 'Capacity Development Facility' product: each reflects a flexible process concept. Common characteristics include: a government-donor platform providing a capacity development strategy including various types of support for institutional or human resource reform or systematic capacity assessments; allowing different types of fund management and programmatic engagement; including a grant-making facility for capacity development-oriented proposals in public sector reform.

Advantages over conventional discrete project-type funding vehicles include: provision of a more strategic and comprehensive governance framework to capacity development initiatives, with prospects of greater sustainability of results; the possibility of funding moving over time directly into the national budget under government/parliamentary direction; monitoring of implementation and evaluation of outcomes by a lead donor agency (in this case UNDP) acting as partner of government in managing a Facility. UNDP requires its own capacity to perform this role.⁶¹

The Montenegro Capacity Development Programme's objective was to contribute to public administration as a vital element in pursuit of the MDGs in accordance with the government's own strategy and action plan for reform. The programme has been extended and adjusted over time from an initial pilot involving three ministries to equip them with institutional capacity in accordance with their differing states of readiness, sectoral objectives and functions. A secondary objective (particularly in the pilot stage) was to fill capacity gaps (for example, in policy-making, development of legal frameworks, work planning, training, and establishment of information systems.)

The mix of support in the Montenegro Facility was: response to specific requests from the minister (including drafting of documents); design of a long-term plan of activities for one of the ministry's departments (including provision of short-term 'stopgap' consultants), and focused analytical and advisory services. After six months of capacity development programme support, the ministry was transformed into a fully operational unit: self-sustaining and with no further need of assistance from the facility.

An independent review of the Montenegro Facility in 2004 identified the following positive features of its support to the Ministry of International Economic Relations and European Integration (the recipient of most substantive assistance at the outset, it had then only just been established): speed and relevance of its response to urgent needs with minimum bureaucratic procedures; transfer of relevant know-how and expertise (using regional experts with direct experience of high-level work in ministries); emphasis on change management: instilling commitment and a sense of purpose in ministry personnel; innovation based on best practice; enabling the ministry to determine what advice it needs, how to get it, and how to use it once delivered (rather than direct provision of policy advice—which was not requested). The beneficiary ministries concluded that it was a better-suited quick-response mechanism than the larger, and often more cumbersome programmes.

In the ADR's list of factors in the 'value added' by the capacity development programme, the following were cited: good management was the single most important factor: needs were assessed before solutions were devised and deployed; there was a sound governance structure, with a high-level Supervisory Board chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Public Administration Reform, backed up by an Executive Committee which held monthly, minuted meetings. Design of the facility involved partnership, ownership, focus (on a few ministries), complementarity (avoiding duplication or overlap with other donors' inputs), flexibility, experimentation and learning.

⁶⁰ See 'Capacity Development During Political Transitions: A Seminar Report', UNDP Capacity Development Group and UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre RBEC, Senec, Slovak Republic, November 2005, p.4.

⁶¹ The Montenegro ADR of 2006 noted that the (relatively new) country office had invested in 'top-notch' staff capable of playing high-level policy advisory and dialogue roles. Box 9 of the Montenegro ADR (p.60) lists 18 functions which the country office played as partner in the Capacity Development Programme, using Direct Execution modalities (DEX) with a Project Management Unit housed in the UNDP country office and staffed by UNDP staff.

Box 10. Principles That Should Drive a Capacity Development Approach

The UNDP 2008 Practice Note suggests a project development approach reflecting the following basic principles:

1. The UNDP approach makes the concept of national ownership tangible. It is about the ability to make informed choices and decisions.
2. It addresses power relations, mindsets and behavioural change. It therefore emphasizes the importance of motivation as a driver of change.
3. Capacity development is a long-term process. It can be promoted through a combination of shorter-term results that are driven from the outside and more sustainable, longer-term ones that are driven from the inside.
4. It requires sticking with the process under difficult circumstances.
5. The approach links the enabling environment, as well as organizations and individuals, and promotes a comprehensive approach.
6. It looks beyond individual skills and a focus on training to address broader questions of institutional change, leadership, empowerment and public participation.
7. It emphasizes the use of national systems, not just national plans and expertise. It discourages stand-alone project implementation units; if national systems are not strong enough, it deems that those be reformed and strengthened, rather than bypassed.
8. It requires adaptation to local conditions and starts from the specific requirements and performance expectations of the sector or organization it supports. There are no blueprints.
9. It makes the link to broader reforms, such as those in education, wage structures and the civil service. There is little value in designing isolated, one-off initiatives.
10. It results in unplanned consequences that must be kept in mind during the design phase. These should be valued, tracked and evaluated.
11. It measures capacity development systematically, using good-practice indicators, case evidence and analyses of quantitative and qualitative data, to ensure that objective judgments are made about capacity assets and needs, as well as the progress achieved.

The four country case studies show a mixed picture of how these principles are reflected in relationships between UNDP and national partners. It should be borne in mind, however, that the principles are not mandatory for country offices and are not explicitly addressed in UNDP's programmatic quality assurance and enhancement procedures.

National ownership of the development strategies was strong in Paraguay, Botswana and Saudi Arabia, reflecting the fact that governments decided how to allocate scarce resources. In Togo, there was less evidence of national ownership of the PRSP outside of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

ADRs from Bhutan, Bosnia, Mozambique, Tajikistan and Zambia commented on the

unevenness or absence of ownership among key UNDP counterparts. In Tajikistan, in the view of the ADR team, inaction on PRSP implementation indicated lack of ownership. The fact that Turkey established a Human Development Centre was cited as reflecting the extent to which HDR messages were taken on board and 'owned'. The Montenegro country office benefited from a counterpart agency that owned the programme of reforms needed to facilitate entry into the European Union. Rwanda's ownership of at least future capacity development programmes will, according to the ADR, be enhanced by the preparation of a National Strategy for Capacity Development.

UNDP senior country office management and staff were aware of the issues of **power relations**, mindsets and behaviour change within the public

sector and in terms of engagement between the executive and legislature and with civil society. Evidence varied on the degree to which programmes and UNDP advocacy responded to this understanding. UNDP's focus on strengthening the availability of evidence and analysis does address power relations both within government and between government and civil society. In one case, the UNDP country office successfully advocated moving a government function into a position that would theoretically strengthen its influence. In terms of projects, there is little evidence of selection based on strong motivation by the government partner to develop national capacity. Nor could it be ascertained that projects had been designed to support incentives/motivation for change and stronger national capacity.

There were two key constraints to developing projects recognizing this principle. The first was an uncritical approach from UNDP when responding to requests from governments or development partners. As highlighted earlier, one of UNDP's comparative advantages to partners is that it is seen as non-judgmental and willing to say yes. This characteristic, within the ADRs, was normally ascribed to perverse incentives, as prospective projects or development support services offered prospects of much-needed revenue for the country office. Evidence of this was also seen in the country offices in the case-study countries. The second constraint was that UNDP often uses comparatively light project formulation and appraisal processes, which limit opportunities to truly explore the full range of opportunities. In this case, two possibly contradictory trends appear to be in place. On the one hand, interview evidence strongly supports the value of capacity assessments in opening a more rigorous discussion between partners in the design of project support. On the other, there is evidence that UNDP country offices are moving away from development of detailed project documents towards a programmatic approach. Under this approach, programmes are defined as part of the periodic country programme development process and actual support is identified through annual work plans agreed with the partners. Such

processes have strengths and present opportunities, but whether they will also increase the opportunity for rigorous programmatic design remains open to question.

In all four case countries, UNDP's engagement in strengthening national development strategy formulation and maintenance of oversight has been **long term**. Within this long-term engagement, UNDP's specific support was however generally seeking to deliver shorter-term results. There was little evidence, barring the Botswana governance programme, that these interventions were firmly and deliberately aligned with longer-term ones driven from within the national endogenous system. However, this situation may change in Paraguay and Togo, depending on how the public administration reform process in Togo and state reform process in Paraguay develop.

In the case of Togo, there is strong evidence of UNDP continuing engagement with the government in **difficult circumstances**.

There was little evidence of the country offices adopting a programmatic approach that linked the enabling environment, as well as organizations and individuals, and was therefore **comprehensive**. As discussed above, evidence suggests that UNDP projects and engagement have focused narrowly on the range and types of intended capacity development without covering the possible range of drivers. Country offices had had varying success in moving beyond technical assistance and **training for individuals**, and providing support that addressed more fundamental issues. Saudi Arabia and Botswana both showed that changing governments' perception of UNDP's comparative advantage was vital, if this was to happen, and that it needed also to be a government priority. In Botswana, the evidence suggests that in the governance programme, UNDP did manage to accomplish this. However, in Saudi Arabia it did not. In both Paraguay and Togo, UNDP is providing support to nascent government reform programmes, which offer the possibility of linking UNDP support into **broader reforms**, such as those in education, wage structures and the civil

service. In terms of whether UNDP support is **adapted to local conditions** and starts from the specific requirements and performance expectations of the sector or organizations with which it works, the evidence is that it starts from the specific requirements of the partners. However, developing national capacity was often not the immediate priority for the partners. There was little evidence of UNDP support being tailored to play a more facilitative role related to the management of change processes and hence responding to the context.

Use of national systems, not just national plans and expertise, varied across the countries. In Saudi Arabia and Botswana, despite the fact that projects are delivered through national execution, the opportunity to not automatically use all government systems was one of the attractions of using UNDP. In Togo, all projects until 2008 were implemented directly by UNDP, reflecting the weak state of government's systems. Although projects are now implemented through national execution, UNDP still provides a significant degree of direct support.

Traditionally, UNDP's role in Paraguay was to administer government funds. In the mid-2000s, the government restricted the transfer of new budgetary funds to UNDP for administration as this undermined the use of government systems. Experience with this decision is illuminating in that it clearly suggests diverse opinions within government. Owing to lack of capacity within government, some partners remain ambivalent about this change, with some projects having been returned to direct execution by UNDP. The implications of this shift and the effect of funding sources on UNDP's behaviour more generally is discussed in Chapter 5.

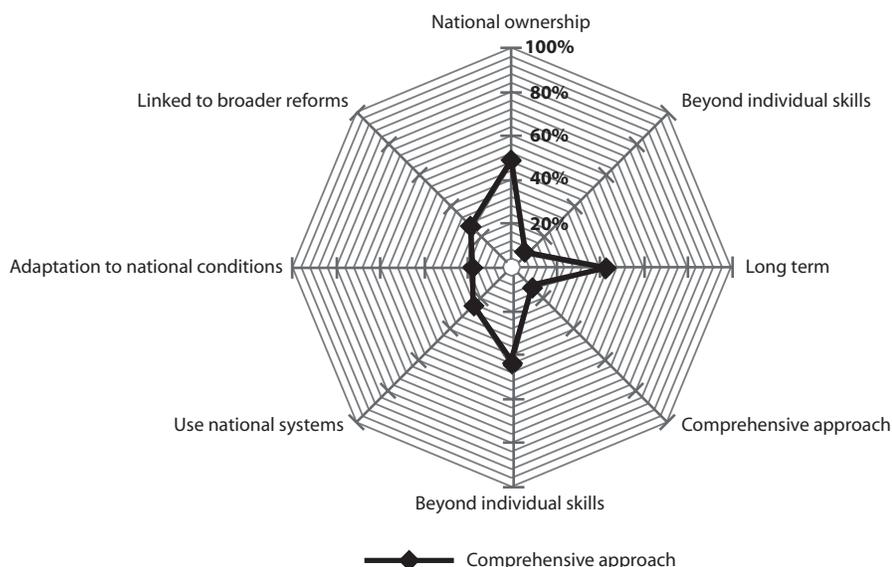
Capacity development should be **systematically measured**, using good-practice indicators, case evidence and analyses of quantitative and qualitative data, to ensure that objective judgments are made about capacity assets and needs, as well as the progress achieved. Possible **unplanned consequences** should also be considered during the design phase. These principles were not addressed by any of the four country programmes. This reflects the well-documented problems with monitoring and evaluation at the project level across UNDP.⁶²

UNDP does not track the degree to which the Capacity Development Group's principles are implemented across its programmes. Therefore as part of the portfolio analysis (see Annex 4), an assessment was made of the degree to which a sample of UNDP projects active between 2004 and 2009 (based on the project document and annual work plans) appeared to have been designed in line with the principles. The results (see Figure 1) illustrate two points. First, they generally conform to those from the four case-study countries. Second, they illustrate the challenge of implementing the principles.

As the ADR evidence cited above shows, experience in the countries where UNDP was engaged in capacity development for national development strategies tends to confirm the findings from the case studies and the portfolio analysis. However, as the ADRs did not explicitly and systematically assess the extent to which these principles were reflected in capacity development practices, the evaluation's conclusions are based on a judgment of the partial evidence presented.

⁶² UNDP, 'Evaluation of Results-Based Management in UNDP', Evaluation Office, UNDP, New York, December 2007; UNDP, 'Annual Report on Evaluation in UNDP 2009', paper presented to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, July 2010, DP/2010/19, Paragraphs 76-77; and UNDP, 'Management Response to the Independent Review of the UNDP Evaluation Policy', paper presented to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, July 2010, DP/2010/21.

Figure 1. Adherence to Capacity Development Principles⁶³



4.4 HOW EFFICIENTLY WAS UNDP'S SUPPORT DELIVERED?

In general, perceptions of UNDP's efficiency depended on what it was compared against. While some characterized UNDP systems as overly complex and bureaucratic, they were perceived as more efficient than those of the governments. In Saudi Arabia, there were greater reservations on UNDP efficiency. Issues included the quality and range of consultants available on the UNDP roster as well as the speed with which visas were obtained, where UNDP efficiency was compared unfavourably with both the World Bank and GTZ⁶⁴. Despite the long-standing nature of this problem, the country office was unable to

identify precisely why its performance was worse than that of the other two agencies.

4.5 DID UNDP SUPPORT HAVE A SUSTAINED EFFECT AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE ADAPTABILITY AND RESILIENCE OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEMS?

The main finding is that UNDP support did not. This was not a focus of UNDP support in the four case-study countries. The ADRs also identified few instances where adequate or timely attention was given to 'what happens when the project stops?'

⁶³ A degree of judgment and inference was required in this assessment, as UNDP guidance does not require that these issues be specifically addressed in project documentation. The degree to which capacity development was systematically measured and unintended consequences tracked was also not assessed, as these issues were not addressed in the documentation available to the evaluation.

⁶⁴ The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) is an organization owned by the German Government and was established to support the German Government in achieving its development objectives. Its main focus is on capacity development. In Saudi Arabia, GTZ acts as a de facto consultancy company to the government.

Chapter 4: Key Findings

1. In general, UNDP supported the endogenous process for national development strategy formulation and management. In one country, challenges were observed with aligning the introduction of a new approach, the PRSP, with the endogenous process.
2. UNDP is one of the major development partners working at the centre of government, and in the field of national development strategy formulation and management. There were examples of effective UNDP support to enhancement of national development strategies in all four country studies and in fourteen others from among the over 40 countries in which an ADR has been conducted since 2002.
3. In all four case-study countries, the main driver of UNDP's engagement was a response to the national context, not to a corporate agenda. Evidence from both the case studies and meta analyses of ADRs suggest that partners did not approach UNDP for its perceived comparative advantage in capacity development. Rather they did so for the organization's perceived impartiality, its ability to forge long-term relationships, its access to international expertise, its likelihood of providing support, and the possibility it held out of avoiding administrative constraints within national governments.
4. Generally, UNDP support was relevant to the national partners in all 19 countries for which case study or ADR evidence are available. UNDP has provided extensive project-based support. National partners have assessed the support provided to be relevant and well done. Very few specific activities or support failed to deliver against expectations. Project support contributed to both the delivery of the national plans or/and affected their quality, although not always directly or immediately. UNDP advocacy through products such as the National Human Development Reports and the MDG reports also helped to broaden the range of issues discussed nationally.
5. Strengthening the future ability of national partners to do things for themselves, or do things better, without the United Nations having to play the same role again is, however, not a priority of UNDP support.
6. In project design, there is limited evidence of UNDP efforts in applying the principles of effective capacity. Exit strategies were generally not the subject of dialogue between country offices and government partners in the four country cases, nor, with a few exceptions, in the other 15 countries covered by ADRs that examined support to national development strategy processes. Across all four countries, support has been in terms of technical assistance mobilized at the request of government to carry out certain actions. In a number of instances, a full-time technical adviser has been mobilized but in the majority of situations, funding has been used to procure short-term consultants as well as finance-specific activities such as training and consultation exercises. Functions carried out by long-term technical assistance are rarely taken over by nationals at the end of assignments. Rapid turnover of national staff was a common reason given for a lack of impact of training, although there were no case of training effectiveness evaluation was found. Projects were rarely designed to identify and enhance access to national knowledge or expertise outside of the government. For short-term consultants, assignments were usually focused on delivery of a product. Structuring work to increase its longer term impact on capacity development was not a priority.
7. There are examples of innovative and effective UNDP capacity development support. These include instances in Benin, Bhutan and Montenegro, where the assistance was clearly demand driven, and Afghanistan, as well as in Yemen, where there was clear evidence of capacity development at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels. Innovative modalities of south-south-based technical assistance in the form of coaching were reported favourably in Afghanistan in a major civil service reform and development programme. However, these examples are exceptions, rather than the norm.
8. The more common failure to reach a state in which the national partners do things for themselves appears to reflect a failure to implement the lessons learned in the past on the use and a focus, by the government partners, UNDP and the consultants on 'getting the job done'.

Chapter 4: Key Findings (continued)

9. Country-specific circumstances also play a major role in determining opportunities for UNDP to engage governments in capacity development and are dependent on several factors. These include the commitment and degree of cooperation within the government; the relationship UNDP has established with key drivers of government-wide reform processes; and the degree to which UNDP's established national partners see capacity development as part of their responsibilities. It also depends upon the degree to which governments are willing to engage with UNDP on what are sensitive issues and whether they believe the organization has something to offer.
10. The case-study countries showed a mixed picture of the degree to which the principles espoused by Capacity Development Group in the 2008 guidance (but implicit in the 1998 policy guidance) have been reflected in the relationships between UNDP and national partners. Evidence from portfolio analysis revealed similar patterns of non- or partial compliance. The degree of compliance with capacity development principles in programmes is not tracked.
11. Across the country case studies, support has focused on developing functional capacity to formulate policies and strategies and gap filling of technical capacities. In terms of the four endogenous drivers of effective capacity development identified in UNDP's recent guidance—institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability—no examples of support addressing all four drivers, as suggested in the guidance, were found. Support was narrowly focused around one driver—knowledge.
12. There was no evidence of UNDP using its strong position for frank dialogue on the potentially negative consequences (on capacities or programme effectiveness) of government policies and practices. Good practice emphasizes the importance of effective learning from experience through joint reflection between stakeholders about outcomes, 'what works and why' and how positive change is taking place as a entry into such dialogues, but little evidence was found of such approaches being systematically used, either during the appraisal process or through evaluation for programme and project design.

Chapter 5

INTERNAL FACTORS EXPLAINING UNDP'S PERFORMANCE

Chapter 3 discussed the environment within which UNDP operates at the country level, using a national perspective. Chapter 4 judged UNDP's performance in terms of developing national capacity and concluded that while the understanding of what is required for effective capacity development was available, implementing the required approach has been the challenge. This chapter aims to both describe the key investments made by UNDP over the past decade in enhancing its own capacity in this area and flag key institutional issues identified as either fostering or hindering UNDP's development of its own internal capacity.

5.1 INTERNAL UNDP MEASURES

Has UNDP taken measures internally to support its role in capacity development?

A detailed time-line of key events within UNDP related to capacity development is provided in Annex 5. The findings include the following.

- i. Capacity development is a role for all United Nations agencies, but UNDP is the only one that has devoted significant resources to identifying lessons on effective capacity development over the last twenty years. The Capacity Development Group within the Bureau of Development Policy is generally acknowledged as the main source of expertise across the United Nations, as well as within UNDP, and plays a significant role in the wider community of practitioners that work on capacity development.
- ii. Over this period, the 'perspective' used in analysing capacity development has remained constant. Especially in the 1990s, work at headquarters level focused on gathering and analysing evidence of what does and does not work.
- iii. The 1998 guidance included many of the tools and approaches currently advocated, although there has been some shift in the language used (see Box 3).
- iv. The 1998 guidance was incorporated to some degree in the 2003 revision of the UNDP programming manual and some training was offered to staff to support use.
- v. Capacity development has become more clearly expressed in UNDP strategy documents over the past ten years.
- vi. The establishment of the Capacity Development Group in 2003 marked a significant change, creating a 'champion' for the agenda in the organization.
- vii. Through funds from a range of sources, there has been a gradual increase in the number of professional staff in the Capacity Development Group. Capacity development advisors were also placed in the regional centres providing substantive support to the country offices and time has seen the regional bureaux assume responsibility for funding of these positions.
- viii. The Capacity Development Group has worked to increase external and internal understanding and buy in to best practice, particularly since 2005.

- ix. Externally, this has included through the 2006 Policy Statement and associated guidance issued United Nations-wide by the United Nations Development Group; work with the wider range of capacity development practitioners (including within the OECD's Development Assistance Committee and the Learning Network on Capacity Development (LenCD), SNV and European Centre for Development Policy Management (both in the Netherlands); and with key decision makers in governments (the Madrid (2006) and Marrakech (2010) conferences).
- x. Internally, a range of guidance has been developed since early 2008, aiming to inform UNDP staff on how to approach, assess and measure capacity development. Internal training has been revamped, while capacity development advisors have actively sought to provide further training at both regional and country office level. Finally, ways of addressing capacity development were strengthened in the 2008 revision of its programming guidance—the Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP).

It can be concluded that the Capacity Development Group has been an active champion of lessons learned both within the organization and, to a lesser extent, more broadly. Capacity development has an increasingly high profile within the organization and is reflected within many of the organization's internal systems and procedures. The evidence on how capacity development should be approached, based on lessons learned over the last few decades and fully in line with the lessons learned by the wider community of practitioners, are available. The question therefore is why, as the evidence in Chapter 4 shows, the lessons are often not reflected in practice at the country level? To some extent, this

is because much of the Capacity Development Group's work has only really been delivered in the past three to four years. It will take time to affect how country offices and the wider organization approach the agenda. However, there are other factors impeding UNDP's taking on a capacity development approach rooted in the lessons learned. These factors are discussed below, structured around the organizational change framework commonly applied within UNDP.

5.2 ALIGNMENT OF THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT WITH INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Has senior management at headquarter, regional and country office levels understood the external environment and reflected this in its strategic choices on how UNDP's internal systems and processes should be configured to ensure that UNDP has the capacity to be an effective partner in capacity development at the country level?

Managers at all three levels in the organization—the Administrator/Associate Administrator, Regional and Policy Bureau Director, and Resident Representative/Country Director—constantly receive information on the external environment within which UNDP operates. Engagement with the Executive Board, discussions with representatives of individual governments and stakeholders at the country and regional level, and products such as UNDP's Partnership Survey all provide such information.⁶⁵ This information obviously influences their decision-making, and instances of senior managers responding to changes in the external environment and raising the priority of capacity development are found. For instance, UNDP's Senior Management Team reportedly approved the establishment of the Capacity Development Group in 2003 based on a detailed justification drawing on evidence from a number of sources on the external environment. The Bureau of

⁶⁵ On the other hand, there are no formal systems that systematically track demand and shifts in the external environment on an ongoing basis, although there is evidence of regional bureaux moving to track demand through demand for services at the Regional Service Centre level, as a proxy indicator.

Development Policy set up a more formal Policy Advisory Group in 2003 to regularly review the external environment for its policy work, involving all policy-related units in the organization, but this version of what was earlier called the Policy Board, like its two predecessors, was not sustained. A second example would be the 'Back to Development' initiative led by the Regional Director for the Latin America and Caribbean Region, which responded to messages from a number of governments in the region that they wanted UNDP to move away from its role in the administration of government funds into providing upstream policy advice.

Within the organization, formal assessment of the external environment and then consideration of what this means in terms of changes in systems, procedures, staffing, etc., might take place through two processes. First, it could happen as part of programme formulation at either the country office or regional level, since these processes include analysis of the external environment. There was no evidence that this was common practice.

Instead, this appears to be done as part of the change management exercises carried out by country offices and the bureaux. The change management approach and toolkit were introduced in 2003 in direct response to experience with the re-profiling within UNDP as part of the 1999 internal reform process. The change management approach: (a) is inclusive and participatory and driven by management in the unit undertaking the exercise; (b) is comprehensive, with a focus on aligning functions (such as staffing levels and mix of skills and competencies), within financial limits, to an overall vision, positioning of the unit, and a sustainable business model; (c) uses an iterative approach to financial analysis that allows one to translate the agreed-upon functional structure into an organigram (with numbers and levels of posts) that can be financially sustained over the long term; (d) and includes a corporate clearance process that helps to ensure compliance with corporate policies, especially due process, and helps to avoid abuses

of authority. The approach explicitly includes a process of analysis of the external environment, and it is to be assumed that the rationale for working on capacity development will arise as part of this analysis. The Management Change Team based in the Bureau of Management often supports these exercises. Between 2005 and 2009, over 78 such exercises were carried out in sixty-seven country offices (25 of the 46 in Africa Region, 9 of the 17 Arab States Region, 10 of the 26 country offices in Asia/Pacific Region, 8 of the 26 country offices in RBEC and 15 of 25 in Latin America and the Caribbean Region), two of the regional bureaux and in the Bureau of Development Policy.

In terms of managers formally considering how UNDP should establish itself as an effective capacity development partner, there are several major conclusions. Managers, both through formal processes and in response to ongoing messages from the external partners, do consider ways of matching the internal organization with demands from the external environment. Reflecting UNDP's decentralized management culture, most of this work happens at the regional bureau level and below, where the senior managers only have control of some of the aspects of how the unit operates. At the country office level, the Resident Representative has some control over staffing numbers, how the office is organized and what is included in the annual performance assessments of staff. The basic country office core structure, i.e., what is funded by core resources through the Biennial Support Budget of UNDP, is determined in New York. Therefore, the Resident Representative does not have full control over staffing numbers. Other key variables outside the Resident Representative's control include: (a) the contractual modalities for employing staff which are determined at the headquarters; (b) compliance with decisions taken as part of United Nations reform and UNDP's role in it—which, in practical terms means that the Resident Representative can no longer manage the office in isolation from his or her role as the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations country team; and (c) conformity

with centrally set policies and procedures for financial, procurement, and human resources administration. With the decline in predictable core resourcing from headquarters, the Resident Representative needs to maintain a financially sustainable business model, in a context where funding a significant proportion of the country office staffing will be contingent on the level of extra-budgetary resources raised.

The Regional Bureau Directors (the Associate Administrator, for work at the regional bureau level) have a direct role in change management through the corporate clearance process. First, the regional director reviews and clears the initial 'rationale for change'. This brief document summarizes the external and internal drivers for as well as the proposed scope and timing of the change. The second point of clearance is when the country office submits its draft 'transformation plan' to the bureau. This plan captures all of the work done (visioning, positioning, functional review, financial analysis, etc.) and includes the overall proposal for functional and staffing changes, and due process implications, along with an action plan with clear deliverables and timelines. This plan is reviewed and cleared first by the regional bureau and then by the Bureau of Management (Office of Budget and Planning and Office of Human Resources). The clearance looks at substance, consistency, completeness and of course adherence to UNDP policies and procedures.

Within these processes, there is no formal requirement to consider what internal capacity is required or how systems and procedures should be changed, to enhance UNDP's effectiveness as a partner in capacity development. The degree to which such issues are considered will depend upon the extent to which the managers see it as UNDP's role to prioritize medium-term capacity development support to enable national partners to do things for themselves. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, there is ambiguity within the organization on what capacity development really means in operational terms. On the other hand, partners may prioritize delivery of immediate

needs over medium-term improvements. In such a situation, the external environment may not necessarily mean that these processes are pushing UNDP managers to carefully consider what they need to do differently to enhance their effectiveness in capacity development.

5.3 CLARITY OF GOALS AND POLICIES

Has the organization clear goals and policies in terms of its contribution in the area of national development strategies and developing national capacity?

THERE ARE GOALS AT THE CORPORATE AND COUNTRY LEVELS

At the corporate level, UNDP has had capacity development-related goals since 2000. This normally implies that indicators are set to allow tracking of progress towards achievement of said goals and that the goals frame and focus discussion within the organization over what it should do and how it should organize itself internally. In the case of UNDP, no such indicators have been set. Interview evidence from this evaluation suggests the present situation remains the same as depicted in the RBM evaluation completed in 2007: 'This evaluation has found that the goals of UNDP in the strategic frameworks have changed in presentation, but the underlying areas of work have remained almost the same as before. The focus areas under the goals have been rationalized and simplified, but it is hard to identify substantive change to the scope of activities at the country level. Managers and staff in country offices believe that the Multi-Year Funding Frameworks have helped to bring focus and improve positioning and advocacy. They have been a positive tool in conjunction with the reformed United Nations Development Assistance Framework and country programme document to foster dialogue about country results. However, their effect on country portfolios has been limited to encouraging the removal of 'outlier' activities. Projects have just been mapped to the new frameworks.' Interview evidence would suggest that rather than the setting of goals, it has been the increasing importance in the messages from successive Administrators to staff of UNDP's

role in capacity development that has increased its prominence within the organization.

At the country level, while instances of capacity development outcomes were found in results frameworks, credible supporting indicators were not. Nor were baselines set. This was one area in which the principles identified in the 2008 Practice Note were generally not implemented and the finding echoes the general experience across UNDP, as consistently highlighted by evaluations presented at the annual meeting of the Executive Board over the past few years. Senior management has recently assured the Executive Board that it would pay greater attention to setting realistic objectives and indicators and to tracking them. The Capacity Development Group also issued guidance on measuring capacity in early 2010.⁶⁶ This guidance is well aligned with the revised monitoring and evaluation guidance UNDP issued in 2009⁶⁷ but the evaluation has reservations over whether it can be applied in the majority of contexts within which the organization operates or identify the right approach to tracking national capacity (see Box 11).

UNDP's approach and that of the United Nations more generally is founded upon using nationally agreed objectives and outcomes and supporting indicators and then relying on national monitoring systems that report progress against these. This is the correct approach but presents problems if the focus is on national capacity. Government objectives and monitoring/reporting systems focus on what has changed (such as health outcomes, income changes or use of services) rather than on how the changes are delivered (changes in national capacities).

As pointed out in UNDP's own guidance and wider experience, being able to show robust linkages between a capacity development investment and a change in national capacity that then clearly links through into changes in developmental outcomes is difficult. Especially given that such relationships are rarely linear in nature and subject to the law of unintended consequences. This means that the results framework type of approach used by UNDP, based on the use of linear reductionist perspectives, is ill suited for tracking the effectiveness of capacity development.

Box 11. Monitoring Changes in National Capacity and the Effectiveness of Capacity Development Interventions

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⁶⁶ UNDP, 'Measuring Capacity', Note prepared by the Capacity Development Group, February 2010.

⁶⁷ UNDP, 'Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results', October 2009.

BUT THE ROLE AND STATUS OF UNDP'S POLICY ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IS AMBIGUOUS

Whether or not UNDP has a 'policy' on capacity development depends upon what a policy is understood to mean. Policy 'guidance' on capacity development was issued in 1998 and again in 2008. The United Nations Development Group issued a Common Position Statement on capacity development in 2006. The need to address capacity development was also included in UNDP's 2003 programming manual and the 2008 revision (Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures). Evidence would suggest that UNDP staff are aware of the material, although the same cannot be said of external stakeholders. To this extent, UNDP can be seen as having a policy on capacity development.

However, the evidence is more ambiguous if a policy is understood to mean a set of principles that apply across the organization and which need to be followed by all within the organization. Implementation of the guidance, or even selected aspects of it, is not mandatory and is clearly labelled as non-prescriptive content under Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures. The degree to which managers choose to implement the policy guidance issued by the Capacity Development Group is therefore discretionary.

In addition, the degree to which regional bureaux and the country offices have implemented the guidance is not tracked within UNDP's management information systems and implementation does not appear to be discussed on a regular basis by senior management. This is despite the fact that they could easily be discussed as part of the programme quality assurance and enhancement processes managed by the regional bureaux. Overall, the findings echo those in the 2006

Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming⁶⁸, which concluded that there was no corporate strategic plan for putting the gender mainstreaming policy into effect and that while several initiatives had shown results, these 'islands of success' depended on individual interest and efforts rather than a systematic approach.

5.4 BUSINESS PROCESSES

Have UNDP's business processes been supportive towards the organization being an effective partner in capacity development?

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IS CONSIDERED IN UNDP'S BUSINESS PROCESSES

As summarized in Table 2, the need to consider capacity development is highlighted within many of the organization's internal systems and procedures. There are two main exceptions. First, within the annual process for assessing individual's performance (Result and Competency Assessments), which does not as a matter of course include assessment of capacity development performance.⁶⁹ By contrast, ongoing efforts to mainstream gender have meant that gender is considered part of this annual process and investment in the area is now tracked by UNDP's management information systems. Possibly the main influence of the annual performance assessment is in terms of its focus on delivery of immediate results at the individual level, although this does not necessarily strengthen incentives for the longer term perspective required for good capacity development. Second, is the absence of capacity development as a key focus of the internal programme quality assurance and enhancement processes managed by the regional bureaux, where the opportunity to take a longer-term perspective exists.

⁶⁸ UNDP, 'Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in UNDP', Evaluation Office, New York, January 2006.

⁶⁹ Note that standard core competencies for UNDP staff in the area of capacity development, even for the capacity development advisors, do not exist.

Table 2: Degree to Which, Where Relevant, Capacity Development Has Been Reflected Within the Organization’s Business Processes and Support Staff Taking a Systems-Based Approach to Capacity Development, Based on the Principles Outlined in the 2008 Practice Note

Business process	Capacity development reflected within the business process?	Support staff taking a ‘systems based approach’ and application of the principles
Programme and project management		
Programme and project management procedures	✓	Neutral
Capacity development assessment tool	✓	X
Monitoring and evaluation guidance	✓	X
Financial administration system (ATLAS)	X	X
Use of national execution	✓	✓
Individual’s performance management		
Individual’s annual performance assessments	At discretion of line manager	At discretion of line manager
Internal learning		
Internal knowledge networks ⁷⁰	✓	✓
Training	✓	✓
Corporate reporting		
Corporate reporting	✓	Possibly from 2010
Resource allocation		
Resource allocation of TRAC funds	✓	X
Criteria for allocation of trust funds	✓	X

BUT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO INTEGRATE THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

While business processes may encourage consideration of capacity development, they are not necessarily supportive of the approach to capacity development outlined in the 2008 Practice Note and hence implementation of the approaches that experience indicates will lead to greater effectiveness.

Key challenges here start with the lack of consensus within the organization over what capacity

development means. If national capacity and capacity development mean everything, then in terms of management they mean nothing, as they do not define what and what not to do. This, in turn, leads to the status of the capacity development policy guidance and the fact that UNDP does not appear to systematically track implementation of policies developed within the Bureau of Development Policy or elsewhere. The Capacity Development Group, with active support from others within the organization, may have been successful in raising the ‘profile’ of the policy and ensuring that it is reflected in internal

⁷⁰ In UNDP’s internal ‘Products Survey’, capacity development-related knowledge networks score as medium performers. The Capacity Development Group acknowledges that more needs to be done, but there is an issue of priorities and resources.

UNDP documentation. However, as observed by a senior manager at the country office level, capacity development is just one of many policy issues that needs to be dealt with and that is promoted from the headquarters. What appears missing is a core message, backed by consistent attention from the organization's management, of what operational units should do differently in response to the policy.

This, however, would be challenging, even if senior management wanted to do so. The guidance includes a number of different analytical frameworks and insights that reflect learning from a range of differing academic traditions in organizational development. In attempting to reflect the diversity of approaches to understanding national capacity and capacity development, the guidance has made use of specialist terminology. Which aspect of the approach in the Practice Note should therefore be reflected in business practices? Should it be the perspective, the principles, a requirement that rigorous assessment be carried out, or rules on what the programme looks like? Questions also arise over the degree to which staff find the guidance easy to comprehend and apply in their work. Interviews at the regional and country office levels indicated that many staff members found the language used technical and difficult to understand—staff are not specialists in organizational theory. Finally, while the guidance reflects the present consensus on how to approach capacity development, it is not presented in a way that makes it easy to use with governments or to apply internally.

Judging the degree to which a bureau or country office and its managers are taking the suggested approach is also not amenable to a mechanistic assessment against a pre-defined set of criteria, as illustrated throughout this evaluation. As the guidance states, there are no blueprints of what support should look like. Nor is it easy to assess implementation of the

approach through a desk review of the support programme. The 2007 UNDP RBM evaluation noted the lack of oversight systems that focus on tracking whether programmes use results to adjust resources (people, money and partnerships) to improve future results. This raises the question of whether UNDP has systems in place that would allow senior managers to track implementation, even if it were decided to so. However, interview evidence does suggest that regional bureaux are exploring the issue and that several are experimenting with ways of increasing engagement with the country offices on substantive issues.

Evidence shows that the complexity of UNDP procedures and a preoccupation of staff with internal project processing procedures are leading to an overly technocratic and narrow staff perspective that fails to respond to, or even register, field realities.⁷¹ This 'blinking' impedes field trips aimed at assessing progress on the ground and learning about 'what is working (and what is not)'. This issue was also raised in the context of national execution, where variability in interpretation across countries is found. At one extreme, national execution, for whatever reason, has meant almost no engagement by UNDP with what happens in the projects, beyond attendance at the annual review meetings.

Finally, as noted elsewhere, there is a tension between the linear/reductionist approach found in some of the tools (such as the capacity assessment tool) and business processes (the approach to monitoring and evaluation) and the 'systems' perspective found in the Practice Note. The Capacity Development Group is aware of this dichotomy, but insists that the capacity assessment tool, for example, is normally not used mechanistically, and instead adopted as a framework for initiating and structuring a more useful and ongoing dialogue between partners at the country level.

⁷¹ The ADR from Burkina Faso commented on this tendency particularly strongly.

5.5 ALIGNMENT OF UNDP STRUCTURES

Are UNDP's structures suitably aligned to permit the organization to be an effective partner in capacity development?

UNDP's internal structure is fairly standard for an international organization, with divisions at headquarters, regional and country levels and a clear line of authority, in theory, from the Administrator/Associate Administrator to the Regional Directors (regional bureaux) and thence to the Resident Representatives (country offices).

This core structure is supported by a number of functional divisions that address corporate-level and administrative issues, but which have no line management role in the work at the regional and country level. These include the Bureau of Development Policy (responsible for policy development and guidance), Bureau of Management (responsible for administrative systems, policies and procedures) and Partnerships Bureau established in 2007 (responsible for enhancing strategic partnerships and resource mobilization). The Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery does not entirely fit within this structure. While based at corporate level, it plays a direct role in project formulation and delivery at the country level.

In terms of alignment for supporting capacity development, three aspects of the structure directly affect its capability. These are: (i) the line management role of the Regional Director for the Resident Representatives and in quality assurance and enhancement of the country programmes; (ii) the role of the Bureau of Development Policy, and in particular the Capacity Development Group, in the development and implementation of policy and guidance; and (iii) the role of the capacity development advisors placed within the Regional Service Centres who provide substantive support to the country offices.

THE LINE MANAGEMENT ROLE OF THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES AND IN QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

Resident representatives have significant autonomy in shaping the UNDP programme at the country level. The director of the regional bureau, however, is accountable for the submission of a high-quality draft Country Programme Document for Executive Board review and approval. The country office and the regional bureau are jointly responsible for determining an appropriate formulation and appraisal process, which would normally include the following:

- The regional bureau reviews through a Bureau Programme Appraisal Committee the draft Country Programme Document along with the evaluation plan to verify that it reflects the UNDP programming framework.
- The regional bureau ensures that the advice of the Programme Appraisal Committee and other comments are taken into consideration in the final draft and arranges for the financial data to be cleared by the Office of Planning and Budgeting before forwarding the draft Country Programme Document to the Executive Board Secretariat.
- The regional bureau prepares the Resource Mobilization Table in collaboration with the Office of Planning and Budgeting. This table is used for internal UNDP management purposes only.
- In the event that UNDP and the government are unable to reach full agreement on the draft Country Programme Document content, the Administrator will bring the areas of disagreement to the attention of the Executive Board in a note. The regional bureau prepares this note.

UNDP therefore does have the modality to assess the capacity development approach of a country programme.

THE ROLE OF THE BUREAU OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY, AND IN PARTICULAR THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Capacity Development Group is effectively one of six practices found within the Bureau of Development Policy. The others are Democratic Governance, Poverty Reduction, Energy and Environment, HIV/AIDs and Gender. The Bureau of Development Policy's vision statement describes it as 'a group of leading development knowledge entrepreneurs dedicated to empowering UNDP Country Offices and UN Country Teams with knowledge, tools, solutions and resources for critical development challenges, supporting strong development coherence throughout the UN system, and informing and influencing the global policy debate'.

Four of the practices deal with substantive areas, while capacity development and gender are cross-cutting themes. Central to understanding the Capacity Development Group's role is that it is mandated to be entrepreneurial but has no direct line management role. In terms of the tools available to fulfil this entrepreneurial role, the Capacity Development Group suffers from one constraint that the other practices do not, namely the lack of a Thematic Trust Fund associated with capacity development and/or a dedicated line item within UNDP's core budget for funding innovative work on capacity development. This hampers the leverage of the Capacity Development Group relative to other practices, as resources from trust funds are a well-established tool used by other practices for encouraging innovative work at the country level.

The lack of a trust fund reflects the view of potential donors that capacity development is a cross-cutting issue and therefore should be clearly reflected in the allocation of funds under the other trust funds. However, this assumption depends upon active consent from practices administering the other trust funds, since no formal system is in place that compels this. Within this context, while cooperation between practices is perceived to be improving, senior Bureau of Development Policy management acknowledge

that mainstreaming the approaches advocated by the Capacity Development Group is a priority.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORS PLACED WITHIN THE REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRES

UNDP does not have the funds to employ at the country level the full range of technical specialists required. Therefore, advisory resources are funded at the regional level, and placed within the Regional Service Centres. This issue was not examined in any depth as part of this evaluation, since the UNDP Evaluation Office was concurrently assessing the role of the Regional Service Centres.

In terms of capacity development, teams are small relative to demand. Team leaders are funded out of UNDP's Global Cooperation Framework, rather than the core Biennial Support Budget. Other members are normally funded as long-term consultants using project funds (initially from the Capacity 2015 project and the Global Cooperation Framework) or have been Junior Professional Officers. One regional bureau has, for the first time, put in a regional initiative on capacity development, while work has been carried out in at least one bureau to recast the corporate policy guidance into a form thought more relevant and accessible to the regional context and what staff want. Recent evidence from the Regional Service Centres confirm that demand for capacity development advisors far exceeds what is available. This is true even though supply can be expanded by the use of research assistants, the practice networks, and rosters of consultants and other professional contacts. Advisors also face a dilemma between providing in-depth and sustained support for a few of the countries in 'their' region, which allows them to play a full and substantive role, or spreading their support thinly across all countries. Discussion with the advisors suggests that most find it more effective to focus on a limited number of countries. However, as illustrated in the country case studies, this inevitably means that a significant number of country offices receive almost no support and find it difficult to identify satisfactory alternative sources.

5.6 RESOURCES

Has UNDP optimized the resources dedicated towards allowing the organization to be an effective partner in capacity development?

FUNDING

Optimization is challenging due to a number of factors, including the sources and predictability of funding. The challenge of limited core funding is signalled in the regular resolutions of the General Assembly calling for member-states to increase the level of such funding. This reality has been reflected in the justified degree of attention placed by senior management on both resource mobilization and delivery, but also in the perception in some quarters that UNDP seeks funds not always because the proposed support is a priority. Rather, it seeks them because many staff are funded out of non-core, extra-budgetary resources, and therefore managers must maintain a certain level of such funding if they are to even maintain a team with the necessary core competencies. The funding issues all impede taking a long-term and strategic approach to capacity development, where final outcomes are often not fully defined and opportunities may suddenly appear and then disappear.

In terms of core funding allocated from the central level, the change to TRAC 2⁷² allocation criteria

in 2008 is potentially significant, although TRAC 2 funds are allocated on an annual basis.⁷³ Distribution of TRAC 2 resources is notionally now geared to capacity development performance criteria:

- Criterion 1: National capacities for the MDGs and human development, policy and plans
- Criterion 2: National capacities for implementation of development strategies and goals
- Criterion 3: Response to emerging development priorities of programme countries

In practice, Regional Bureau Directors, who decide the allocation, are not held accountable for their decisions. Thus, it does not appear that this opportunity has been used by the Regional Directors to encourage change in behaviour by country offices along the lines envisaged in the Practice Note.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ABILITIES

Discussion with staff from the Learning Resource Centre indicated that collaboration with the Capacity Development Group has facilitated incorporation in training materials for capacity development courses and modules of up-to-date guidelines and tools. Demand for the Capacity Assessment elective is particularly strong. Selection of staff to undertake the

⁷² UNDP funding is complex. Effectively, 10 percent of programme resources comes from core funding, which is distributed under three budget lines, TRACs 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.3. TRAC 1.1.1 budget represents the minimum level of resources targeted to be available for an individual programme country during a given financial period. It is calculated in accordance with the board-approved distribution methodology, using per capita gross national income and population as the primary criteria. TRAC 1.1.2 resources are in the first instance earmarked by region. These are subsequently allocated by the regional bureaux on an annual basis between country programmes. In theory, allocation should be on the basis of the quality of the planned UNDP assisted programmes. TRAC 1.1.2 earmarking for a given region is equal to two-thirds of the total TRAC 1.1.1 earmarking for all countries in that region. The allocation formula for TRAC 1.1.2 assignment for an individual country was initially expressed as a percentage of the country's TRAC 1.1.1 earmarking, and ranged from 0 to 100 percent (averaging 66.67 percent). Temporary changes were made to the TRAC 1.1.2 allocation system through Executive Board decision 2005/26. The TRAC 1.1.3 facility was established to provide the Administrator with the capacity to respond quickly and flexibly to the needs of countries in special development situations. This budget, which has grown significantly, is mostly used to support work in crisis situations.

⁷³ UNDP, 'Information on TRAC-2 allocation and methodology and criteria for establishing fixed lines in the programming arrangements', Paper DP/2008/14 presented at First regular session 2008 of the UNDP Executive Board, 21 to 28 January 2008, New York.

(on-line) Virtual Development Academy⁷⁴ is contingent on the decision of the Career Review Group and the opinion (and commitment) of the candidate's supervisor, since successful participation is very time-consuming. Other programmes that incorporate capacity development elements include thematic courses (e.g., governance), general training and inductions and Regional Service Centre training and workshops (which tend to

be 'demand-driven'). There is no formal training qualification requirement for taking up a capacity development specialist post; although an annual Capacity Development Group retreat prepares new specialists. A formal induction programme is being prepared. There is no formal capture of course learning experience in the Annual Performance Assessment.

Chapter 5: Key Findings

1. UNDP is the only United Nations agency that has devoted significant resources to identifying lessons on effective capacity development over the last twenty years. The Capacity Development Group within the Bureau of Development Policy, established in 1992, is generally acknowledged as the main source of expertise across the United Nations, as well as within UNDP, and plays a significant role in the wider community of practitioners.
2. UNDP has also engaged fully with the broader community of those assessing the effectiveness of capacity development, and has started to invest in promoting the lessons learned to stakeholders in programme countries. However, the overall impression is that key government stakeholders in programme countries are still much less familiar with the lessons learned.
3. Within UNDP, the systems, processes and opportunities are now in place that would allow the organization to take a more effective approach to capacity development, but implementation will require a transformation in the way they are used.
4. The Regional Directors, given their role and responsibilities both with the United Nations more broadly, and in managing the UNDP Resident Representatives at country office level, would need to drive through any transformation of how UNDP approaches capacity development.
5. There is still a lack of consensus within UNDP on what capacity development means and it is difficult to define precisely what should or should not be done, including within business practices.
6. The Capacity Development Group has been an effective champion but its success has been contingent on convincing individuals and it has lacked access to the main incentive used by the policy advisory function, namely money. Overall, positive incentives rewarding managers who adopt the advised approach to capacity development do not appear to be in place.
7. Capacity development is explained as 'how' UNDP does business. It is thus treated as a means in UNDP's strategy documents including the present strategic plan. This conceptualization is not reflected in the structures established. As a means, the expectation is that advisory work would mostly be integrated as part of the practice areas and expertise on capacity development developed within practice areas. Instead, capacity development advisory teams have been established at both regional and headquarters levels. In so doing, UNDP has organized its corporate response in the same way as for its thematic work in the various practice areas.

⁷⁴ A one-year modular structure comprising six core courses of which capacity development is one, and four electives. Participants are usually managers, programme officers, heads of units, etc. It features interactive case studies; an Action Learning Project and (for some) a face-to-face workshop in New York. Of the approximately 160-180 participants annually, one hundred attend headquarters for the latter which incorporates a capacity development 'clinic' for small groups several times during the 5-day workshop. A certificate is awarded for successful completion (but not everyone completes).

Chapter 5: Key Findings (continued)

8. Capacity development advisory teams within Regional Service Centres are small relative to reported demand for their support. Inevitably, the practice of focusing on only some countries means a significant number receive little or no capacity development support. Progress has been made in integrating capacity development into the work of the broader cadre of advisory staff in these practice areas, but this has been at the discretion of the individual managers, and not a systematic response to a corporate agenda.
9. Effective management for capacity development cannot be reduced to a blueprint or checklist of what should be done, but rather requires acknowledging that Resident Representatives and the country offices work in an environment in which outcomes and objectives are often ill-defined, consequences unpredictable and options limited. It therefore means placing a premium on informed judgment, which is difficult to track under an organization's management information systems, and being prescriptive about the use of the principles and informed decision making, rather than the process. Being prescriptive about processes runs the danger of reinforcing rigid and formulaic approaches.
10. There is a tension between linear 'reductionist' approaches to capacity development in some tools and the systems perspective reflected in the Capacity Development Practice Note.
11. The utility of the guidance is also affected by two other significant factors. Its complexity makes it difficult for staff to apply. Interviews with staff at the regional and country office levels indicated that many found the language used technical and difficult to understand. UNDP's capacity development guidance is also not presented in a way that makes it easy to use with governments. UNDP guidance is driven by supply rather than demand and thus in discord with government processes. The guidance treats capacity development as a unified and comprehensive issue. This is not how it is addressed within governments where aspects of the agenda are addressed by a range of government organizations, either as part of their core function or as part of a reform process.
12. National partners' and UNDP's programme and project monitoring systems, as well as performance reviews of country offices and staff, focus on tracking results. This acts as an impediment, as capacity development is not a result but a process. Its lack of visibility in monitoring and reporting systems therefore reduces the scope to either identify instances of good practice or strengthen positive incentives to reward those using good practice. UNDP guidance on measuring capacity was issued in early 2010. This is well aligned with the revised guidance on monitoring and evaluation issued by UNDP in 2009 but the evaluation has reservations over whether it can be applied in the majority of contexts within which UNDP operates or identifies the right approach to tracking national capacity.
13. Severe limitations of core funding at country office level often lead managers to seek out opportunities for extra-budgetary resources (including in diverse non-core fields of activity) to fund staff posts. This tendency impedes adoption of more strategic long-term approaches to capacity development.
14. Notwithstanding the lack of positive incentives to pursue strategic approaches to capacity development, there is evidence of growing demand for staff development programmes in the field of capacity development.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: UNDP has not made the shift to the nationally-led change process for capacity development identified in the strategic plan.

UNDP is faced with the challenge of responding to government demand and ownership of the development agenda and process while also addressing corporate demands and the global normative agenda including on capacity development for sustainable development. It has accomplished the first as it is highly responsive to supporting government partners meet immediate priorities and day-to-day requirements. It has not fully accomplished the second or sought ways of balancing how it responds to both demands. At this stage, UNDP's efforts are focused on the mechanical process of developing tools and instruments in a supply-driven mode and their integration into UNDP internal systems and procedures. The main focus is not on transforming how UNDP manages its relationships with national partners, which is what would be expected if the lessons reflected in UNDP's own guidance were being applied.

UNDP's effectiveness in contributing to capacity development is dependent upon the degree to which partners demand UNDP's support in this area and are also aware of the lessons learned on how best to address national capacity constraints. These conditions are not met. Partners perceive UNDP's comparative advantages in terms of its impartiality, the long-term relationship, its access to international expertise in substantive areas, the likelihood of it being willing to provide support, and the possibility of using UNDP to circumvent administrative constraints within national governments. On the part of UNDP, there has only been some modest work by the corporate

advisory cadres in ensuring that national partners are aware of the principles identified on how UNDP should manage its relationship with governments, how this might change how they would relate with UNDP, or whether they agree with this change in approach.

Conclusion 2: UNDP misses opportunities to understand the complexities of the endogenous process and to help governments move the national capacity development agenda to a broader and more comprehensive level.

Understanding the complexities of the capacity development process as well as the diverse and fast-changing conditions within countries is vital if UNDP is to better position itself and address, in a strategic manner, its mandate for capacity development. Current international experience shows the limitations of the 'planned' approaches to capacity development, which have been the norm in international development cooperation, and of UNDP reliance on a set of tools that do not necessarily capture the national perspective and systemic constraints. UNDP is missing opportunities at both programmatic and project levels to identify and highlight opportunities to government to meet both immediate demands and medium- or longer-term capacity development needs.

Conclusion 3: UNDP does not have learning mechanisms in place to capture emerging innovations and lessons on the ground and to develop, disseminate, and scale up.

UNDP does not systematically learn from successes and then seek to systematically replicate the lessons. UNDP can showcase a number of instances of support reflecting good practice

and what has been identified as working best, at both regional bureau and country office levels. Given its universal presence on the ground and work with national partners, UNDP is in an advantaged position working with national partners including universities to develop analytical systems in countries to develop and compile knowledge of what works, why and how. UNDP's promotion of South-South cooperation also provides good opportunities for learning from each other.

Conclusion 4: UNDP's investment on capacity development, including its conceptual work and guidance and the international recognition of its work, makes it well placed to take a lead role, both at the country and global levels to enhance capacity development.

This role now has to move to a more demand-driven model and to a greater focus on working with national partners using the principles of its own guidance. Doing this in partnership with other United Nations agencies and other development partners presents several advantages worth exploring.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: UNDP should prioritize implementation of the principles embedded in the strategic plan across all countries.

UNDP should build upon its analytical work and successful programmatic experiences and implement the shift to a fully nationally-led approach that is both responsive to meeting immediate government needs while maximizing the contribution to capacity development. At the operational level, implementation of the principles for how the relationship between UNDP and national partners is managed is the most important priority, rather than further refinement of tools and guidance. This requires ensuring that governments and other national partners are aware of, and buy into, the proposed changes in the nature of the relationship with UNDP. It also requires ensuring that they are

aware of what expertise on capacity development they may access through UNDP. Internally, it requires UNDP to both highlight the importance of implementation of the principles and identify how to better support their implementation at the country level.

Recommendation 2: Capacity development guidance should be drafted to maximize its coherence with government processes.

Guidelines will only be effective if staff understand the rationale for and importance of the guidance for the work they do and what government and other partners are requesting. Future guidance must therefore be drafted to respond to this reality and its value within government processes, where capacity development is rarely addressed as a discrete issue. UNDP should also ensure that future guidance helps staff make a clear distinction between support that contributes to ongoing national activities and capacity development. This would directly address the belief of many within the organization that they already address capacity development and therefore need not consider changes in how they work.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should systematically assess good practices and develop knowledge of why these have happened.

Governments face increasingly complex national capacity challenges, while the limitations of traditional 'planned' approaches to capacity development are becoming more evident. These trends require a continuous learning process. They present clear opportunities for both governments and UNDP to identify both why capacity development successes have happened and the implications for replication. This should become the priority for UNDP's work in support of capacity development. It will require dedicated resources. It will also require development of new approaches for learning lessons beyond the traditional monitoring and evaluation systems that focus on end results. Finally, it means enhancing knowledge management across the various units, regions and country

offices to ensure that good practices and lessons are disseminated.

Recommendation 4: UNDP should develop the capacities and competencies of its staff and managers in country offices to identify opportunities to integrate capacity development into their programme and projects.

Capacity development cannot be reduced to a blueprint or checklist of what should be done. It requires acknowledging that UNDP works in environments in which outcomes and objectives are often ill-defined, consequences unpredictable, options limited and failure a cost of doing business. It therefore means placing a premium on informed judgment, which is difficult to track under an organization's management information systems. Required competencies also include flexibility, business orientation in exploiting situations, and a drive and perseverance to get things done with governments. It also means not being prescriptive about process, as this runs the danger of reinforcing rigid and formulaic approaches. UNDP therefore needs to ensure that its internal reporting and management systems recognize this. Country offices and the regional bureaux have started developing diverse approaches on how best to access the required expertise needed to both bring in experience from elsewhere and develop specific plans of action with

national partners based on lessons learned. This experience should be assessed to identify whether there are approaches that should be implemented more widely across the organization.

Recommendation 5: UNDP should ensure that capacity development at the regional and headquarters level is not treated as a practice area.

UNDP should retain its internal expertise in capacity development at both headquarters and the regional levels. This expertise is both a comparative advantage and essential if the organization is to enhance its effectiveness as a global partner in capacity development and learn from examples of good practice. Making the change required by the guidance necessitates that capacity development becomes firmly integrated into the work of the practices and broader advisory cadre at regional level. This is also likely to decrease the proliferation of centrally produced guidance, using differing terminology and frameworks when addressing the same basic issues, and hence reduce confusion for those who use the guidance. This will ensure that capacity development is properly addressed in UNDP's ongoing engagement with governments and will enable the organization to build on its strengths and past work to more effectively develop national capacities to achieve human development.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The achievement of development results, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in an equitable and sustainable manner requires that countries have the capacity to perform critical functions for policy, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and aid coordination. This is important for country ownership of the development process and the achievement of development effectiveness. The central role of capacity development for national ownership and development has been given centre stage in the United Nations system. United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 59/250 – 2004) acknowledged the importance of capacity development for the achievement of the MDGs and requested all United Nations agencies to support developing countries to ‘establish and maintain effective national institutions’. The Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR, A/RES/62/208) also highlights the importance of capacity development for national ownership and reiterates the United Nations mandate for supporting countries. Capacity development has also been the focus of major international debates and the core of major initiatives such as the Paris Declaration (2003) and the more recent Accra Agenda for Action (2008). There has developed at the global level an increasing consensus on the definition of capacity development as an endogenous process that is important for sustainable development.

Strengthening national capacities to carry out a variety of functions has been a focus of UNDP since the 1960s. UNDP has applied a variety of strategies and approaches for capacity development across its various practices areas. More recently, over 70 percent of the outcomes in UNDP’s strategic document, the Medium Term

Financial Framework (MYFF) 2000–2003, were targeted at capacity development. The MYFF 2004–2007 continued this emphasis. Also in 2004, UNDP established the Capacity Development Group within the Bureau for Development Policy, to further improve policy and programme guidance and ensure a greater institutional focus on capacity development. The Strategic Plan for 2008–2011 highlights the strategic importance of capacity development for UNDP and seeks to enhance its role as the ‘how’ of operation in all focus areas of UNDP’s work. UNDP now looks upon capacity development no longer simply as an ‘approach’ or a ‘development driver’ but as an ‘expected development outcome’ featured in all UNDP focus areas. The attainment of these capacity outcomes will be significant part of a summative assessment of the Strategic Plan in 2011. This evaluation will contribute towards that assessment.

The massive effort that UNDP has directed at supporting capacity development has never been evaluated in a systematic and comprehensive fashion. However, the growing body of preliminary evidence coming from the various UNDP Evaluation Office evaluations, which include an assessment of capacity development activities, show a substantial level of convergence in the findings to lend credibility and generalizability. The evidence from these evaluations indicates that there are substantial efforts directed at capacity development by UNDP but that in the majority of cases, UNDP does not play a significant role in engaging local capacities and in strengthening national capacities in a sustainable manner. While there is progress in supporting alignment of activities with national development strategies, there continue to be shortfalls in using country systems and capacities.

This evaluation will complement or validate existing findings and put them in context as well as explain the observed results. It will be the first direct and systematic assessment of capacity development and will focus on one area of UNDP's work—support for national development strategies and their management, providing the evidence to support accountability for what UNDP has done in terms of the appropriateness of its approaches, and its contribution to strengthening national capacities. The evaluation will also contribute to guiding the massive ongoing efforts within UNDP at integrating capacity development in all areas of work by providing information on what has worked, why, how and in what contexts. This also includes indicating how well policies and guidance provided by the Capacity Development Group and the regional bureaux have been implemented, factors of success and what would enhance the effectiveness of support from central and regional offices. Given the wide range of donors and development partners involved in supporting national capacity development, a critical question raised is: what is UNDP best placed to do (relative to other partners) in supporting countries in their internal national efforts in capacity development? This will be part of the evaluation.

CAPACITY AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT—DEFINITIONS AND CHALLENGES FOR EVALUATION

The evaluation will use the following definitions.

- 'Capacity' is a condition or state made up of individual competencies and collective abilities that combine and emerge into some form of system that allows performance to take place (i.e., abilities and performance).
- 'Capacity development' is defined by UNDP as 'the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain capacities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time'.
- 'Capacity development support' is the process that contributes the resources, the strategies, the motivations, the ideas and so on to

encourage that development or emergence of abilities.

The definition reflects the belief that capacity development is an endogenous process that is country owned. Development partners such as UNDP can only support or facilitate the process.

This more recent conceptualization of capacity development dates back to the mid-1990s and differs from earlier conceptualizations that focused primarily on human resource development and from the 1970s' conceptions focused on building basic technical and functional competencies. The new definition places institutional changes in a national context and addresses them at a macro level. It includes 'the capacity of the institutions of a country to manage policy and programme formulation, budgeting and financial management, development planning, implementation, coordination and performance monitoring and evaluation of development operations'. Within this conceptual framework, individuals and organizations are now seen not as isolated actors but as integral and critical parts of a larger system. This definition, which is fully expanded upon in UNDP practice notes produced in 2008 and 2009, will guide the development of a conceptual framework for assessing UNDP's contribution to enhancing national capacity.

Evaluating capacity development presents several challenges for measurement and evaluation especially in a development context. An analytical piece is being prepared to highlight these challenges and their implications for the design of this evaluation. The evaluation provides an opportunity to more fully understand and address some of the challenges and lend input to UNDP/CDG current efforts at developing a framework for the measurement and evaluation of capacity development.

FOCUSING THE EVALUATION ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

UNDP's work on capacity development is vast and varied. It cuts across focus areas and operates in different contexts and with different national

needs and priorities. As noted in the 2008 Administrator's Annual Report, human development is the 'what' of UNDP's work and capacity development is the 'how'. More than in any other United Nations agency, strengthening national capacities to perform critical functions of 'upstream' policy formulation, developing strategies and planning, setting budgetary and financial management framework, monitoring and evaluation and aid coordination have been a major focus of UNDP's work. These functions continue to be important given changing national contexts and priorities, the demands of the MDGs, the changing global requirements under the Paris Declaration and new programmatic development instruments. Many countries, however, continue to be weak in these core functions and could benefit from evaluative information to guide effective interventions. The evaluation will focus on UNDP's work in strengthening national development strategies and their management and the capacities developed over the course of the past two UNDP Multi-Year Funding Frameworks (spanning 2000-2003 and 2004-2007 respectively), and will be forward looking with regard to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011. This evaluation will draw from previous UNDP evaluations addressing the PRSP process, the MDGs, and Capacity 21, which supported the formulation of sustainable development strategies and action plans.

PURPOSE

The evaluation is intended to help UNDP, within the evolving national and global context, to better support capacity development and contribute to development results at the country level in line with the bold aspirations of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan.

The evaluation has two main aims:

1. It will support the work of the UNDP Executive Board by providing evidence on the extent to which UNDP has set itself up to deliver capacity development support which responds effectively to diverse national

contexts and has then delivered substantive results in the area of capacity development, with a special focus on national development strategies.

2. Looking forward, based on the evidence of what has and has not worked, the evaluation is intended to help UNDP, within the evolving national and global context, to better support capacity development and contribute to development results at the country level in line with the bold aspirations of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan. To this end, it will aim to make recommendations towards:
 - i. Improvement of approaches, interventions and programmes for capacity development support;
 - ii. Enhancement of capacity (policies, processes, skills, support available to country offices, and related incentives, etc.) to support capacity development;
 - iii. Strengthening of UNDP's strategic positioning within the evolving national and global context, and its comparative advantage in supporting capacity development; and
 - iv. Development of approaches for the evaluation of capacity development that judge against endogenous criteria of success.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the evaluation address the accountability and learning requirements of UNDP. Of the following four objectives, the first two are clearly focused on accountability, while the latter two pursue a learning goal:

- Ascertain the contribution of UNDP's support to capacity development in terms of strengthened country capacities in the selected area of national development strategies and their management and the sustainability of these capacities;

- Assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of UNDP's support to capacity development for national development strategies and their management;
- Distil findings and draw lessons on what works well, why and in what contexts from this and other pertinent evaluations;
- Contribute to the ongoing discussion on the measurement and evaluation of capacity development support.

The evaluation will provide actionable recommendations on UNDP strategies, policies, approaches and interventions for capacity development support, and its organizational capacity to deliver on them.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The key evaluation questions are as follows:

- What is UNDP's contribution to strengthened national capacities for development results? What are the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and sustainability of UNDP's work?
- What works, how, and in what contexts?
- What is UNDP's comparative advantage in strengthening national capacities for development results? How is UNDP best placed in supporting this area? What alternatives are important?

The following provides the more detail questions that would guide the evaluation:

Outcome Status (Programmatic and development outcomes)

- I. How have the national capacities for national development strategies and their management developed (or not) in the 2000-2008 period (and, where feasible, over a longer time-frame)? What was the progress towards development outcomes?

Contribution to national capacities

- II. What has UNDP done to support capacity development in national development strategies and their management in countries from 2000-2008 (and, where feasible, over a longer time-frame)?
 - What was the nature and magnitude of capacity development support UNDP provided to the countries?
 - What was the scope and magnitude of capacity development support specifically directed to capacities for national development strategies and their management?
 - How was this support distributed across:
 - different facets of national development strategies and their management—national development strategies and plans, aid coordination, monitoring and evaluation?
 - different levels—individual, organizational and system-wide?
 - different functional (engaging stakeholders, articulating a vision, formulating strategies and policies, etc.) and technical (procurement, financial management, etc.) skills areas?
 - different capacity levers such as institutional arrangements, leadership, accountability, and knowledge?
 - How did this support change over time? Pre-mid-1990s? Mid-1990s-1999? 2000-2003? 2004-2007? 2008?
 - What was the quality of UNDP's support to capacity development?
 - *Relevance:* Was the capacity development support relevant and responsive to country needs and priorities?
 - *Coordination and partnership:* To what extent did the capacity development support promote coordination and partnership within the country (between

- government and other national actors), and among donors?
- *Alignment with UNDP Mandate and Practices:* How well did the capacity development support reflect UNDP's mandate and the evolving paradigm on capacity development?
 - *Consistency with desirable practice* (e.g., nationally-owned, based in systematic assessment and understanding of informal behaviours and structures, country-driven design, adapted to country context, supportive of innovation, cognizant of trade-offs and addressing system-wide capacity): How consistent was the capacity development support with desirable practice?
 - *Cost-effectiveness and sustainability:* Was UNDP support to capacity development delivered in a cost-effective, sustainable manner?
- What capacities were developed:
 - in different facets of national development strategies and their management?
 - at different levels?
 - in different functional and technical areas?
 - across different capacity levers?
 - Were capacities sustained?
 - What was the adequacy and quality of UNDP's inputs (e.g., policies, framework/tool kits, guidance/support to country offices, knowledge management, staff skills, incentives, and managerial oversight)?
- III. Were there significant developments in the country over this period that had a bearing on national capacities and capacity development? What were they?
- IV. What was the nature of the capacity development support for national development strategies and their management provided by other donor/development partners over the same period? How did it affect capacity development or progress towards development outcomes?
- V. Taking into account the possible influence of donor/partner initiatives and contextual factors, what has been the contribution of UNDP support to capacity development for national development strategies and their management in terms of:
- capacities developed?
 - progress towards development outcomes?
- Factors affecting success—what works and how*
- Where has UNDP's capacity development support resulted in significant capacity gains and where not?
 - What factors best explain the gains or lack thereof? For example,
 - country/situational context
 - national ownership of the process
 - involvement of stakeholders
 - quality of relationships with other development partners
 - type of coordination/harmonization (UN system/Paris Declaration)
 - quality of UNDP's capacity development support
 - quality of UNDP's inputs (e.g., managerial oversight, staff skills, quality assurance processes)
- Strategic positioning*
- VI. Relative to other development partners, how is UNDP positioned to work on developing capacities for national development strategies and their management? What is its comparative advantage?

SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will cover the period 2000–2009. For assessing the effectiveness of UNDP support at the country level, the evaluation will also look at UNDP support in the area of capacity building for national development strategies prior to the evaluation period, if practicable. To the extent possible and based on country information, the study will seek to cover all geographic regions, as defined by UNDP. It will evaluate capacity building for national development strategies, including support provided from the country office, regional bureau and corporate levels. At the country level, the evaluation will assess the capacity building for national development strategies approach under diverse development conditions in which UNDP functions. The scope and focus of the evaluation will be informed by discussions with stakeholders, research, and the consideration of issues involved in evaluating capacity development.

APPROACH FOR THE EVALUATION

NATIONAL-DRIVEN PERSPECTIVE

The design of the evaluation will strongly recognize: that capacity development is about allowing people to manage themselves, *creating an understanding of how this process happens and how UNDP and other development partners effectively engage with this endogenous process*. The design of this evaluation must therefore differ significantly from that of previous ones. It should start from the country perspective and focus on country ownership of the development process. It should then place UNDP activities, and the value of these activities, within the larger framework of countries developing and implementing their own national policies and strategies for development. It will therefore focus on: how countries are achieving results, including the extent and nature of national ownership and capacity acquisition; the countries' expectations of UNDP and other development partners; how well UNDP responds to these expectations; and what is UNDP's overall contribution to country results.

OPEN SYSTEMS MODEL FOR EVALUATION

In addressing this approach, the evaluation will explore use of an open systems perspective and inductive evaluation model in studying a selected number of countries. This has several methodological implications, the most significant of which are: having definitions and criteria established with input from national stakeholders; defining adequate methods to enhance validity across cases and varying perspectives; and developing an appropriate framework for synthesis. The Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has initiated efforts in testing this same model. Coordination and sharing of knowledge will be explored. Coordination with ECDPM, which has actively promoted the use of an open systems perspective when evaluating capacity development, should also be explored.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PERFORMANCE AND PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS

A portfolio analysis will provide broad-based knowledge about UNDP capacity development activities (in various countries and regions, the types of products and investments made), the quality of its work, and the set of organizational and institutional factors that affect its work in strengthening national capacities. Data will be drawn from a sample of UNDP projects and programmes, a meta-evaluation and synthesis of existing evaluation that cover the topic of capacity development, analysis of secondary data from partnership surveys, the ROARs and other external data sources that include an assessment of UNDP. All secondary sources used will be assessed for validity and reliability and limitations will be reported. When necessary, organization-wide surveys will be conducted. The information generated will address several accountability questions and also provide contextual information about UNDP and its response to country demands and requirements.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT OR NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OR EXPERTS

As a development partner, UNDP contributes to country processes that are led by government and supported by a range of domestic and external stakeholders. This evaluation will explore the best approach for the Evaluation Office to partner with governments or national institutions or experts to ensure the evaluation has mutual benefits for both parties. Partnership may be in the form of: (i) integrating the evaluation within an ongoing country-led review and evaluation processes, or (ii) having the evaluation led by the country; and (iii) having national institutions or experts play a lead role in the conceptualization and conduct of the evaluation. Preliminary assessment indicates difficulties with the first two models and that it would require a longer time to explore such partnership with countries that want to integrate the evaluation as a component in their ongoing review processes or lead the evaluation.

Evaluations of the second type are already started in UNDP Evaluation Office and the lessons learned will be instrumental for this evaluation. These evaluations differ from traditional evaluations in terms of the roles and responsibilities given to the national consultants relative to international consultants. National, rather than international, consultants will take the lead in facilitating and conducting the evaluations at country level, adjusting evaluation frameworks to the national context, collection of the evaluation evidence, and, most importantly, analysis of the evidence and making the interpretations and evaluative judgments based on that evidence. This approach is intended to further strengthen the national perspective when judging the performance of UNDP.

ENHANCING TECHNICAL RIGOUR

The evaluation will use both quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the questions of the evaluation guided by the Evaluation Office's methodology Guide for Thematic Evaluation. The evaluation will be designed to ensure a systematic and transparent approach. A design

matrix will be developed for the evaluation highlighting for each question the criteria to be used in assessing areas of investigation, the target group or sample for data collection or generation, the data collection and generation methods or existing secondary data sources, the basis for analysis and for making judgments against clearly defined standards or via the use of the expert judgment of the evaluation team and others.

The following passage identifies some of the key features of the approach for the evaluation.

- Analysis of cross-cutting organization-wide issues drawing from both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Use of the case-study method for a sample of countries that would allow for appropriate 'analytical or theoretical generalizability'. The focus will not be on 'statistical generalizability'. The countries selected will have had a significant UNDP portfolio on national development strategies and their management with some of having had UNDP engagement in the area dating back some 10/15 years. Countries from this subset will be selected to ensure regional representation. There will also be a mix of country typologies (post conflict, transition, emerging economies, etc.) to enhance better understanding of variations in approaches and the type of support or issues significant in these country types. These and other criteria will be further developed as part of preparation and scoping.
- This evaluation gives a clear focus to addressing issues of accountability for results. In evaluating contribution/effectiveness—the evaluation will use a 'qualitative approach' with inductive methods to address the key question of UNDP's contribution/effectiveness in strengthening national capacities. In this regard, the focus will be on an analysis of the 'rival hypothesis' as opposed to 'counterfactual/attribution analysis'.

Both primary and secondary data will be collected and some are listed below. All data collection and generation methods will pay due regard

to ensuring validity and reliability in measurement. Triangulation methods will be used when necessary to enhance validity and reliability.

- Given the complexity involved in the measurement and evaluation of capacity development, the approach will explore use of a variety of alternative or non-traditional methods addressing change processes.
- Synthesis of information across all data sources will be managed by the evaluation design matrix for which findings from various sources will be aligned with the key questions of the investigation.

The following outlines some of the bases for information generation and data collection.

- Literature review of a broad range of information on capacity development and on national planning, including pertinent evaluations in these areas. These are identified and listed in the website prepared for this evaluation.
- Document review and analysis of a wide range of : (i) existing UNDP evaluations; (ii) programme documents (CPD, CPAP), (iii) strategic plans and results frameworks for the SP. MYFFs, (iv) reported results by the ROAR.; (iv) guidance documents, practice notes, performance assessment.
- Portfolio analysis covering UNDP's work on capacity development for national planning across all information presented in UNDP's data systems (the ERBM).
- Consultations and focused interviews with a wide range of stakeholders on the key questions of the study. The process will use both planned as well as opportunistic data collection methods.
- Surveys using questionnaires (when feasible) will be used to assess staff views of UNDP's vision and approach and its positioning for national development strategies and areas of its comparative strength and weaknesses.
- Surveys for beneficiary assessment will be explored as part of country case study.

- Various secondary data sources will be used. Programmatic information on outcomes will be based on the MYFF and SP development outcomes. Development outcome data will be drawn from various sources including global data as well as national statistical data. Other secondary sources would include pertinent sources such as the global partnership survey.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND TIME-FRAME

The main output will be a final evaluation report that provides a synthesis of evidence across all sources of information. The findings, conclusions and recommendations will be summarized in an Executive Summary. The draft evaluation report will be submitted to the Evaluation Office by the evaluation team leader by August 2010. The final report will be approved by the Evaluation Office. The findings will be presented to the UNDP Executive Board in January 2011.

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent international team with expertise and experience in capacity development, the core functions of national planning as listed above, and evaluation methodology. The team will be led by a senior international development expert with excellent leadership and development expertise. Partnerships with analytical institutions from the South will be explored in conducting the evaluation.

The Evaluation Office, via the task manager, will take part in the evaluation as a member of the team and will manage the evaluation process, provide backstopping support and ensure the coordination and liaison with concerned agencies at headquarters as well as the country level. The Evaluation Office also will provide a quality-enhancement team of staff evaluators to provide substantive support and provide rigorous critique of the reports produced by the team on a continuous basis.

Quality assurance will be carried out, as in the case of all Evaluation Office evaluations, by an independent external advisory panel of three leading authorities on development effectiveness, global development issues of relevance to the study and development evaluation. The advisory panel will be established at the outset of evaluation and remain active until the completion, final review and dissemination of the evaluation in January 2011. The role of the advisory panel is to provide strategic, methodological and substantive inputs to enhance the quality of the evaluation. Its main responsibility is to assure quality in the inception report on scope and design of the

evaluation and the final report produced by the evaluation team.

The Evaluation Office will ensure the provision of support needed by the evaluation team from different UNDP bureaux and country offices. Support for country fieldwork will be provided by UNDP country offices through a focal point designated for this purpose. Regional and practice bureaux will also provide focal points to support the evaluation. The Operations Support Group and Office of Information Systems and Technology will provide any needed support for institutional data and information systems.

Annex 2

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

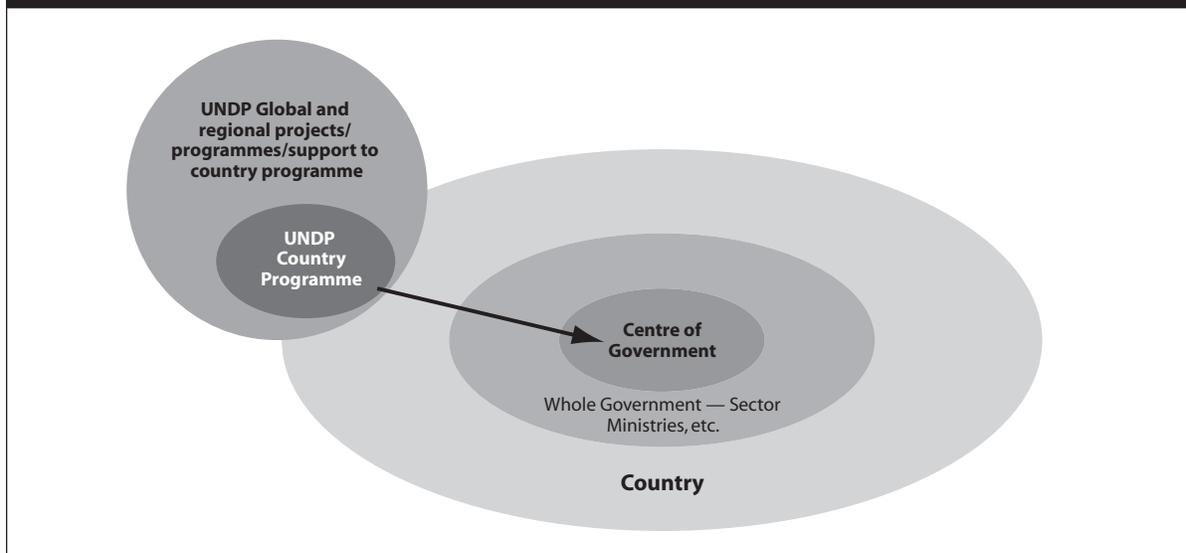
SUMMARY

The evaluation was designed as an explanatory qualitative case study design⁷⁵, using multiple sources of evidence, and structured around three evaluation questions. An inductive⁷⁶ analytical approach was used, with data collection and analysis structured around a number of propositions supporting each of the three main evaluation questions. Propositions were included in a matrix that was used to compile all data collected, prior to data reduction. A three-day analytical workshop with participation of all evaluation team members was a key aspect of the analytical process.

APPROACH

An open systems⁷⁷ theoretical perspective, as illustrated in Figure A1 below, was used in this evaluation. Partially this was because governments had not pre-defined what changes in national capacities for formulating and managing national development strategies were generally needed. Nor had they tracked the performance of capacity development initiatives in this area. Furthermore, research and evaluation of capacity development increasingly show that evaluations using pre-defined logic models that assume clear and direct cause and effect relationships between capacity development initiatives and changes in

Figure A1. A Systems Perspective of Contributing Towards Building National Capacity for National Development Strategies



⁷⁵ A detailed discussion of the use of case study approaches can be found in Yin, R., 'Applications of Case Study Research', *Applied Social Research Methods Series*, Volume 34, Sage. Second Edition, 2003.

⁷⁶ A deductive approach starts from a theory and hypothesis, such as summarized in a results framework, and then looks for evidence to confirm or disprove this theory/hypothesis. An inductive approach works the other way, moving from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories.

⁷⁷ While some of the language and concepts of open systems theory may be unfamiliar to people, its application is not. It underpins the dominant approaches to institutional and organizational development that have been used across the world, in both the public and private sectors, for the past twenty years.

national capacity rarely provide an accurate and credible understanding of what has happened, and why. Experience instead shows that evaluations that use what is called an ‘open systems’ perspective are more likely to provide such credible and robust evidence.

An open systems perspective defines an organization in terms of inter-related subsystems. Organizations are therefore made up of individuals (who are systems in their own right) who belong to groups or departments (which again are systems) that in turn are possibly organized into divisions and so on. If we define the organization as the ‘system’, then the other levels—individuals, groups or departments, and possibly divisions—are all sub-systems within that system. The perspective is ‘open’, because the direct interactions between an organization and those outside the organisation, as well as with the broader context and environment, are seen as important for how the internal sub-systems should be configured and operate.

In this evaluation, the organizations within government concerned with formulating and managing the national development strategy would be the ‘system’, with each organization then being a ‘sub-system’ within this overall ‘system’, and then varying levels of sub-systems within each organization. The national development strategy formulation and management process would be defined as a set of ‘business processes’ that operate both within individual organizations and frame interactions between them. This is the endogenous system. The United Nations organizations or other partners are part of the external environment that interacts with this endogenous system.

This means that the evaluation had three strands of work. First, an analysis of the endogenous national system for developing and managing a national development strategy. Note that

UNDP, even at the country level, was not part of this ‘system’, but rather interacts with it. Second, evaluation of UNDP as a system. Third, evaluation of how these two systems interacted, mainly at the national level.⁷⁸

Open systems theory highlights several major issues that have significantly informed the evaluation approach:

- There is no such thing as a ‘perfect’ system or single ideal against which one can assess the relevance or effectiveness or adaptability of a system. Systems need to adapt constantly over time to the external environment within which they exist and at any one time there may be several equally valid system configurations that are equally effective and relevant. There are therefore no **blueprints**. This applies equally to the national system and to UNDP as a system.
- Change in systems is a non-linear, long-term, and often-unpredictable process requiring efforts at multiple levels. Therefore the analysis of cause and effect has to be at the level of the system and not isolated components, while effectiveness can only be assessed in the medium to long term. This means that attempting to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of UNDP’s support to strengthening national capacities over an extended period based on logic models and results frameworks would be the wrong approach. This is because logic models assume that clear and direct cause-and-effect relationships exist and that precise results and outcomes have been defined and agreed between partners and can be measured. Logic models therefore assume a closed system and deductive analytical approach.
- Judging performance of the system requires understanding how effectively it interacts with the external environment; and

⁷⁸ The evaluation TORs explicitly called for use of an open systems perspective and this is the dominant theory currently accepted by the wider community of practice involved in researching capacity development. However, it should be noted that other theoretical perspectives do exist. See Morgan, G., *Images of Organization*, California/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006, for an overview of the most used alternatives.

- Changes in one part of the system may have unpredictable effects elsewhere in the system. Finally, there are no blueprints.

KEY QUESTIONS AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

The evaluation was organized around three key questions:

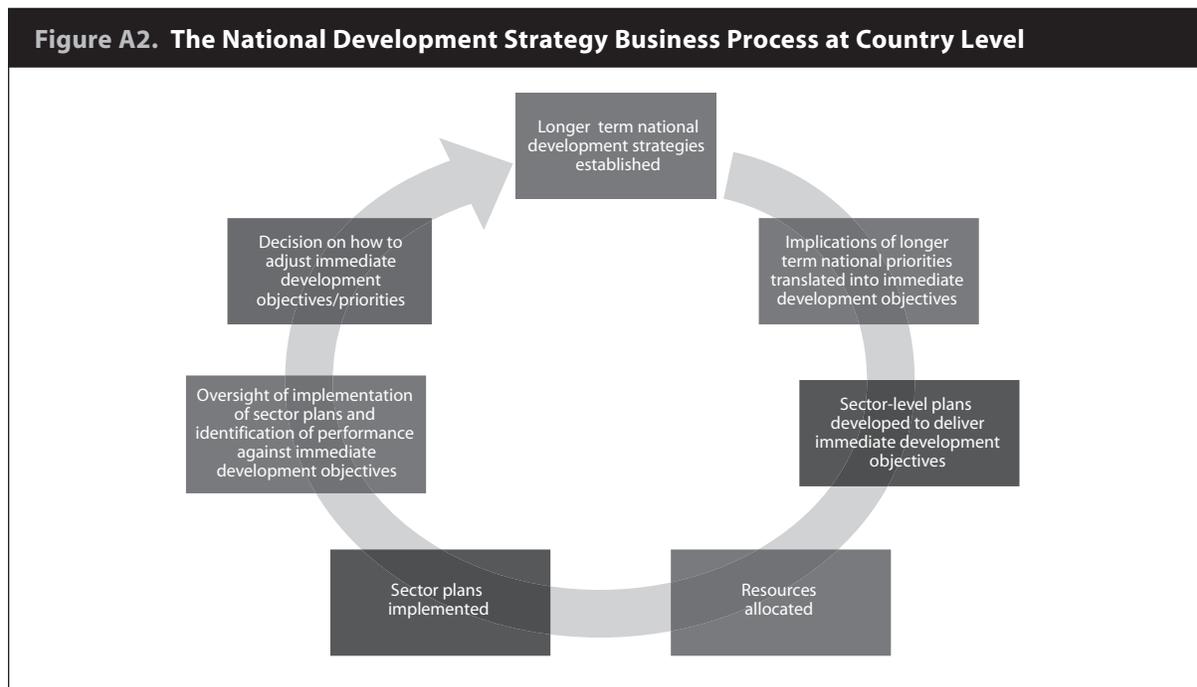
- I. From a national perspective, what have been the successes and problems in formulating and managing national development strategies in selected programme member-states?
- II. Is there evidence that (a) UNDP’s country programmes and (b) the projects of UNDP’s global and regional programmes enhanced national capacities to develop and execute national development strategies as identified as needed by the country?
- III. What is the capacity of UNDP to be an effective partner in capacity building at the country level?

Reflecting open systems theory, Question 1 focused on the ‘national’ system, Question 3 focused on UNDP as a system, while Question 2 focused

on how these two systems interact. It is extremely important to understand that Question 1 was framed to allow self-reflection by the key national stakeholders of what has happened and the successes and challenges. **As such, it was not intended that this question be an evaluation of the government or others by UNDP’s Evaluation Office.** However, this self-reflection was key to evaluating in particular the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of UNDP’s support and contribution from the national perspective.

To construct the inductive approach around the three main evaluation questions, a series of propositions and sub-questions were developed to guide the collection of evidence and structure the inductive analysis. The propositions and sub-questions used are set out at the end of this annex.

Propositions and sub-questions related to Questions 1 and 2 were structured around the generic ‘business process’ for planning as illustrated in Figure A2 below. The analysis primarily focused on those aspects of the business process that were the responsibility of the centre of government agencies (indicated in Figure A2 as the boxes with a solid line). It only focused on those aspects that were the responsibility of the sector



ministries or sub-national government bodies (indicated in Figure A2 as the boxes with a dashed line), where relevant in terms of national capacity for coordination or reporting of performance.

There are a large number of analytical frameworks, based on open systems, which could have been used to develop the propositions. The decision was taken to use the framework found in UNDP's own Toolkit for Managing Change as it is based on open systems theory and is also familiar to most staff. There is little evidence to show the inherent superiority of other frameworks. Propositions and sub-questions related to UNDP as a 'system', i.e., Question 3, were evaluated against the following four propositions:

- UNDP has clear goals and policies in terms of its contribution in the area of capacity development.
- UNDP's business processes are supportive of the organization's being an effective partner in capacity development.
- UNDP's structures are suitably aligned towards the organization being an effective partner in capacity development.
- UNDP optimizes the resources dedicated towards allowing the organization to be an effective partner in capacity development.

SOURCES OF DATA AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Sources of data and data collection methods for Question 1

Case studies at country level: Plainly, it was infeasible to gather evidence from every one of the over 100 programme countries where UNDP operates as part of this evaluation. The normal approach therefore would be to evaluate what has happened in a sample of countries and then generalize the conclusions on the basis that the countries were selected as a statistically representative sample of all the countries. This was **not** the approach used in this evaluation for the simple

reason that it is unclear what variable should be used as the basis for sampling. The open systems perspective clearly shows that each country is unique, while the data do not exist to stratify countries by either their approach to national development planning, level of national capacity, or intentions for developing their approach to national development strategy formulation. Nor were there data that would have allowed stratification of countries based upon different types of response by UNDP over the past decade.

Instead, an explanatory case study approach, in which the focus was on identifying the factors that most influenced UNDP's performance in developing national capacity has been used. Conclusions from the work at the country level have then been generalized through what is termed **replication logic**—basically the more times the same response and issue are observed leading to the same outcome, the more certainty there is that this is something general across the organization, irrespective of the national context within which the organization is working.

Case-study data were collected in four countries—Botswana, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia and Togo.⁷⁹ These countries were selected through key informants, who identified countries in which: (i) there was a national interest in strengthening the operation of the centre of government; (ii) UNDP had provided support to this area; and (iii) it is thought that there was some positive outcome. A key informant strategy was used in identifying country programmes meeting the above criteria as using UNDP's own management information systems to identify such programmes was impossible. This initial process was then triangulated by looking at information available on the country programme websites, followed in some cases by telephone interviews with staff in the concerned country offices.

Selection of countries was also influenced by the need not to include countries where the volume of external evaluations was considered

⁷⁹ It was originally planned to also carry out a case study in Bangladesh. This proved impossible due to timing issues.

excessive and countries where the Evaluation Office's wider programme of evaluations had/were already leading to a significant burden on the UNDP country office. It should be noted that this process meant that the countries where key informants considered that UNDP had made the most significant contribution to national capacities were not included in the country case studies. For the country case studies, data were collected through a mixture of stakeholder interviews and review of relevant government, UNDP and other documentation.

In all four of these countries, the collection of evidence and analysis was guided by a set of propositions and questions structured around the generic strategy/planning development and implementation cycle. In each country, the process started with the self-reflection processes to identify the evidence of the successes and problems with the national development strategy. The degree to which these successes or problems were primarily due to national capacities was then identified. At this stage, the focus was entirely on what had happened within the national endogenous system and answering Evaluation Question 1. UNDP and other external partners only figured in this work when the national stakeholders chose to

highlight their role. Based on these analyses by the national stakeholders, whether and how UNDP had contributed to the identified changes in national capacities was identified (Evaluation Question 2). While UNDP's performance was evaluated and judged against the commonly used evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, the significant difference was that performance against these criteria was based on evidence from the self-reflection exercise rather than pre-defined measures of success. Short country case-study reports were produced and discussed with in-country stakeholders, but most of the detailed evidence was summarized in a set of evaluation matrices, based on the questions, to allow more systematic and credible cross-country analysis.

Meta analyses of ADRs (and Evaluation Office thematic evaluations): All the ADRs (the two figure number to the right of each country is the year of publication) below were reviewed to derive relevant observations of the capacity development work and performance of UNDP. Analysis was guided by the set of propositions and questions structured around the generic strategy/planning development and implementation cycle. The 15 ADRs in the left-hand column were the focus

CD in CoG re NDP/S	CD in CoG (non-NDP/S)	CD in Other Fields
Afghanistan 09	Argentina 09	Barbados 09
Bangladesh 05	Burkina Faso 09	Bosnia Herzegovina 09
Benin 08	Bulgaria 03	Egypt 04
Bhutan May 07	Chile 09	<i>Georgia 10</i>
Botswana 09	China 05 and 10	Guatemala 09
<i>Cambodia 10</i>	Colombia 07	<i>Indonesia 10</i>
Congo (Ro) 08	Honduras 06	Jamaica 05
Ecuador 08	Nicaragua 07	Maldives 10
Ethiopia 06	Serbia 06	Mozambique 05
Jordan 07	Syria 06	Peru Dec 09
Laos 07	<i>Turkey 10</i>	<i>Philippines 09</i>
Montenegro 06	Uganda 09	Seychelles 10
Rwanda 08	Ukraine 05	Tajikistan 09
Viet Nam 03	Uzbekistan 09	
Yemen 05	<i>Zambia 10</i>	

of most detailed scrutiny, as they featured work with Centre of Government (CoG) organizations in capacity development for national development strategies. Those in the middle column featured capacity development with CoG, but not closely related to national development strategies. Those in the right hand column featured capacity development initiatives in other fields. Italicized ADRs were not yet finalized when the ADR scrutiny was ongoing in April 2010: some were still in draft form, but cleared by the Evaluation Office for inclusion in the ADR sample.

All thematic evaluations completed between 2005 and 2010 were also reviewed.

Wider literature reviewing the challenges of developing and using national development strategies: A wider literature search was also carried out to identify relevant documentation for review of what have been the successes and problems in formulating and managing national development strategies and national capacity in this area.

Sources of data and data collection methods for Question 2

The same data sources and data collection methods used for Question 1 were also used for Question 2. These were supplemented by evidence from telephone and face-to-face interviews with key informants within UNDP, especially the capacity development advisers based in the regional service centres. In terms of constructing the sample of those that should be interviewed, the evaluation first identified the major functions and units involved in UNDP's approach to capacity development. The functions and units were then responsible for identifying who within their unit should be interviewed.

Sources of data and data collection methods for Question 3

Case studies at the country level: Case-study data were collected in four countries—Botswana, Paraguay, Togo and Saudi Arabia.

Portfolio analysis: Ultimately, the aim was to evaluate whether UNDP itself had the internal capacity in place to be an effective partner in capacity building at the country level. Judging this, especially in an organization as decentralized as UNDP, required some understanding of the importance of capacity development as a significant element in UNDP projects, and to what extent this includes support for national development strategies. While UNDP has invested significant resources in an Enterprise Resource Programme (ATLAS) and other reporting and management information systems, it is extremely difficult to identify what UNDP actually does in its project portfolio and hence what demand for capacity development support there is.⁸⁰ The evaluation therefore carried out a portfolio analysis, based on a sample of all projects flagged as active by ATLAS between 2004 and 2009. Project documents were first reviewed to estimate the importance across the portfolio of: (i) capacity development in general; (ii) support to national development strategies; and (iii) capacity development support to national development strategies. Importance was measured in terms of the percentage of projects.⁸¹ Projects were then assessed to judge the degree to which their design reflected the capacity development principles identified in UNDP's 2008 Capacity Development Practice Note.

Meta analyses of ADRs (and Evaluation Office thematic evaluations): These documents were reviewed to identify any relevant evidence.

⁸⁰ In addition, it is impossible to access data from central MISs in operation prior to introduction of ATLAS in 2004.

⁸¹ Due to time and resource constraints, we are forced to accept the trade-off of reporting with a larger confidence interval while selecting a more manageable project sample. The (ideal) 5 percent confidence level would require a sample size of 377 projects from our total population of 20,000+ (assuming that 50 percent of the portfolio has a significant capacity development component). Holding constant these parameters, a 10 percent confidence level leads to a more reasonable sample size of 96 projects. Prior experience with UNDP databases and discussions with key informers have alerted us to the fact that not all project documents from our original sample of 96 will be tracked down. Missing or inaccessible project documents, is a challenge that will need to be corrected by oversampling. A current suggestion is to oversample 15 percent, so around 14-15 extra projects.

Interviews with key management staff within UNDP: Interviews were carried out with staff within UNDP, including at headquarters and regional service centre levels.

Data recording

All data collected were entered into a series of tables against these propositions and sub-questions, prior to reduction and analysis.

Analytical Approaches

Data reduction and analysis was challenging, as large amounts of data were collected and spread across a number of versions of the evaluation matrix. Ideally, a formal coding approach would be used to reduce the data to manageable and categorizable pieces. There was neither the time nor the resources available to adopt this approach, as it would have required a team already familiar and comfortable with such qualitative research approaches or intensive training of consultants in such techniques and then bringing the whole team together several times to discuss the coding and results.

Instead, a different approach to data reduction and analysis was taken as described below:

- Data reduction and analysis of all evidence outside of that collected in the four in-depth country case studies were carried out by the core team in June with the intention of identifying a preliminary set of findings and conclusions.
- Information in the matrices for the four in-depth country case studies was structured into evidence, findings and conclusions, by the national consultants so allowing easier validation of conclusions through triangulation.
- The core team worked with the nationally based consultants to ensure that findings and conclusions in the in-depth country matrices were based on the evidence presented in the matrices on an ongoing basis.
- A three-day cross case analysis workshop, attended by both the core team and nationally

based consultants, was then used to consolidate common findings and conclusions across the propositions and investigate the linkages between the findings and conclusions.

- Once a set of conclusions had been developed, recommendations were developed.

Risks and Potential Shortcomings

Time available for the evaluation: Detailed work on the evaluation effectively started in January since the first draft needed to be completed by end July. This cut the time available by three to four months compared with a normal for Evaluation Office thematic evaluations. The main risk mitigation strategy was to use multiple data sources, although this did not eliminate the risk that the evaluation was heavily dependent on the four case studies.

Using an inductive approach to assessing national capacity and then clarifying the UNDP contribution:

This evaluation was methodologically challenging. While the approach and methodology proposed represent good practice, most evaluators are not practiced in its application and few have well-developed skills in qualitative research approaches. In this case, both the principal evaluation consultant and team specialist had the requisite skills, although they had never used them in an evaluation of this ambition.

The national perspective:

The process of developing and then managing the self-reflection exercise took time, while working to ensure that participants were willing to discuss potentially sensitive issues was challenging. The main response was to use national consultants, as they were based in-country and also should have had the cultural sensitivity required to foster more open dialogue with nationals. There were also limitations of information sources at the national level due to historic staff turnover at this level of government and hence a lack of institutional memory. It was proposed that as needed, key informants no longer in post would be sought and interviewed, where practicable.

Quality of the consultants used for the country case study work: The proposed country case studies were complex and also required consultants that were able to work with little direct supervision, were analytical and strategic enough to analyse the evidence and produce a structured and evidence based set of findings and conclusions, and also understood how the centre of government worked. Finding national consultants with these attributes was difficult. Risk mitigation strategies included: (i) development of briefing material by the core team before work started; (ii) three-day one-to-one in-country briefings of national consultants by the core team; (iii) use of the evaluation matrices; and (iv) ongoing support by the core team members during country-level work.

Considering the sheer volume of data and the time it would have taken to edit it, a decision was made not to present the raw data. This therefore meant that credibility was reliant on the Evaluation Office's internal quality control process.

Quality Assurance Processes

The Evaluation Office uses two quality assurance processes. The inception report, which lays out the basic approach and methodology proposed in response to the evaluation ToRs, is commented upon by the senior Evaluation Office evaluators. The same process is used with the initial draft of the evaluation report. In addition, as with in the case of all Evaluation Office evaluations, an independent external advisory panel of three leading authorities on development effectiveness, global development issues of relevance to the study and development evaluation, reporting directly to the Director of the Evaluation Office, comment upon both the inception report and the draft evaluation report. Both of these quality assurance processes were used in the case of this evaluation, although interaction from the independent panel occurred after the evaluation's main data gathering phase had started. Fortunately, responding to their comments did not require significant change in what was under implementation.

Listing of Propositions by Main Evaluation Question

Evaluation Question 1: From a national perspective, what have been the successes and problems in formulating and managing national development strategies in selected programme member-states?

- Government understands a national development strategy to be something different from a PRSP and understands it to be concerned with how longer-term national priorities and visions are properly reflected in immediate development objectives.
- The centre of government works better in terms of (i) a better functioning centre of government system for national strategy development; and (ii) better national development strategies that identify long term priorities while also responding to significant changes in the international context, such as financial crises.
- Achievement of the MDGs is adequately addressed in national development plans and strategies.
- Who has the power and authority in your system for determining how the national development strategy is prioritized in your budget allocation and priorities reflected in sector level strategies and plans are clear?
- A well established process within the centre of government for coordinating the development of the national development strategy, ensuring it is then reflected in medium term and annual sector level plans and budget allocation processes and monitoring results is in place:
 - in theory; and
 - in practice.
- There have been major achievements in the past ten years in improving the performance of the process within the centre of government for coordinating the development of the national development strategy, ensuring it is then reflected in medium-term and annual sector level plans and budget

allocation processes and monitoring results is in place.

- Major constraints⁸² to improving the performance of the process within the centre of government for coordinating the development of the national development strategy, ensuring it is then reflected in medium term and annual sector-level plans and budget allocation processes and monitoring results have been identified.
- National capacity, at either the institutional, organizational or individual level, has been identified as a major constraint.
- National capacity constraints, once identified, have been effectively signalled: (i) within government (ii) and between government and external partners.

Evaluation Question 2: Is there evidence that (a) UNDP's country programmes and (b) the projects of UNDP's global and regional programmes enhanced national capacities to develop and execute national development strategies identified as needed by the country?

Relevance

- UNDP was one of the main development partners supporting capacity development of the centre of government.
- Government, UNDP and other development partners have a common view of UNDP's comparative advantage for supporting the centre of government in terms of national strategy development and oversight of implementation.
- The response of the development partners, especially UNDP, in the context of overall support, was relevant. *Relevance* is defined in terms of:

- comprehensiveness of response (c.f. issues faced and UNDP comparative advantages)
- design of interventions (including the mix of inputs/activities and their applicability against the principles outlined in the 2008 capacity development Practice Note)
- implementation (according to principles in capacity development Practice Note and Paris Declaration)

Effectiveness

- UNDP has made a significant contribution to how the centre of government works in terms of (i) individuals and organizations at the centre of government using UNDP support to ensure better functioning centre of government system for national strategy development; and (ii) better national development strategies that identify long-term priorities while also responding to significant changes in the international context, such as financial crises.
- There are not more plausible rival explanations for why the improvements identified, and to which UNDP contributed, occurred.
- UNDP has successfully worked in partnership with other UNCT members, and stakeholders, to support government to ensure that achievement of the MDGs is adequately addressed in national development plans and strategies.
- Based on a good understanding of the long-term national process of building capacity at the centre of government, UNDP was proactive and identified, reflecting its comparative advantage, the key opportunities to provide capacity development support to this national process.

⁸² 'Constraints' here include those principally at the three levels identified in the CDG Practice Note on Capacity Development. First, the institutional (legal frameworks, roles and relationships, budgeting processes or committee structures involved). Second, the organizational (leadership, business processes, alignment of internal structures and optimal use of resources). Third, the individual.

- UNDP's capacity development interventions applied good-practice standards for capacity development.

Efficiency

- The UNDP support has been adequately delivered or carried through, in particular, in terms of timeliness, phasing and duration of the delivery of inputs.

Stability and adaptability⁸³

- UNDP support has contributed to enhancing the adaptability and stability of the government's system for development and oversight of national development strategies.
- UNDP interventions related to national development strategies have had explicit exit strategies.

Evaluation Question 3: What is the capacity of UNDP to be an effective partner in capacity building at the country level?

Corporate level—The demand

- The majority of UNDP projects between 2004 and 2009 had a significant capacity development component, as defined in paragraph 54 in the Strategic Plan and in the Capacity Development Group guidance.

- Support for national development strategies has been a significant component of UNDP's work between 2004 and 2009.

- Support for national capacity development for national development strategies has been a significant component of UNDP's work between 2004 and 2009.

Corporate level—The response

- Senior management, at the corporate and country office levels, have understood the external environment and reflected this in their strategic choices on how UNDP's internal systems and processes should be configured to ensure that UNDP has the capacity to be an effective partner in capacity building at the country level.

- The organization has clear goals and policies in terms of its contribution in the area of national development strategies.

- UNDP's business processes are supportive towards the organization being an effective partner in capacity development.

- UNDP's structures are suitably aligned towards the organization being an effective partner in capacity development.

- UNDP optimizes the resources dedicated towards allowing the organization to be an effective partner.

⁸³ UNDP's Capacity Development Group splits the evaluation criteria 'sustainability' into two components—adaptability and stability. Stability refers to the fact that 'All systems are under constant threat by various internal and external factors. An improvement in an organization's performance can be a temporary enhancement which is followed by larger setbacks at a later time. Stability is the degree to which a system can identify and mitigate internal and external risks through risk management and decrease volatility through institutionalization of good practices and norms' (CDG, Measuring Capacity Development, Practice Note, 2009, pp.11-12). Adaptability 'is the ability to perform in future conditions and meet future needs. It requires preparation to adapt to anticipated change and demands through proactive investment plans and continuous improvement mechanism' (CDG, Measuring Capacity Development, Practice Note, 2009, p.13).

Annex 3

REPORTS FROM BOTSWANA, PARAGUAY, SAUDI ARABIA AND TOGO

Separate country reports for Botswana, Paraguay, Togo and Saudi Arabia may be found at <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/thematic/cd.html>

THE PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS

PURPOSE

The majority of UNDP support at the country level is delivered through projects, where a project is defined simply as an envelope of money dedicated to delivering an agreed set of outputs. Therefore examining what forms of capacity development support is provided by UNDP requires examination of the portfolio of projects, based on the information found in the supporting project documents. A change in management information systems means that it is impossible to examine the portfolio of projects before 2004, when ATLAS, UNDP's Enterprise Resource Programme, was introduced. Therefore analysis must be confined to those projects active from 2004 onwards.

In this analysis, the decision was made to examine the portfolio of projects registered within ATLAS as active between January 2004 and December 2009, and based on a review of project documents, estimate the importance across the portfolio of:

- Capacity development in general
- Support to national development strategies
- Capacity development support to national development strategies
- The degree to which there is evidence that projects have been designed and implemented according to the capacity development

principles outlined in the 2008 Practice Note on Capacity Development

Two possible measures of importance could have been used in this assessment—money committed or number of projects. In this analysis, importance was measured in terms of the percentage of projects. The use of money as a measure was rejected because: (i) it was not considered a sufficiently robust indicator of importance;⁸⁴ and (ii) projects normally have multiple objectives and attempting to allocate funding within projects to direct capacity development related activities would have been problematic.

METHODOLOGY

In total, over 20,000 active projects existed in ATLAS between January 2004 and December 2009. Assessing all of these would have been infeasible and therefore a sampling approach was used. Using a randomized number generating tool, 140 sample projects were randomly selected across all five regions (and regional bureaux) in which UNDP operates. The number of projects from each bureau was in proportion to the size of the total projects implemented in that region/bureau between 2004 and 2009.⁸⁵

Sampling theory requires a random sample of 96 projects⁸⁶, if we are willing to accept that

⁸⁴ This could be contrasted with the situation of the IFIs, where project funds are for investment and the projects should all technically have passed a test of an adequate economic and financial return. In this situation, money is the better indicator of importance.

⁸⁵ Projects under the Global Environmental Fund and security fund codes were screened out of the population of active projects before sampling.

⁸⁶ Due to time and resource constraints, we are forced to accept the trade-off of reporting with a larger confidence interval while selecting a more manageable project sample. The (ideal) 5 percent confidence level would require a sample size of 377 projects from our total population of 20,000 (assuming that 50 percent of the portfolio has a significant capacity development component). Holding constant these parameters, a 10 percent confidence level leads to a more reasonable sample size (ss) = 96 while still providing the Board with statistically robust results; Additionally, a project was 'captured' by our randomizer if it had any active expenditures during 2004-2009.

the estimate derived from the sample is within +/- 10 percent of the actual figure for the entire population and we are willing to accept a 1-in-20 chance that the sample is not representative of the population being sampled. In practice, 140 active projects were initially selected, representing oversampling by 50 percent. The numbers of active projects initially selected and then included in the analysis by regional project/region are shown below in Table A1.

Out of the original sample of 140 active projects, 25 were eliminated as they proved unfeasible on various grounds⁸⁷, two were eliminated as documentation was only available in Arabic or

Portuguese, while a further 18 were eliminated as project documents were not available through either ATLAS or the country office. The remaining 96 included projects drawn from 68 different country programmes.

Project documentation⁸⁸ was then reviewed. As to whether the project had a significant capacity development focus, documentation was assessed against the definition of what UNDP should or should not do, outlined in paragraph 54 of the Strategic Plan,⁸⁹ and the definition of what capacity development is implicit in CDG (2009) 'Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer'.⁹⁰ For work on national development strategies,

Table A1: Numbers of Active Projects Initially Selected and Then Included in the Analysis by Regional Project/Region

Region	Number of projects initially selected	Number of projects reviewed as part of the portfolio analysis
Regional project	2	1
RBA	40	26
RBLAC	33	24
RBEC	20	14
RBAS	18	12
RBAP	27	19
Total	140	96

⁸⁷ Twenty-five emerged as 'dummy projects' out of which: (i) 8 were UNDP Management projects with no 'development'- hence no 'capacity development' component, (ii) 6 were not identified or recognized as projects from the country office focal points, (iii) 2 were used for advisory services; (iv) 3 were only UNDP administered (UNAIDS and a two day conference); and (v) 6 were not possible to track down because they were too old (Philippines, Benin), or the country office closed (as in the case of Korea), had downsized (Latvia), or experienced a tragedy (Algeria).

⁸⁸ Often including: Annual Work Plans; annual reports, project revision documents, evaluations, etc.

⁸⁹ The Strategic Plan states that UNDP will not normally engage in the following: (a) specialized sectoral activities; (b) small-scale projects without country-wide impact; (c) infrastructure with no capacity-building; or (d) stand-alone procurement of goods and services.

⁹⁰ According to the CDG, 'UNDP is responding to the growing demand for capacity development support by helping governments, civil society and other partners to build the skills, knowledge and experience they need to improve peoples' lives'. If capacity development initiatives are determined as part of the project's objective, outputs, and activities—the project is classified in this category. Nevertheless, the projects under scrutiny have not been designed in the light of latest CDG guidance therefore most make no explicit reference to the core issues (institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and accountability). Consequently, CDG guidance (see Capacity Development Primer, Practice Note, etc.) is liberally interpreted in the matrix coding.

the main criteria used were whether or not the project worked with organizations at the centre of government⁹¹ and then whether this support was for strengthening national development strategy/planning processes. Matrices were then prepared for each of the individual projects, based on the following questions:

- a) *Does the project involve working with institutions in the centre of government?*
 - If so, does it involve capacity development for plans (national development plan) and strategies (National Development Strategy)?
- b) *Does the project involve capacity development activities (in general) and if so, how do these relate across:*
 - The different levels of capacity: individual, organizational and enabling environment?

- The core capacity development factors: institutional arrangements, leadership, accountability, and knowledge?

The matrices were then expanded to allow assessment of the degree to which the documentation indicated that projects had been developed in an approach reflecting the principles for capacity development laid out in the CDG Practice Note (2008).

OVERALL FINDINGS ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

If capacity development is understood in terms of training and technical assistance, the portfolio analysis confirms that capacity development is, as described in the Strategic Plan, the how of what UNDP does (see Table A2).

Table A2: Percentage of Projects Judged to Have a Significant Capacity Development Component		
Region	Number of projects reviewed	Percentage of those projects judged to have a significant capacity development component
Regional project	1	100%
RBA	26	92%
RBLAC	24	96%
RBEC	14	71%
RBAS	12	92%
RBAP	19	95%
Total	96	91%

⁹¹ To be classified in this category the projects have to fulfil two criteria: a) the implementing organizations are: President/PM Offices, Planning Commissions/Ministries; Ministries of Finance (including Ministries of Social Planning in LAC contexts); Cabinets of Government and/or Cabinet Secretariats; Central Statistical Offices; Development Planning, Budget and/or Public Accounts Committees of the legislature, and b) the project should relate to capacity development for centre of government for purposes related to national development plans/NDSs or MDGs but should not involve any sectoral programming.

Looking at the 87 (91 percent) projects that were identified as having a significant capacity development component, Table A3 below shows the degree to which the projects were assessed to be working at the three levels—enabling, organizational, individual—identified in the CDG Practice Note.

Table A4 also shows that, at least in terms of the number of projects, support for organizations at the centre of government to enable them to better fulfil their roles in the development and management of national development strategies

was a significant strand of UNDP’s work. These findings on the importance of work with the centre of government are broadly in line with those from the recent review⁹² of UNDP’s work on public administration and local governance, which concluded: ‘UNDP has long provided assistance to the centre of government, a field which has considerable strategic potential in terms of supporting the overall direction and management of government policy. The total number of projects within this portfolio remains significant (36 projects⁹³), and is currently most common in Latin America (13 projects), probably as a direct

Table A3: Assessment of Degree to Which Projects Work at the Enabling, Organizational and Individual Levels

Region	Number of projects having a ‘capacity development or some capacity development’	Percentage of those projects having outputs at:		
		Enabling level	Organizational level	Individual level
Regional project	1	100%	0%	100%
RBA	24	67%	71%	96%
RBLAC	23	70%	74%	83%
RBEC	10	50%	80%	80%
RBAS	11	40%	80%	100%
RBAP	18	44%	50%	89%
Total	87	57%	68%	89%

Table A4: Number and Percentage of Projects Supporting Centre of Government Role in Development and Management of National Development Strategies Across UNDP and by Bureau

Region	Number of projects reviewed	Number of projects judged to have a significant capacity development component	Percentage of projects judged to have a significant capacity development component
Regional project	1	0	0%
RBA	26	5	19%
RBLAC	24	2	8%
RBEC	14	1	7%
RBAS	12	2	17%
RBAP	19	1	5%
Total	96	11	12%

⁹² UNDP, ‘Public Administration and Local Governance: An Overview of Trends and Developments’, paper prepared by the Bureau for Development Policy, New York, January 2010.

⁹³ These include projects with substantial investments such as the \$17 million project in Afghanistan in support of the President’s Office, and the \$7.6 million project in Zimbabwe aimed at strengthening government capacity for results-based management.

result of the regional SIGOB project. Both Africa (8) and the Arab States region (7) have important projects (in an equal number of countries) in this area, such as the capacity development of senior public servants in Zambia and the ‘Support to the Strategy and Policy Unit in the Office of the President’ project in Sierra Leone. These interventions, however, are less frequent in the Asia Pacific (2 countries) and Eastern Europe and CIS (3 countries and 5 projects) regions.’

Table A5 shows the degree to which the 11 projects judged to be working with the centre of government and intended to enhance capacity worked at the enabling, organizational and/or individual levels.

The CDG (2008) Practice Note suggests that projects should be developed within an approach reflecting the following basic principles:

1. The UNDP approach makes the concept of **national ownership** tangible. It is about the ability to make informed choices and decisions.
2. It addresses **power relations**, mindsets and behaviour change. It therefore emphasizes the importance of **motivation** as a driver of change.

3. Capacity development is a **long-term process**. It can be promoted through a combination of shorter-term results that are driven from the outside and more sustainable, longer-term ones that are driven from the inside.
4. It requires **sticking with the process** under difficult circumstances.
5. The approach links the enabling environment, as well as organizations and individuals, and promotes a **comprehensive approach**.
6. It looks **beyond individual skills and a focus on training** to address broader questions of institutional change, leadership, empowerment and public participation.
7. It emphasizes the use of **national systems**, not just national plans and expertise. It discourages stand-alone project implementation units; if national systems are not strong enough, it deems that those be reformed and strengthened, rather than bypassed.
8. It requires **adaptation to local conditions** and starts from the specific requirements and performance expectations of the sector or organization it supports. There are no blueprints.

Table A5: Assessment of Degree to Which Projects Working With the Centre of Government and Intended to Enhance Capacity Work at the Enabling, Organizational and Individual Levels

Region	Number of projects supporting national development plan/ National Development Strategy at the COG and having ‘capacity development or some capacity development’	Percentage of those projects having outputs at:		
		Enabling level	Organizational level	Individual level
Regional project	0	0%	0%	0%
RBA	5	80%	100%	100%
RBLAC	2	100%	50%	0%
RBEC	1	0%	100%	100%
RBAS	2	50%	100%	100%
RBAP	1	100%	100%	100%
Total	11	73%	91%	82%

9. It makes the **link to broader reforms**, such as those in education, wage structures and the civil service. There is little value in designing isolated, one-off initiatives.
10. It results in **unplanned consequences** that must be kept in mind during the design phase. These should be valued, tracked and evaluated.
11. It **measures capacity development systematically**, using good-practice indicators, case evidence and analyses of quantitative and

qualitative data, to ensure that objective judgements are made about capacity assets and needs, as well as the progress achieved.

Project documentation is not specifically designed to say whether these 11 principles have been followed in the design of a project, but it is judged that it is possible to assess the degree to which a project reflects a country office following all but principles 4, 10 and 11 above. A judgment on the degree to which the 86 projects were judged to be following the remaining 8 principles is therefore shown in Table A6 below.

Table A6: Degree to Which Projects Were Judged to Reflect the Principles Outlined in the 2008 CDG Practice Note

Principle	Percentage of projects						
	Overall (n=86)	RBA (n=?)	RBLAC (n=?)	RBAS (n=?)	RBEC (n=?)	RBAP (n=?)	Other (n=?)
National ownership	49%	50%	57%	55%	40%	39%	49%
Power	9%	8%	13%	0%	20%	6%	9%
Long term	43%	42%	39%	36%	30%	61%	43%
Comprehensive	13%	13%	13%	9%	10%	17%	13%
Beyond individual	44%	42%	48%	45%	50%	39%	44%
Use national systems	24%	29%	26%	9%	0%	39%	24%
Adaptation to national conditions	19%	13%	9%	9%	40%	33%	19%
Linked to broader reforms	26%	17%	43%	0%	0%	44%	26%

Figure A3. Adherence to Capacity Development Principles Analysis of UNDP Project Documents

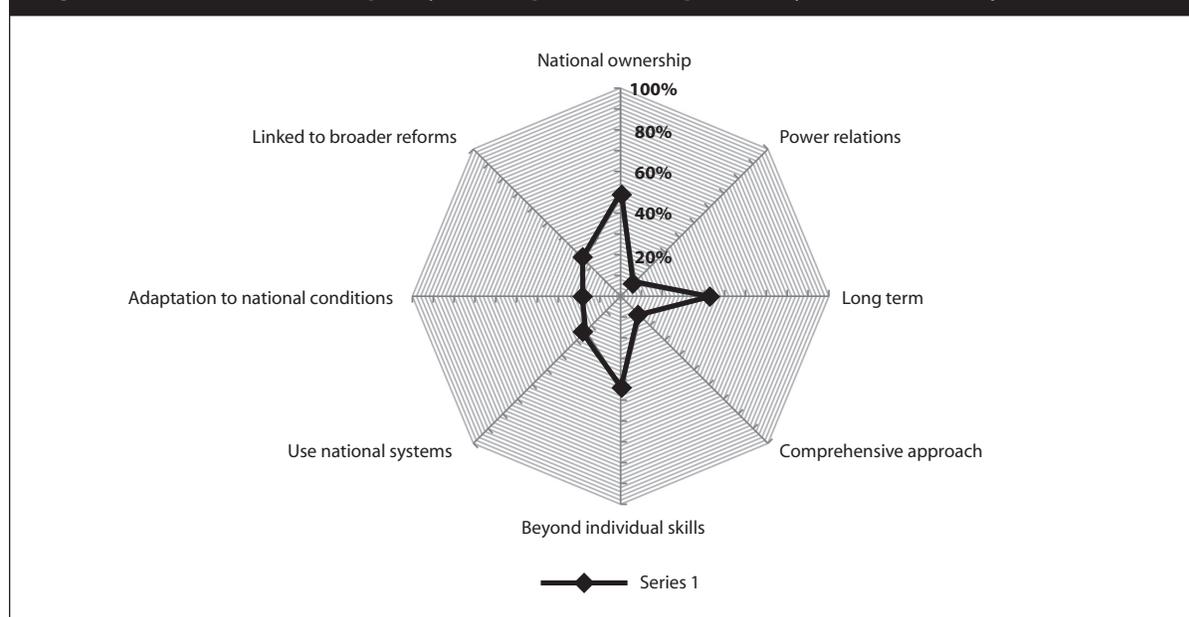


Table A7 then presents the same analysis, but for the 11 projects working with the centre of government and intended to enhance national capacity.

LIMITATIONS AND CAVEATS

These included:

- **The analysis was mainly based on what was planned rather than what was done.** One project included in the sample was also in a country where a case study was carried out. The original project document

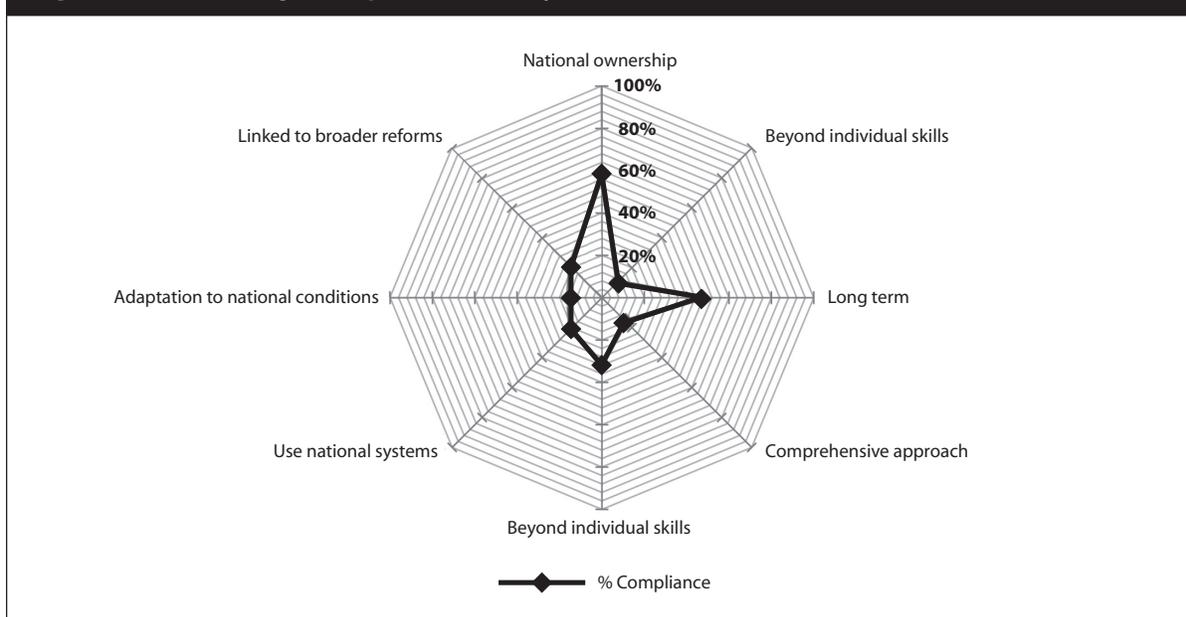
suggests a strategic approach to capacity development was planned, with a significant training component. In depth review of the actual project implementation showed that the training planned was not carried out, while the strategic approach to capacity development suggested in the original project documentation was not borne out in project implementation.

- **The absence of clear capacity development categories.** It was often difficult to judge the degree to which a project was intended to

Table A7: Degree to Which Projects Working With the Centre of Government and Intended to Enhance National Capacity and Judged to Reflect the Principles Outlined in the 2008 CDG Practice Note

Principle but only Centre of Government	Number	% Compliance
National ownership	11 out of 19	58%
Power relations	2 out of 19	11%
Long term	9 out of 19	47%
Comprehensive approach	3 out of 19	16%
Beyond individual skills	6 out of 19	32%
Use national systems	4 out of 19	21%
Adaptation to national conditions	3 out of 19	16%
Linked to broader reforms	4 out of 19	21%

Figure A4. Percentage Compliance for Project Documents with Centre of Government



address capacity development, beyond cases of straight training support. For example, whether or not technical assistance support could be defined as capacity development support was often difficult.

- **Oversampling.** Oversampling by 50 percent may have skewed the results of the analysis. Nevertheless, this was a necessity due to the difficulties in accessing project documents in UNDP.
- **Uneven quantity and quality of information from project to project.** Some projects had 3-5 supporting documents besides the project document to inform the matrix classification, while others had only partial or solitary project documents. Variability in the level of information available may therefore have affected the accuracy of interpretation.
- **Blurred distinction between a project and an award.** In most cases, the project number randomly selected for the portfolio analysis neatly corresponded to one UNDP Award. In such cases, the projects had their own project document. In a few select cases however, the project chosen was clustered under one award (and one project document) with a few other projects. When this was the case, the discrepancy was noted in the matrix but no corrective measures could be taken. Consequently, in some cases, activities for one or more projects may have been included in a matrix. This is likely to have resulted in more expansive categorization of projects in the ‘capacity development or some capacity development’ category.
- **Inclusion of older projects in analysis.** Some projects picked up (maybe 5-10 percent) were actually completed prior to the 2004 mark. According to UNDP practice, however, although a project may be deemed ‘operationally closed’ (i.e., closed on paper), this does not mean that it is also ‘a financially closed UNDP project’ (i.e., closed on the books). Hence, 2004-2005 Atlas databases picked up projects that continue to ‘leak expenditure’ although they have been effectually terminated years ago. The actual portfolio analysis then is more inclusive than the stated 2004-2009 timeline.
- **The volume of secondary material reviewed was large but treatment of national capacity limited and of capacity development variable.** For example, 39 ADRs were studied. It was challenging to distil general themes and issues from a welter of detail. Second, the mandated treatment of capacity issues in the ADR ToR has varied throughout the period, with more emphasis given to coverage of capacity issues in ToRs in recent years (especially since the second UNDP Strategic Plan and when the CDG began to guide and facilitate capacity development work in regional bureaux and country offices). Third, even with this provision, actual treatment of the subject varies considerably. This appears to be due to country contexts, the background of the members of the team conducting the ADR, and the notion of capacity development adopted by the teams in question.

Annex 5

KEY EVENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDP'S RESPONSE TO THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Year	Key events
The 1990s	<p>1991: 'Concept paper on coordinated UNDP strategy for capacity building, aid coordination, and the programme approach', (RBA/Paul Matthews, 9/91): a precursor to the functions included in the CDG mandate.</p> <p>1993: Governing Council paper 93/23 on 'National capacity building', based on General Assembly resolution 44/211 of 21/12/89, which sets out UNDP position and role.</p> <p>1994: <i>Capacity Development: Lessons of Experience and Guiding Principles</i> issued by Bureau for Development Policy.</p> <p>1994: 'Capacity building' : letter to RRs dated 7/7/94 on premises and instruments of capacity building.</p> <p>1998: 'CAPBUILD software to guide CO in formulation of institution building projects', S. Glovinsky, January.</p> <p>1998: Capacity Assessment and Development in a Systems and Strategic Management Context issued by Bureau for Development Policy (BDP).</p>
1999	<p>First Multi Year Funding Framework (2000-2003) agreed. Identifies four capacity building outcomes—(1) policy, regulatory and legal frameworks; (2) social cohesion; (3) institutional capacity; and (4) data collection and monitoring.</p>
2001	<p>Reforming Technical Cooperation (RTC) project starts in 2001, with non-core funding from the Netherlands, with the objective of reviewing and analyzing trends in technical cooperation. Produces case evidence supporting the conceptual framework found in the 1998 guidance from the Bureau for Development Policy. Makes strong case for a more systematic dialogue and approach to supporting national capacities—beyond technical assistance and externally driven projects, expertise and coordination mechanisms. Three books are produced through this effort—<i>Capacity for Development: New Solutions to Old Problems</i>; <i>Ownership, Leadership and Transformation: Can We Do Better for Capacity Development</i>; <i>Developing Capacity Through Technical Cooperation: Country Experiences</i>—which in part inform UNDP's capacity development strategy today.</p>
2002	<p>In order to more systematically address UNDP support to national and local capacity development, the Capacity Development Group (CDG) established within the Bureau for Development Policy. Established at the initiative of senior management within BDP, with support from champions within the organization. Initially intended to bring together the resources, ideas and programmes from the Reforming Technical Cooperation project and Capacity 2015 Trust Fund, the raison d'être of this small team was to bring these strands of work together, and integrate the lessons into mainstream UNDP policy and programme. Through 2003, staff and programmes were funded primarily through the Capacity 2015 Trust Fund (with the exception of the Director and one assistant post funded under Biennial Support Budget).</p>

Year	Key events
2003-2004	<p>Global Cooperation Framework funds used to follow up of the RTC programme, and creation of the Capacity Development Innovation Facility—CDF). Intention is to enable the Facility to become the focus for capacity development policy and methodology development. Global Cooperation Framework funds also used to expand staffing within the regional Capacity 2015 teams to include capacity development programme specialist in each of the regional support functions (SURFS).</p> <p>Second Multi Year Funding Framework (2004-2007) agreed. National capacity identified as one of five key drivers of development effectiveness and stated that UNDP had unparalleled comparative advantages supporting development of national capacities in a number of broadly defined areas. Paragraph 55: Development effectiveness is primarily a function of national capacity. All countries require skilled human resources to formulate a development agenda; strong institutions to implement and administer it; and a level of social cohesion that allows optimal interplay between individuals and institutions.... UNDP will capitalize on its unparalleled comparative advantages in these areas of national capacity development to help countries meet complex development challenges.</p> <p>Aspects of approach advocated in 1998 guidance note from BDP reflected in 2003 revision of the Programming Manual.</p>
2005	<p>Shift in expectations over role of CDG—from a group that manages and oversees Capacity 2015 Trust Fund and associated projects at country level, to a team working on integrating capacity development diagnostics and strategies into national, regional and global policy and programmes. This includes work with the OECD DAC, on the UN’s Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (for 2007) and in other international forums), facilitating capacity assessments and helping to negotiate and design the capacity development strategies that follow, and ensuring monitoring and tracking of their progress along these lines. This required that the roles of global and regional capacity development advisors change—from being Capacity 2015 project managers, who controlled their project funds to (i) capacity development policy advocates and advisors and capacity assessment facilitators and (ii) capacity development trainers and partnership and knowledge brokers. This was effectively done during the course of 2005-2006 in all regions but one (Latin America and the Caribbean).</p>
2005-2006	<p>From 2006, global cooperation funds and latterly regional bureaux have funded the capacity development advisory posts.</p> <p>Global cooperation funds also used to (i) expand the global CDG team to include a capacity development policy specialist and a capacity assessment specialist; (ii) to provide for small experimental initiatives to roll out the capacity development assessment and strategy methodologies, and establish a few partnerships such as with LenCD and SNV; and (iii) amass more case evidence in capacity development mainstreaming through ‘application areas’—Procurement Capacities; Capacity Development for Aid Effectiveness; Localizing the MDGs; and Capacities for Private Sector Development in the amount of \$1.2m).</p>
2006	<p>The Madrid global event: A coming together of consolidation of lessons from application areas and moving UNDP’s capacity development work to a global network and platform. The global programme supports the global Madrid Conference on capacity development, co-financed with the Spanish Government. This event provides the launch pad for country evidence, voices and global partners—200 plus who gathered at decision making levels, to agree on the remit of this capacity development approach, its implications for development processes and the role of UNDP to support such. Global cooperation funds used to fund an additional Knowledge Management Specialist for CDG, so bringing it into line with the other ‘practice areas’ in BDP. UNDP takes lead role on development of the Capacity Development Good Practice paper produced by the OECD DAC, and approved at ministerial level.</p> <p>UNDP chairs the UNDG task team that puts forth the UNDG Common Position Statement (2006) and Capacity Assessment Methodological Framework (2007)</p>

Year	Key events
2008	<p>Moves to mainstream capacity development approach throughout UNDP, through number of approaches:</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>A number of key guidance documents are used, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Capacity Development: the UNDP Approach • Practice Note—Capacity Development • Capacity Assessment Methodology <p>TRAC 2 Funding</p> <p>The big potential breakthrough was in the change to TRAC 2⁹⁴ allocation criteria in 2008⁹⁵. Distribution of TRAC2 resources is notionally now geared to capacity development performance criteria—Criterion 1. National capacities for the Millennium Development Goals and human development, policy and plans; Criterion 2. National capacities for implementation of development strategies and goals; and Criterion 3. Response to emerging development priorities of programme countries. But in practice Regional Bureau Directors, who decide the allocation, are not held accountable for their allocations and little evidence that this opportunity has then been used by the Regional Directors to encourage change in behaviour by country offices.</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Shift in the content and dissemination of Learning Resource Centre capacity development courses, as new capacity development content introduced.</p> <p>Revision of Programming Guidance</p> <p>Increasing prominence and integration of need to systematically address capacity development issues through the programming cycle reflected in the revised programming guidance (Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP))</p> <p>Ensuring that reflected in the Strategic Plan, 2008-2011</p> <p>In the current Strategic Plan, 2008-2011, all of the expected outcomes supported by UNDP upon request by programme countries focus on capacity development. The Strategic Plan also states that ‘In all cases, UNDP focuses its support on the development of national capacities, which must be led by and grounded in endogenous efforts in order to be meaningful and sustainable’.</p> <p>Paragraph 54 states: ‘In supporting and building capacity for the design and execution of country-owned national development strategies and programmes, UNDP delivery should be based on expertise and comparative advantage in accordance with the criteria outlined in this chapter, building on the comparative advantages and expertise of all partner organizations working at the country level. UNDP will intensify its activities within the focus areas, as outlined in the present strategic plan, and will not normally engage in: (a) specialized sectoral activities; (b) small-scale projects without country-wide impact; (c) infrastructure with no capacity-building; or (d) stand-alone procurement of goods and services.’</p>

⁹⁴ UNDP funding is complex. Effectively, 10 percent of programme resources come from core funding, which is distributed under three budget lines, TRACs 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.3. TRAC 1.1.1 budget represents the minimum level of resources targeted to be available for an individual programme country during a given financial period. It is calculated in accordance with the board approved distribution methodology, using per capita gross national income and population as the primary criteria. TRAC 1.1.2 resources are in the first instance earmarked by region. These are subsequently allocated by the regional bureaux on an annual basis between country programmes. In theory, allocation should be on the basis of the quality of the planned UNDP assisted programmes. TRAC 1.1.2 earmarking for a given region is equal to two-thirds of the total TRAC 1.1.1 earmarking for all countries in that region. The allocation formula for TRAC 1.1.2 assignment for an individual country was initially expressed as a percentage of the country’s TRAC 1.1.1 earmarking, and ranged from 0 to 100 percent (averaging 66.67 percent). Temporary changes were made to the TRAC 1.1.2 allocation system through Executive Board decision 2005/26. The TRAC 1.1.3 facility was established to provide the Administrator with the capacity to respond quickly and flexibly to the needs of countries in special development situations. This budget, which has grown significantly, is mostly used to support work in crisis situations.

⁹⁵ UNDP, ‘Information on TRAC-2 allocation and methodology and criteria for establishing fixed lines in the programming arrangements’, Paper DP/2008/14 presented at first regular session 2008 of the UNDP Executive Board, 21 to 28 January 2008, New York.

Year	Key events
2008	<p data-bbox="383 216 1138 243">Ensuring that reflected in the Strategic Plan, 2008-2011 (continued)</p> <p data-bbox="383 258 1349 348">This agenda is then reflected in Outcome 1.2 of the supporting results framework, which is 'Enhanced national and local capacities to plan, monitor, report and evaluate the MDGs and related national development priorities, including within resource frameworks'.</p> <p data-bbox="383 363 1179 422">Start to scale up regional and national training and learning events for government counterparts</p> <p data-bbox="383 436 1398 527">Delivered mostly through capacity development advisors based in the Regional Service Centres, through mixture of workshops, usually at request of country offices, and training added onto work at country level.</p>

Annex 6

PEOPLE CONSULTED

AS PART OF THE BROAD EVALUATION

UNDP HEADQUARTERS

- Artaza, Ignacio, Change Management Advisor, Management Consulting Team, Bureau of Management
- Baffour, Violet, Special Assistant to Regional Director, Regional Bureau for Africa
- Banerjee, Niloy, Policy Advisor, Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy
- Benitez, Carlos, Programme Specialist, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Bhatia, Vineet, Chief, South-East Asia and Pacific Division, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
- Carlson, Christina, Programme Advisor, South and West Asia Division, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
- Cavanna, Magda, Policy Specialist, Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy
- Cisse, Babacar, Deputy Director, Regional Bureau for Africa
- Colville, Jennifer, Policy Advisor, Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy
- Conceicao, Pedro, Economic Advisor, Regional Bureau for Africa
- Conille, Garry, Leader, MDG Support Team, Bureau for Development Policy
- Deodat, Maharaj, Chief, Regional Programme Division, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
- Diaz, Ana Maria, Programme Specialist, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Drayton, Alison, Director, External Relations Division, Partnership Bureau
- El-Sharkawi, Amin, Programme Management Advisor, Regional Bureau for Arab States
- Eriksson, Thomas, Policy Advisor, Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy
- Fernandez, Lina, Team Leader, Business Solutions Team, Bureau of Management
- Gajraj, Priya, Country Advisor, Regional Bureau for Africa
- Gardner, Douglas, Deputy Director, Bureau for Development Policy
- Gregr, Daniela, Policy Specialist, MDG Support Team, Bureau for Development Policy
- Hannan, Abdul, Policy Advisor, Operations Support Group, Executive Office
- Hildebrants, Martinš, Programme Advisor and Deputy Chief, South-East Asia and Pacific Division, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
- Kalapurakal, Rosemary, Programme Specialist, South-East Asia and Pacific Division, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
- Karl, Judith, Director, Operations Support Group, Executive Office
- Khammar, Carla, Programme Advisor, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Kjorven, Olav, Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Development Policy
- Marzouki, Dania, Programme Specialist, Regional Bureau for Arab States
- Mendoza, Adrianna, Learning Resource Specialist, Office of Human Resources, Bureau of Management
- Murali, Balasubramanian, Programme Advisor and Deputy Chief, South and West Asia Division, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
- Naka, Kyo, Programme Advisor and Deputy Chief, Northeast Asia and Mekong Division, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

Nanthikesan, Suppiramaniam, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, Regional Bureau for Africa

Nkwain, Stan, Deputy Director, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery

Palanivel, Thangavel, Chief Economist, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

Pizarro, Gonzalo, Policy Specialist, Poverty Practice, Bureau for Development Policy

Pronyk, Jason, Management Adviser, Bureau for Development Policy

Rodrigues, Stephen, Economic Advisor, Operations Support Group, Executive Office

Russell, Andrew, Coordinator, Management Consulting Team, Bureau of Management

Rwamucyo, Ernest, Policy Advisor, Regional Bureau for Africa

Scott, Tim, NHDR Unit, Human Development Report Office

Solovieva, Alexandra, Programme Specialist, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

Spytkowski, Iwana, Management Consultant, Management Consulting Team, Bureau of Management

Svendsen, Mads, Management Advisor, Management Consulting Team, Bureau of Management

Topping, Jennifer, Director, Resource Mobilization Division, Partnership Bureau

Wignaraja, Kanni, Director, Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy

REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRES

Brill, Ines, Practice Leader, Capacity Development Cluster, Panama Regional Service Centre

Collins, Nan, Capacity Development Analyst, Johannesburg Regional Service Centre

Gyamfi-Aido, Jacob, Project Manager – Capacity Assessment, Johannesburg Regional Service Centre

Njie, Ndey Isatou, Regional Capacity Development Advisor, Dakar Regional Service Centre

Rohr, Beat, Deputy Director, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Director, Panama Regional Service Centre

Odusola, Ayodele, Economics Advisor, Johannesburg Regional Service Centre,

Rosellini, Nicholas, Deputy Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, and Director, Bangkok Regional Service Centre

Venter, Elaine, Capacity Development Practice Team Leader, Johannesburg Regional Service Centre

Wandel, Jens, Deputy Director, Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, and Director, Bratislava Regional Service Centre

COUNTRY OFFICES

Basnyat, Manoj, Country Director, Afghanistan

Benlamlih, El-Mostafa, Resident Coordinator, Indonesia

Djuric, Dragan, Core Technical Adviser, Capacity Development Programme, Montenegro

Ganuzza, Enrique, Resident Coordinator, Chile

Gercheva, Dafina, Resident Coordinator, Armenia

Kamal, Raj, Project Manager, National Institution Building Project, Afghanistan

Providas, Claudio, Acting Resident Representative, Ecuador

Rawley, James, Resident Coordinator, Egypt

OTHER

Baser, Heather, Consultant, Own practice, Canada

Booth, David, Director of Africa Power and Politics Programme/Research Fellow, Overseas Development Institute, London

Cameron, Claire, Director, Public Administration International

Carey, Richard, Director, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Co-operation Directorate

Hradsky, James, Senior Coordinator for Capacity Development, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Policy Co-ordination Division

James, Simon, Consultant, Public Administration International, Kosovo (ex UK Cabinet Office)

Jorgensen, Karen, Head, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Review and Evaluation Division

Robinson, Trevor, Consultant, Ibis Consultants, London

Sood, Anil, Independent consultant

Theison, Thomas, Independent consultant

Trzeciak-Duval, Alexandra, Head, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Policy Co-ordination Division

AS PART OF THE BOTSWANA NATIONAL CASE STUDY

UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE

Edjang, Fernando, Deputy Country Director, UNDP, Botswana

Lwin, K-S, Resident Representative, UNDP, Botswana

Moaneng, Rebonyebatho, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP, Botswana

Obuseng, Sennye, Economist, Poverty Programme, UNDP, Botswana

GOVERNMENT

Baakile, T., Director, Local Government Development, Ministry of Local Government (MLG)

Batolomi, Principal DDP Coordinator, Local Government Development, MLG

Chalashika, L., IEC Coordinator, Local Government Development, MLG

Dibothelo, Senior Development Officer, Local Government Development, MLG

Gaseitsiwe, Disikisela, Deputy Secretary (Socio-economic policy), Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP)

K. Molefhi, Kebabonye, Chief Food and Poverty Policy Coordinator, Food Security and Poverty Unit, MFDP

Kerekang, Deputy Government Statistician, Central Statistics Office (CSO)

Kokotso, Head, Food Security and Poverty Policy Coordination, Food Security and Poverty Unit, MFDP

Leipego, Principal DDP Coordinator, Local Government Development, MLG

Madikwe, Alfred, Director, International Economic Policy Coordination, International Cooperation, MFDP

Makgonatsotlhe, A., Secretary, Defence, Justice and Security, Office of the President

Makgosa, Principal Development Officer, Local Government Development, MLG

Makosha, S., Director, Human Resources Planning and Enterprises Development Policy Section, MFDP

Makwa, Jerry, Chief Economist, Projects Development Programmes and Budget Administration, MFDP

Maphorisa, Christine, Head, Monitoring Unit, Development Programmes and Budget Administration, MFDP

Masimega, O., Ag. Director, Budget Administration Development Programmes and Budget Administration, MFDP

Monkge, C., Vision 2016 Coordinator, Vision 2016, Council Secretariat

Montshiwa, Montshiwa, Deputy Secretary, National Governance Programme, Office of the President

Moremi, M., Chief Economist, Economic and Financial Policy Division, MFDP

Ndobano, K., Deputy Secretary, Macro-economic policy, Macro-economic Policy Division, MFDP

Pitso, M.R., Performance Management Analyst, Public Service Reform Unit, Office of the President

Radibe, R., Director, Rural Development Policy, MFDP

Serame, P., Director, Macro-economic Policy Division, MFDP

OTHER UN ORGANIZATIONS

Dube, N., Planning and Monitoring Analyst, United Nations, Botswana

Mukiza, R., UN Coordination Specialist, United Nations, Botswana

OTHER

Gaotlhobogwe, P., Coordinator, Nkaikela Youth Group

Kalake, N., Ag. Executive Director, Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (BOCONGO)

Makhumalo, O., Project Coordinator – local governance, BOCONGO

Melville, I, Fundraising and Communications Coordinator, Ditshwanelo

AS PART OF THE PARAGUAY NATIONAL CASE STUDY

UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE

Bachero, Regina, Coordinadora Componente PNUD, Programa Conjunto ‘Oportunidades’

Fernández, Julio, Asesor Técnico Principal ‘Invertir en la Gente’, UNDP

Galiano, Rocío, Gerente: Unidad de Programa y Comunicación, UNDP

Gerard, Veronique, Oficial de Programa, Medio ambiente y energía, UNDP

Méndez, Jorge, Coordinador, Oficina de Desarrollo Humano, UNDP

Mendoza, Pedro Gerente, UNDP

Mussi, Rodrigo, Coordinador, Programa conjunto de Agua Potable y Saneamiento-PNUD

Vallejos, Carmen, Oficial de Programa-Genero, UNDP

Yorg, Ricardo, Oficial de Programa, Gobernabilidad Democrática, UNDP

Zanotti, Rosmary, Oficial de Programa-Pobreza, UNDP

GOVERNMENT

Acosta, Manuel, Viceministro de Administración Financiera, Ministerio de Hacienda

Cárdenas, Héctor, Gabinete Social, Presidencia de la República

Guggiari, Giovanna, Directora, Dirección General de Desarrollo y Gestión del Cambio Institucional, Secretaría de la Función Pública

Jiménez, María Ester, Entidad Binacional Yacyreta, ex Ministra de Educación, ex Coordinadora del Gabinete Social, ex Ministra de la Secretaría de Acción Social

López, Perito Miguel Ángel, Ministro, Secretario General y Jefe del Gabinete Civil Secretaría del Gabinete Civil, Coordinador del Gabinete Social, Presidencia de la República

Querey, Jorge, Secretario General, Secretaría del Gabinete Civil, Presidencia de la República

Rodriguez, Karina, Viceministra de la Juventud, Viceministerio de la Juventud, Ministerio de Educación

Segovia, Elvio, Viceministro de Asuntos Políticos, Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones

Serafini, Verónica, Coordinadora General, Unidad de Economía Social, Ministerio de Hacienda

Talavera, Jorge, Director Ejecutivo, Unidad Técnica, Gabinete Social, Presidencia de la República

OTHER UN ORGANIZATIONS

Cáceres, Joaquín, Oficial de Coordinación, Sistema de las Naciones Unidas en Paraguay

Natalizia, Aldo, Oficial de Población y Desarrollo, UNFPA

AS PART OF THE SAUDI ARABIA NATIONAL CASE STUDY

UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE

Al Mogrin, Haifa, Associate for Governance, UNDP, Saudi Arabia

Al-Ahmed, Reyad, Resident Coordinator, UNDP, Saudi Arabia

Al-Najai, Abeer, M&E Associate, UNDP, Saudi Arabia

Khoday, Kishan, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP

Shammout, Nasser, Management Advisor, UNDOCO (ex DRR), UNDP

Tamim, Mayssam, UNDP, Saudi Arabia

Yassin, Yassin, Senior Programme Associate, Governance, UNDP

GOVERNMENT

- Abu-Kharmeh, Dr. Suleiman, Senior Regional Planning Advisor, Ministry of Economy and Planning (MOEP)
- Al-Awwad, Dr. Awwad, Vice Governor for Investment, Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority
- Al-Bukhayyet, Dr. Salah, Vice President for Investment, National Project Coordinator, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities
- Al-Mubarak, Dr. Faisal, Advisor for Planning, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities
- Al-Nawwab, Dr. Nabil, Senior Social Planning Advisor, MOEP
- Al-Saadoun, Dr. Yousef, Deputy Minister for Economic and Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)
- Al-Saud, HRH Prince Saud ben Khalid, COO, National Competitiveness Centre, Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority
- Al-Sheikh, Dr. Abdulaziz, Vice President for Support, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities
- Al-Sullaim, Dr. Musaad, Director of International Economic Relations, MFA
- Eltigani, Dr. Eltigani Eltahir, Senior Population Policies Advisor, MOEP
- Hakami, Ahmed, Vice-Minister of Economy and Planning, MOEP
- Hatim, Hatim G., Senior Planning Adviser, MOEP
- Mrayati, Mohammad, Senior Adviser on Science and Technology, MOEP
- Salah, Dr. Ahmed H., Economic Advisor and National Project Manager, MOEP
- Taibah, Maha, Head, Education Sector, Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority

OTHER UN ORGANIZATIONS

- Abu-Laban, Ayman, Representative, UNICEF
- AlDeraibi, Abdulrahman, Acting Country Manager, World Bank
- Dinar, Hassan, Assistant Representative, FAO

OTHER

- Al-Ahmadi, Dr. Hannan, Director, Institute of Public Administration
- Al-Mogel, Dr. Abdullah, Vice-Chancellor, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
- Al-Saud, HRH Prince Meshael bent Turki Alfaisal, Vice President, King Faisal Centre for Strategic and Islamic Studies, Riyadh
- Al-Sheikh, Dr. Hind, University Dean, CPA University, Jeddah
- Al-Sheikh, Dr. Hissah, University Dean, Al-Yamama University, Riyadh
- Alshiekh, Abdulelah, Senior Urban Strategist, International Urban Strategies

AS PART OF THE TOGO NATIONAL CASE STUDY

UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE

- Bogonou-Zannou, N'gname Jeanne, Analyste de programme, PNUD/Togo
- Niane, Souleymane Nasser, Expert en Administration Publique et Développement Institutionnel – Conseiller à la Primature, PNUD/Togo
- Pouyo, Alexandre, Chargé de Programme, PNUD/Togo
- Wansi, Pépé Satchivi, Chargée de Programme, PNUD/Togo
- Yamadjako, Selomey, Représentante Résidente Adjoint, PNUD/Togo

GOVERNMENT

- Ahondo, Komba Déo, Chargé de Mission, SGG
- Amadou, Abdel Fatah, Chef Division du Suivi des Réformes, Secrétariat Permanent aux Réformes économiques et financières
- Assih, Atissim, Expert, PRMAP/FP
- Bambah, Djerkbary M., Directeur de la Planification du développement, Ministère de la coopération du Développement et de l'Aménagement du Territoire

Bawara, Gilbert, Minister, Ministry of Cooperation, Development and Country Planning

Bedinade, Biréani, Chef de division Etudes, Direction du Budget/MEF

Boukpessi, Payadowa, Président Commission des Finances/Ancien Minsitre des Finances Assemblée Nationale

Danyaya, Youssof, Economiste, Direction Générale du Développement et de l'Aménagement du Territoire\

Danyaya, Issifou, Economiste, MPDAT

Dedji, Affo Tehitchi, Chef Service de Suivi Relations avec la BM et la BAD, Secrétariat Permanent aux Réformes économiques et financières

Djadou, Ayawo Zoglo, Adminsitrateur base de données DevInfo/TogoInfo, Direction de la Statistique et de la Comptabilité

Djamena, Atama, Directeur Adjoint, Direction de la Planification du développement

Essobozou, Awade M., DCARE/DCD/MPDAT

Fiadjoe, Honoré Tsatsou, Coordonnateur, Programme National de Gestion de l'E-Administration

Gentry, Akoly, Directeur des Echanges et de la coordination, Direction de la Statistique et de la Comptabilité

Gnongbo, Tak Youssif, Secrétaire Général, Minsitère de la Fonction Publique et de la Réforme de l'Adminsitration

Homevor, Alexandre Etsri, Macro économiste, UC/DSRP

Kokou, Waniko, Chargé de Mission, Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement/Cabinet/MPR/PDAT

Lamboni, Mindi, Directeur Général/Adjoint, Direction Générale du Développement et de l'Aménagement du Territoire

Ndiira, Prof. Pascal-Firmin, Conseiller Spécial du Président de la République chargé de la Planification, de la Coordination et du Suivi-Evaluation, Présidence de la République

Nika, Piyabalo, DPD/DDIC

Nonon Saah, Hateedena, Directeur Général, Direction Générale du Développement et de l'Aménagement du Territoire

Ouattara, Baly, Conseiller Technique-Coordination de l'Aide, Ministère de la coopération du Développement et de l'Aménagement du Territoire

OTHER UN ORGANIZATIONS

Vossah-Mooh, Béatrice Hanou, Chargée du Suivi-Evaluation, UNICEF/Togo

OTHER

Agbeti, Kodjo Akiro B., Directeur Général, CENETI/IAI Togo

Agbobli, Edo Kodjo Maurille, Consultant/Enseignant, Université de Lomé/FASEG/UL

Cador, Olivier, Directeur/Adjoint Délégation/Adjoint, Agence Française de Développement/Togo

Carrara, Guido, Chargé des Opérations, Union Européenne/Togo

Diakhate, Karim, Directeur des Rédactions, La Dépêche Diplomatique Afrique

Djenda, Aristide, Directeur Exécutif, UONGTO

Egnonto, Koffi Tessio, Enseignant/Chercheur, Université de Lomé/LARPSAD/ESA

Kokou Raven, Edu, Président Conseil d'Adminsitration, FONGTO

Kponzo, Kwami Dodzi, Directeur Exécutif, FONGTO (Fédération ONG)

Quenum, Claire, Coordinatrice, COSSC

Yina, Dominique, Assistant du Directeur Exécutif, UONGTO

Annex 7

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United Nations Development Programme
Evaluation Office
One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel. (212) 906 5059, Fax (212) 906 6008
Internet: <http://www.undp.org/evaluation>

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