

PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

JULY 2026



INTRODUCING UNDP

UNDP was established in 1965 as the UN's principal vehicle for multilateral development cooperation. Its mandate has evolved substantially over six decades — from a central funding mechanism and technical assistance provider, through the adoption of the human development paradigm in the 1990s, to its current role in supporting partner countries in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Reforms to the UN development system in 2018 moved the Resident Coordinator system out of UNDP's management but gave it the role of 'integrator' for SDG implementation — a function that is still being defined and operationalised. With its wide field presence, UNDP also plays the role of support platform for other UN entities, providing a range of administrative support services — a role that is likely to grow in importance as the UN pursues efficiency measures under the UN80 process.

UNDP's current Strategic Plan 2026–29 is broad in scope. It offers tailored support to programme countries across four results areas — prosperity, governance, crisis resilience and a healthy planet — supported by three cross-cutting accelerators: digital and AI transformation, gender equality, and sustainable finance.



Sustainable palm oil production in Jambi Province, Indonesia

UNDP-supported sustainable commodity programmes that help smallholder farmers and local stakeholders, improve sustainability practices, strengthen livelihoods, and support Indonesia's transition toward responsible palm oil production.

Photo: © UNDP
Indonesia/Andi Pratiwi

UNDP is governed by an Executive Board of 36 member states — shared with UNFPA and UNOPS — which approves its strategic plans, country programmes and budgets, and reports to ECOSOC. The Board’s formal authority extends only to core (unearmarked) resources, which represent approximately 10% of UNDP’s funding. The remaining 90% is mobilised through earmarked contributions from donor governments, programme-country governments, vertical funds (particularly climate funds), and pooled financing mechanisms.

UNDP operates a decentralised, demand-driven business model. Country offices function as locally embedded brokers, matching government needs with donor funding and technical solutions. For more specialised expertise, UNDP relies on its Global Policy Network, regional hubs, Global Policy Centres, and external consultants. The Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC), primarily based in Denmark and Malaysia, provides support services for human resources and finance to UNDP offices and 70 other UN entities.

UNDP’S PERFORMANCE JOURNEY, 2021-25

The 2021 MOPAN assessment identified UNDP as resilient and adaptable, demonstrating strong alignment with national priorities, robust management systems and a high degree of transparency. It also identified challenges: an organisational structure oriented toward project implementation, rather than strategic engagement, a lack of focus on global results, and a need for more systematic integration of evaluation lessons.

Since 2021, UNDP has introduced meaningful reforms in a range of areas. The Quantum enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform replaced the legacy ATLAS system, improving real-time financial tracking, payment processing and management oversight capabilities across the organisation. The People for 2030 strategy introduced new contract modalities, a competency framework, an internal talent marketplace and new leadership development programmes. A new competency framework and updated job descriptions were launched in 2024 to address technical capacity gaps at country level.



Farming in the Seychelles

Francis Simeon, farmer from Val D'Andorre, using sustainable land management practices under the UNDP-funded Ridge to Reef Project.

Photo: © UNDP Mauritius / Jean-Yan Norbert



Education in Ndanu area, Kinshasa, Congo (DRC)

Ndanu, in the Limete administrative district, is settled alongside the Ndjili river. This school is in a former ricefield. This area is regularly flooded and the population struggles to maintain a decent life, dealing with lack of employment, floods, waste management and poverty. But in the end, life always wins.

Photo: © UNDP/ RDC/ Aude Rossignol

Financial governance has been further strengthened. UNDP has maintained an unqualified financial audit opinion for 19 consecutive years, and a new Accountability System Policy was adopted in 2025, supported by an updated Enterprise Risk Management framework and a Chief Risk Officer function.

Progress on cross-cutting commitments has been notable: gender financing tagging reached 73% of expenditures in 2024, ahead of target; the Climate Promise became the largest global support platform for Nationally Determined Contributions, backing 85% of developing-country submissions; and UNDP launched a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) Toolkit in 2025, integrating mandatory human rights and ‘leaving no-one behind’ (LNOB) markers into its reporting system. On safeguarding, completion rates on training in prevention of sexual exploitation and harassment reached 94%, and a full-time Victim Support Officer was appointed.

Despite this progress, the assessment finds that several challenges identified in 2021 persist. Results-based management is effective at tracking and reporting on project outputs, but lacks a focus on strategic results. The Business Model Review of 2024 led to greater role clarity between headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices, but did not address underlying tension between UNDP’s strategic ambitions and the incentives created by its funding model. UNDP’s strategic plan for 2026–29 set out an ambitious vision of integrated, systems-based approaches and portfolio programming, and steps are underway towards its implementation, including the development of new guidance for staff on contextual analysis. However, the organisation still lacks a clear articulation of the operational changes required to implement this vision in the face of declining core funding, capacity constraints in country offices and the competing incentives created by funding pressures.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2026 ASSESSMENT

The overarching conclusion of the 2026 assessment is that UNDP has become a stronger and more capable organisation, but its ability to deliver integrated, strategic results remains constrained by its funding model and the incentives it creates. UNDP’s strategies show a clear understanding of the challenge and a commitment to addressing it. However, they are yet to articulate clearly the organisational change processes required, given the structural constraints and incentives that shape how country offices actually operate.

The assessment identifies three broad findings. **First, UNDP's operational and management systems are among its chief assets.** Its decentralised country presence, financial governance, workforce management and safeguarding frameworks all perform well. This gives funders confidence to entrust their resources to UNDP. Survey data confirms this confidence: 75% of respondents agree that UNDP's organisational structure supports delivery of its mandate, and 86% affirm the value of its wide geographical presence. These are genuine strengths that matter for the UN development system as a whole.

Second, UNDP's performance as a programme implementer and service provider is solid at output level, but weaker at outcome level. Between 2022 and 2024, average target achievement exceeded 90% across strategic performance areas. However, the corporate results framework does not enable systematic assessment of contributions to longer-term outcomes and impacts, leading to an 'unsatisfactory' rating for results-based management. Fragmented, project-based delivery is identified across evaluations as the primary constraint on the delivery of results at scale, leading to 'unsatisfactory' ratings for efficiency and sustainability. The portfolio approach, which was designed to address this fragmentation, has not yet been operationalised at scale and remains concentrated in middle and high-income countries.

Third, UNDP's role as SDG integrator and knowledge broker is the area of greatest strategic ambition, but also poses the greatest challenges. Tools and capacities exist, including SDG Push, Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) and the Accelerator Labs, but a more comprehensive leadership role on SDG integration at country level would require greater conceptual clarity, stakeholder buy-in and dedicated resources than are currently available.



Community mangrove planting in Cambodia

The local activity took place as part of a larger mangrove planting and marine exhibition under ActionAid Cambodia's 100,000 Mangroves campaign, supported by UNDP. Photo: © UNDP Cambodia/Manuth But

Key strengths and areas of opportunity

KEY STRENGTHS

Role 1: SDG integrator & knowledge broker

- Strong track record supporting countries with National Voluntary Reviews, INFFs, National Development Plans and statistics
- Support to UN Country Teams through the SDG Push initiative and identification of SDG accelerators
- Global thought leadership through the Human Development Report
- Accelerator Labs network building innovation capacity, integrated into regional offices

Role 2: Capacity developer & programme implementer

- Robust operational systems and tools; strong and consistent donor confidence
- Climate Promise — largest global platform for NDCs, backing 85% of developing-country submissions
- Increased focus on conflict prevention, anticipatory approaches and stabilisation in fragile contexts
- Strong output-level delivery — average target achievement $\geq 90\%$ across most Signature Solutions

Role 3: Provider of common operational services

- Largest provider of common services in the UN system, serving 70 UN entities
- Expanded service palette across HR, finance, procurement and premises management. Quantum ERP platform provided for 11 UN entities with expected cost-effectiveness.
- GSSC clustering generating efficiency gains; new cost-recovery model introduced in 2025

KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Role 1: SDG Integrator & Knowledge Broker

- SDG integrator role inconsistently understood and applied across country offices
- LNOB agenda lacks clear institutional home, ownership and dedicated resourcing
- Limited evidence of systematic organisational learning despite strong infrastructure
- Insufficient dedicated resources allocated to this role

Role 2: Capacity developer & Programme implementer

- No robust corporate framework for monitoring contributions to outcomes and impacts
- Fragmented, project-based delivery limits scale, efficiency and sustainability of results
- Portfolio approach not yet operationalised at scale, with just USD 175m in total investment across 70 portfolios in 2025

Role 3: Provider of common operational services

- No consolidated reporting on service volumes, costs or performance
- No overarching strategy for inter-agency service provision
- Lack of evaluative evidence across service lines
- Pricing transparency and cost-recovery effectiveness yet to be fully demonstrated

LOOKING AHEAD

UNDP enters the 2026–29 strategic plan period facing unprecedented resource pressures, with global ODA declining by USD 50 billion in 2025 and core contributions to the UN system falling by 27%¹. The UN80 reform process and the appointment of a new UN Secretary-General in 2027 create both urgency and opportunity for a renewed reform agenda.

In the context of shrinking resources, shifting from a project-based to a more strategic approach to supporting the SDGs will be critical. The UN development system is moving towards a more systematic approach to SDG implementation, identifying key investment areas that can have a catalytic effect in unlocking and accelerating the SDG agenda. Identifying the most strategic investment opportunities in each context is a key challenge facing UN Country Teams (UNCTs). These efforts would benefit from stronger engagement by UNDP, combining the Resident Coordinator’s leadership and convening power with UNDP’s substantive role as SDG integrator. With its expertise on specific development challenges (such as poverty reduction and inclusive growth), governance issues and SDG financing, UNDP has a great deal to contribute to those efforts but must increasingly orient itself towards building the effectiveness of the UN development system as a whole.

1. OECD (2026) Preliminary Official Development Assistance Levels in 2025. Paris: OECD. [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD\(2026\)8/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD(2026)8/en/pdf).

UNDP project on Consolidation of Peace, Security and Justice in Nouakchott, Mauritania

Before this centre was established, children and youths in their neighbourhood had nothing to do in their free time after school and would easily get bored. This space gives them the opportunity to spend time with their friends and learn new and creative skills. The project is aimed at Mauritanian girls, boys and young people aged between 12 and early 20s, who can come to the centre and learn computer skills, acting and theatre through month-long workshops.

Photo: © UNDP Mauritania/Freya Morales



The size and number of peace operations is on the decline² and the UN80 review of peace operations aims to provide proposals on how to delegate civilian tasks in ongoing peace operations to UN agencies. With the withdrawal of peace operations, UNDP's role as a capacity development and programme implementer will be increasingly important, to take forward peacebuilding efforts and avoid relapses into conflict. Building on lessons from developing portfolios in countries, such as Libya and Timor Leste, finding ways to scale up the use of complexity theory and systems-thinking in fragile contexts will be important to strengthen UNDP's performance as a peacebuilding actor.

Ongoing reductions in UN funding add momentum to the Secretary-General's efficiency agenda. The UN80 work package on UNCT configuration envisages a Common Back Office in each programme country. To enable this transition, UNDP would need to adopt a more strategic approach to the provision of common operational services with system-wide needs and requirements at the centre.

UNDP's operating model shapes its performance across its various roles. The current system of rotating international staff in which most international posts are mobile with time-in-post limits, while roles such as RRs and DRRs are rotational by hardship classification, was intended to promote independence and distribute hardship postings more evenly. However, as UNDP's expenditure is increasingly skewed toward country contexts that require

2. SIPRI (2025) Developments and Trends in Multilateral Peace Operations. <https://doi.org/10.55163/VVWF7280>.



deep contextual knowledge (including fragile settings and middle-income countries), the demand for generalist staff is decreasing. The 2024 Business Model Review identified opportunities to consolidate location-independent operational support services. A more comprehensive functional review might help UNDP find an optimal balance of generalist and specialist staff across its headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices, as well as with other UN entities.

UNDP might also benefit from a review of its comparatively heavy leadership configuration. From 2011 to 2025, UNDP's core funding reduced by an estimated 71% in real (inflation-adjusted) terms. During the same period, the RC system was de-coupled from UNDP. Despite UNDP's evolving funding mix and mandate, the organisation broadly maintained the same leadership structure with two Under-Secretaries-General and nine Assistant Secretaries-General since 2014. The integrated budget for 2026-2029 includes a reduction by 10% of D1 and higher-graded positions. Given that UNDP's core funding was reduced by 24% in 2025, a more comprehensive review, taking into consideration core and non-core funding availability and other relevant aspects, might be warranted during the 2026-29 Strategic Plan period.

Improving alignment between strategic intent, on the one hand, and the balance of UNDP's activities, on the other, will require more attention to the trade-offs within the business model between responding to national priorities, donor preferences and shared UN objectives and values. There may be a case for reviewing the criteria and process for approving donor-funded programmes, to improve alignment with UNDP's strategic objectives. Strengthening accountability for outcome-level results could also incentivise organisational learning and a stronger focus on integrated portfolios.

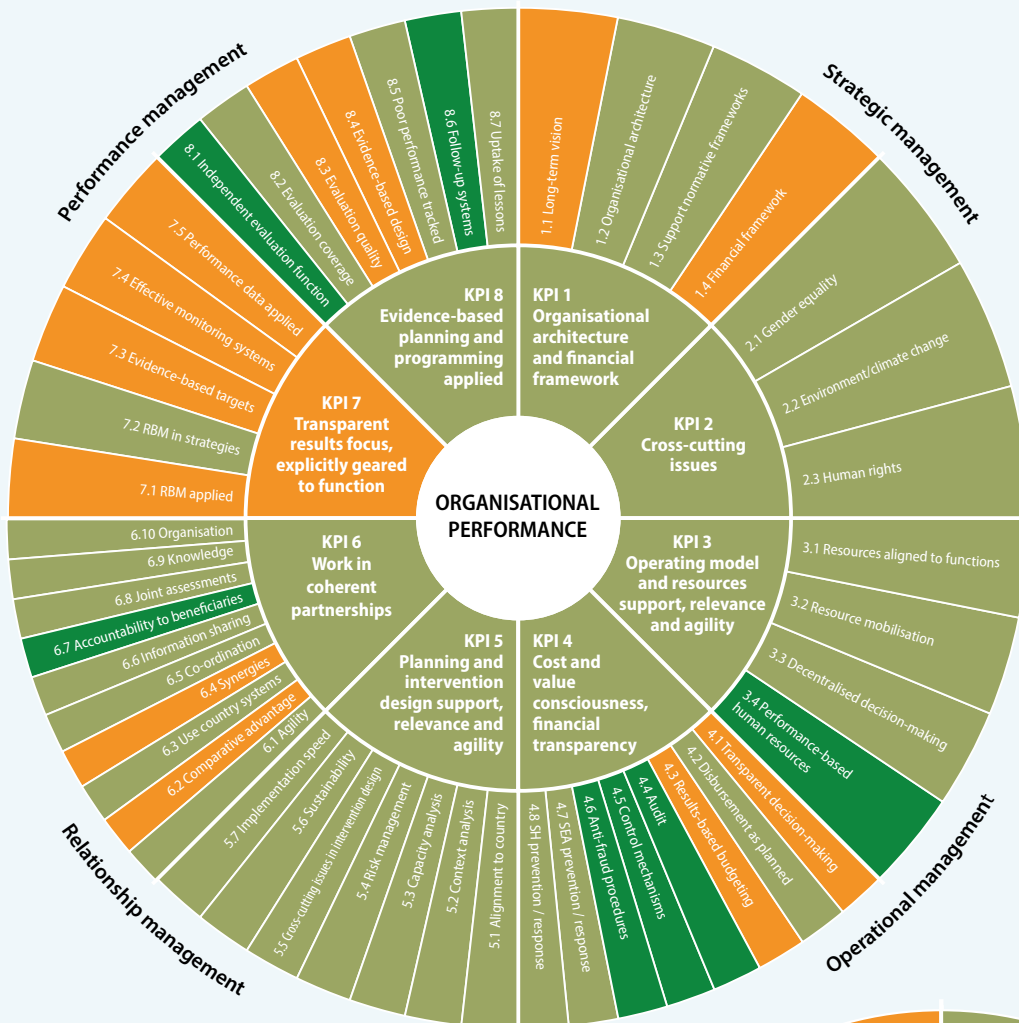
Haiti disaster training

UNDP trained volunteer brigadiers in first aid, rescue, and rubble clearance in Jacmel, and Les Cayes, to prepare them for future natural disasters such as earthquakes.

Photo: © UNDP Haiti/
Moliere Solon

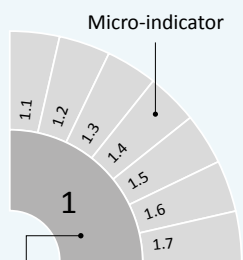


UNDP'S PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY



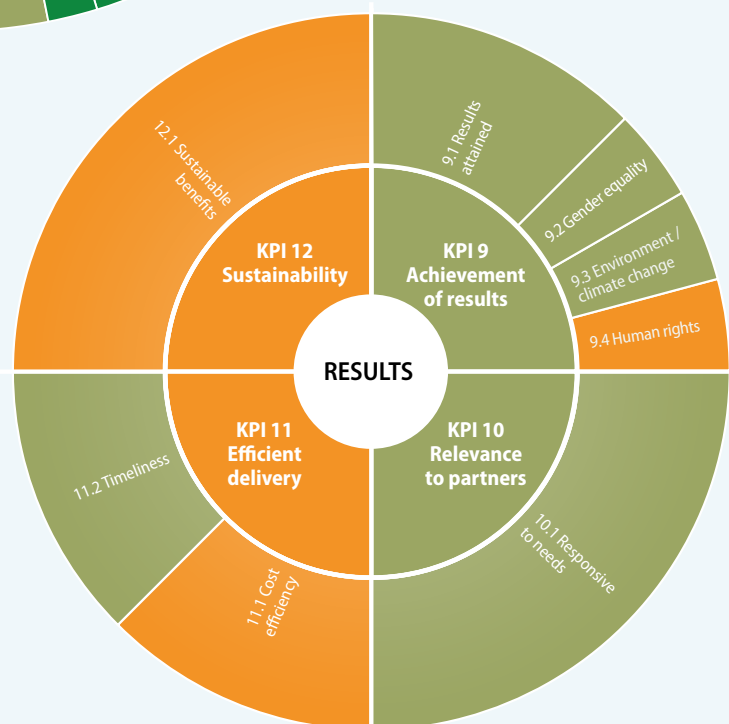
Disclaimer: Each organisation MOPAN assesses has a unique mandate, business model and operating environment. The context of multilateral development and cooperation is dynamic, with expectations and good practices changing over time. The MOPAN framework reflects this unique context and evolution across different types of multilateral organisations. As such, comparison across assessments is strongly discouraged. More information on the rationale underlying MOPAN's assessment ratings can be found in Chapter 4 of this report or the online technical annexes.

How to read these charts



Key Performance Indicator

- **Highly satisfactory** (3.51-4.00)
- **Satisfactory** (2.51-3.50)
- **Unsatisfactory** (1.51-2.50)
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.50)
- **No evidence / Not applicable**



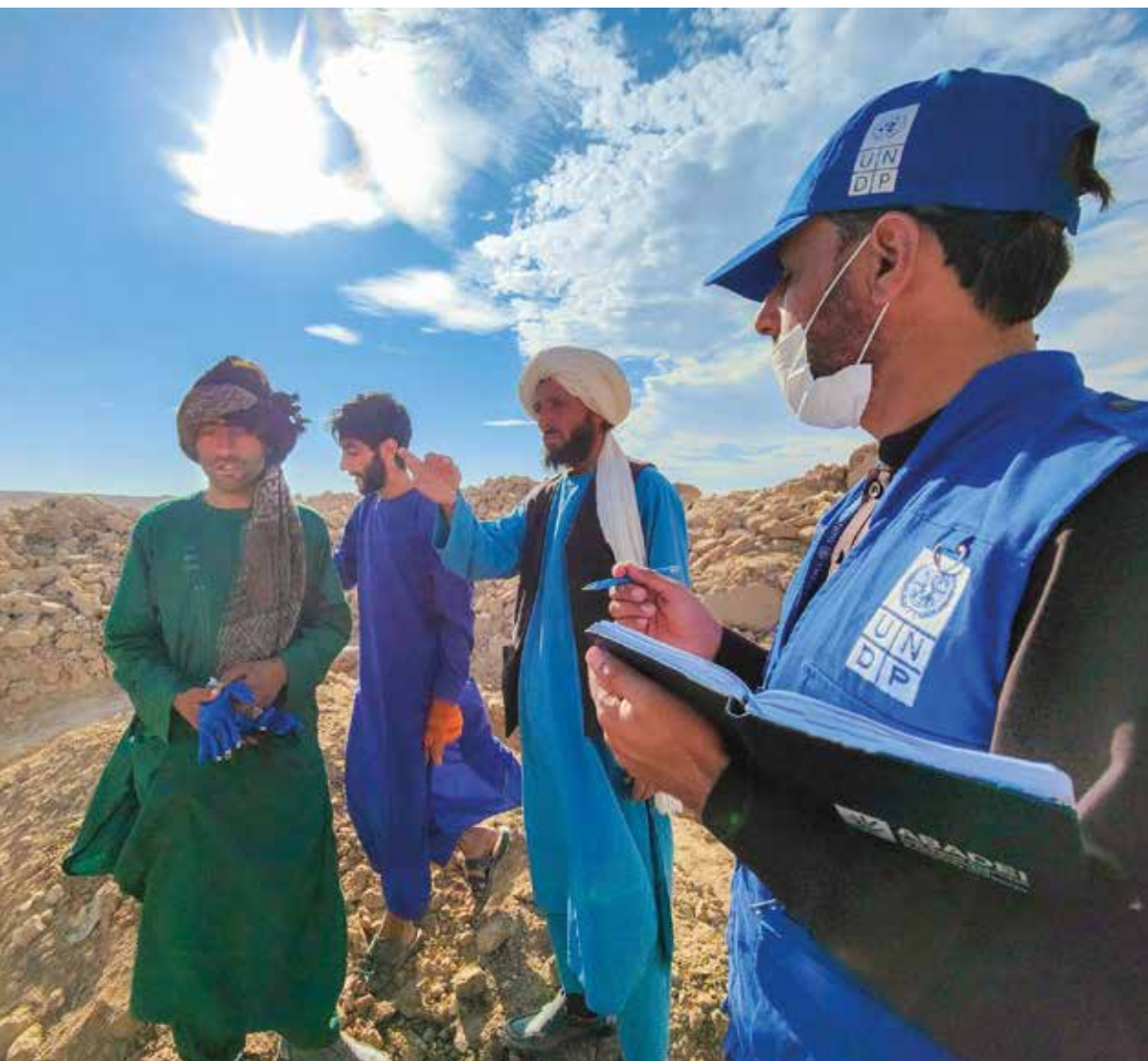
While the MOPAN 3.1 methodology is not designed to generate specific recommendations, the assessment report concludes each KPI analysis in Chapter 3 with a brief discussion of how peer institutions have responded to similar challenges, to help UNDP and its Executive Board identify options for moving forward over the 2026–2029 period. A summary of these suggestions is included in Chapter 2.

THE ASSESSMENT APPROACH

MOPAN's assessments consider whether multilateral organisations are positioned to deliver results in line with their mandates, adhere to the highest standards of ethics and integrity and work coherently across the system. Assessments are shared as a public good to support dialogue and decision-making across the multilateral system, including concerning funding, multilateral policy, and governance. Further information on MOPAN's approach, including details of the assessment framework, is set out in MOPAN's Methodological Manual.

The MOPAN assessment of UNDP relied on three evidence streams: a document review, a partner survey, and individual and group interviews. The objective for each line of evidence is to generate the most relevant evidence, to generate a clear and holistic view of UNDP's structure, operations, partnerships and performance for the period 2022-25.

UNDP was assessed in 2009, 2012, the 2015-16 assessment cycle, and most recently in the 2020-21 assessment cycle.



Assessing earthquake damage in Afghanistan

In 2023, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake caused widespread damage and loss of life in western Afghanistan. UNDP stands ready to support affected people as they recover from this tragedy.

Photo: © UNDP Afghanistan

UNDP in numbers (2024-2025)

INSTITUTIONAL LEADS

Sweden and United Kingdom

Annual revenue (2024)
USD 5.3 billion

Earmarked funding:
88% of total resources

Aid Transparency Index
2024: **Top 5** multilateral;
6th of 50 agencies

193 Member countries

UNDP KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

Headquarters:
New York, USA

Total workforce:
23 797 (staff, PSA holders, UN Volunteers)

Country offices: **135 / 170+** countries and territories

Country-level workforce:
89% of total

UNDP: Top funding partners in 2025

Funding Partner	Core Resources	Other Resources	Total (USDm)
Global Environment Facility	0	372	372
Germany	104	223	327
European Union	0	313	313
The Global Fund	0	311	311
Argentina	0	306	306
Norway	38	225	263
Japan	45	209	254
Multi-Partner Trust Fund	0	234	234
Sweden	41	111	152
Republic of Korea	15	132	147
Gabon	0	123	123
Denmark	18	88	106
Guatemala	0	98	98
Saudi Arabia	2	93	95
Canada	29	59	88

Funding Partner	Core Resources	Other Resources	Total (USDm)
Netherlands	38	49	87
Green Climate Fund	0	84	84
United Kingdom	15	61	76
Brazil	0	76	76
Colombia	0	74	74
World Bank Group	0	71	71
Switzerland	39	31	70
UN Agencies	0	70	70
Italy	0	58	58
Qatar	9	46	55
Panama	0	47	47
Honduras	0	43	43
Dominica	0	41	41
Haiti	0	41	41
Cuba	0	37	37

Source: UNDP Annual Report 2025

Overview

UNDP was established in November 1965 by UN General Assembly Resolution 2029 (XX) through the merger of two predecessor bodies: the UN Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (established in 1949) and the UN Special Fund (established in 1958). Over the following decades, the General Assembly progressively expanded UNDP's mandate, including through the creation of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in 1966 and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in 1970, both operating under UNDP's umbrella.

ABOUT MOPAN

The Multilateral Performance Network (MOPAN) comprises 20 members³ that promote an effective multilateral system, trusted to deliver solutions to evolving global goals and local challenges.

MOPAN is a network of members who assess multilateral organisations, shape performance standards, and champion learning and insights to strengthen development and humanitarian results and promote accountability. Capitalising on the Network's unique cross-multilateral system perspective and expertise, MOPAN members work together to deliver relevant, impartial, high-quality and timely performance information as a public good through an inclusive and transparent approach.

MOPAN's performance information mitigates risks, informs decision-making and supports change, helping increase knowledge and trust amongst all stakeholders and ultimately achieving a stronger, better-performing multilateral system.

3. As at 1 April 2026: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA.

For more
information



Dream big in Bangladesh

Indigenous children in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh face many issues due to a lack of support and neglect. Children and mothers suffer from malnutrition, leading to stunted growth and susceptibility to different diseases in the village youth.

Photo: UNDP/OCHA/
Jewel Chakma

