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IN BRIEF

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COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

This brief presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) of the UN Women Papua New Guinea Country Office conducted between April to December 2019. A CPE is a systematic assessment of the normative, coordination and operational aspects of UN Women’s contributions to development results with respect to gender equality and empowerment of women at the country level.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is one of the most diverse and least urbanized countries in the world, with 85 percent of the nearly 9 million people living in rural areas spread over 600 islands. PNG is classified as a Low Human Development country under UN classification, and its history is marked with political and community conflict and continuing levels of communal violence, particularly in the Highlands.

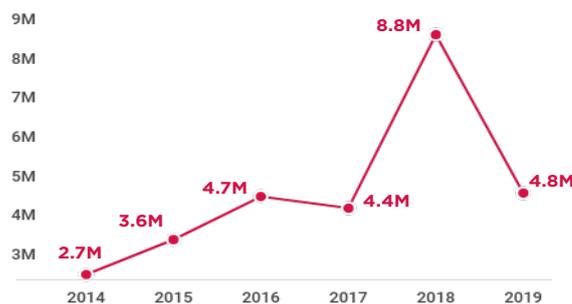
Progress towards gender equality in PNG is slow, with the country ranking 160th out of 161 countries on the Gender Inequality Index produced by the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Gender-based violence (GBV) occurs at very high rates. Though the government of PNG has taken steps to establish dedicated offices, enact referral services and pass a range of related legislation, multiple forms of violence against women and gender discrimination remain widespread.

UN Women PNG was established as a Country Office in 2014; prior to this it was a programme presence overseen by the UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office. During the cycle of the 2014-2017 Strategic Note (SN), ending violence against women (EVAW) was the primary thematic area of focus with the implementation of the Global Safe Cities programme in Port Moresby. The programme initiated in the previous SN, in 2011, with a focus on women and girls in marketplaces, the project was extended in 2015 to Safe Public Transportation. The other key thematic area of focus has been women, peace and security (WPS), with

UN Women engaged in four peacebuilding projects in Bougainville since 2015 and one in the Highlands since early 2019. Following a 7.5 magnitude earthquake in the Highlands in 2018, UN Women also expanded into a new area of work by undertaking a joint humanitarian response programme with the UN Children’s fund (UNICEF) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

The Country Office underwent a major operational restructuring in 2017 that included appointing a new head of office. The total PNG CO budget has grown from US\$2.7 million in 2014 to US\$8.8 million in 2018. Since 2016 the office has had between 22 and the current 34 posts. Personnel was projected to reach 39 in 2019, however, challenges in recruiting staff persist.

CO Annual Budget US\$ (2014-2019)



Top PNG Thematic Areas* (US\$)



Scope of the evaluation



**PNG CO
Development Results
Performance**



5 outcome areas
UN Women's integrated mandates across the portfolio's 5 outcome areas



**PNG CO
Organisational
Effectiveness and
Efficiency**



Past & current SN
SN cycle 2014-2017 and current SN cycle 2018-2022 (information up to Q3 of 2019)



-\$29 million USD
including Core and Non-core resources

Evaluation purpose, objectives and intended audience

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) led this CPE. The purpose of this CPE is to support: strategic learning and decision-making for the current SN 2018-2022; designing the next SN 2023-2027; strategic positioning of the CO in the context of the UN reform; enhanced accountability for development effectiveness and learning from experiences implementing the SN 2014-2017; and capacity development and mobilization of national stakeholders to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW).

The scope of the evaluation covers UN Women's normative, coordination and operational work across all thematic areas of engagement during the previous Strategic Note (2014-2017) and mid-way into the current Strategic Note (2018-2022). The geographic coverage of the evaluation spans PNG, with case studies in Port Moresby (the capital), Mendi (the Highlands), and Buka (Bougainville).

The evaluation had the following objectives:

- Assess the **relevance** of UN Women's contribution at national level and alignment with international and regional conventions.
- Assess the **effectiveness** and **organizational efficiency** in progressing toward GEEW.
- Assess the **added value** of UN Women's presence in PNG.
- Analyse how a **human rights approach and gender equality** principles have been integrated in UN Women's work.
- Identify and validate **lessons learned, good practices, and examples of innovation** that support gender equality and human rights.
- Provide **actionable recommendations**.

The primary target audience and intended direct users of this evaluation are UN Women staff (including PNG CO, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and IEAS), government partners, the UN Country Team, civil society representatives, and funding partners.

Evaluation approach

The CPE employed a non-experimental, theory-based approach. In consultation with the PNG CO, a reconstructed theory of change (ToC) was developed and used as the basis for contribution analysis. Evaluation questions were developed using the ToC and assessed against OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and

sustainability, and gender equality and human rights. UN Women evaluations are gender-responsive and apply the key principles of a human rights-based approach: they are inclusive, participatory, ensure fair power relations, and transparent; and they analyse the underlying structural barriers and sociocultural norms that impede the realization of women's rights. This CPE is anchored around these principles and has been inclusive and consultative during the design, conduct, and finalization stages.

To generate robust evidence, the evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach and triangulated different sources of data. Data collection included extensive document review, two in-depth case studies, primary interviews and focus group discussions with 68 people, country observations, two surveys, and a financial analysis. The evaluation also piloted an analysis of the value for money (VfM) that analyzed the economy, efficiency, equity and cost-effectiveness of one intervention.

This CPE followed UN Women procedures to ensure high quality evaluation processes and products and ethical conduct as outlined in the [UN Women Evaluation Policy](#) and [Evaluation Handbook](#). All evaluation products have been subject to [quality review](#) by the IEAS, peer reviewers, the Evaluation Reference Group, and the Evaluation Management Group.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were developed based on the key findings and consultation with ERG members.



Relevance & Effectiveness

The UN Women PNG CO has made important contributions to gender equality and the empowerment of women in an extremely patriarchal and complex operating environment. This has included at the grassroots level through empowering women and men as agents of change, institutionalizing women's voice mechanisms, and at the national level where key policies have been influenced from a gender lens. The Safe Cities and Safe Public Transport Programme has been the key driver for the CO's contribution to transformative change, empowering 4,000 women market vendors through 19 market vendor associations across three markets in Port Moresby and institutionalizing change at both city and national level in support of safer markets.

The CO is strategically positioned within the UN system in PNG as the go-to agency for gender equality and the empowerment of women. This has been achieved over the course of the past two Strategic Note cycles, mainly by building a niche expertise in markets and public transportation, key achievements in Bougainville, and strategic contributions to the UN Country Team (UNCT). The new Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights Strategy, coupled with UN reform, present opportunities for deepening collaboration across the UN system and enhancing accountability for gender mainstreaming.

UN Women has increased visibility and recognition for its leadership and mandate resulting in significant resource mobilizations. On the one hand, the CO's expansion into new areas of the country will allow the organization to enhance its relevance by reaching those who have been left furthest behind, scaling up its reach beyond Port Moresby and Bougainville. On the other hand, the high risks involved in rapid expansion to these new areas require careful consideration.

Gender Equality and Human Rights & Sustainability

The CO has demonstrated how an holistic, long-term approach grounded in national ownership and institutionalization, as exemplified under the area of work on ending violence against women (EVAW), can help to move the needle up on the dial of gender equality and empowerment of women in PNG. Women Peace and Security (WPS) has not benefited from the same level of resources and engagement as EVAW, and there are persistent risks that important recent gains in the WPS area may be lost.

The scope of the issues to be tackled require focussing more deeply on systemic-level social norm change, and new programmes have opened the opportunity to do so effectively. There is the continued need to prioritize support to the government and to advocate for the accountability of government institutions to implement national and international normative frameworks and policy commitments, in parallel to the continued need to strengthen civil society as a means for stimulating systemic-level social norm change.

Efficiency

Results-based management (RBM) and risk management are fundamental to the CO achieving its objectives, in light of the challenges related to governance, capacity of implementing partners, staff capacity (both numbers and skill sets) and an expansion into new areas of the country, in particular in conflict zones. Key challenges with respect to UN Women operational procedures and staff understanding of these were identified. Likewise, as evidenced through the recent round of United Nations Peacebuilding Fund projects, there are opportunities for optimizing synergies between programming efforts of UN agencies in the same area and enhancing joint management and oversight of programmes.

The following recommendations are based on the evaluation's findings and conclusions and have been developed through an iterative process of discussion with the PNG CO and the Evaluation Reference Group. Each recommendation proposes specific, actionable steps for consideration by the CO.

RECOMMENDATIONS



During 2020, UN Women should **undertake key analyses that will help prioritize efforts** by continuing the current scaling up of some, and assessing the possibility of scaling back or shifting focus of others; and should put in place adequate capacity to deliver its ambitious programme.

1



During 2020, the CO should work with partners to **develop a long-term strategy and action plan** that outlines how it will engage with and strengthen civil society and government institutions as a means for stimulating systemic-level change of social norms.

2



In advance of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), and recognizing that coordination efforts require collective and collaborative action, the CO should **continue building upon its strategic positioning within the UNCT** by strengthening its support to coordination both within and beyond the UN system, and contributing to coherence and management of programmes (in particular for joint programmes).

3



During 2020, The CO should **strengthen its RBM and risk management** to ensure more effective programme management, placing accountability and engagement with populations front and centre, seeking support from the ROAP and HQ as necessary, and advocating with funding partners to invest more in RBM capacity.

4