UNIDO’s partnerships with Donors: Thematic Evaluation Facts and Findings (10/2017)

UNIDO’s partners* are:
- 168 member states
- Multilateral institutions
*Private sector and civil society organisations are important partners, but were not the focus of this evaluation.

UNIDO’s voluntary contributions have been increasing from 2006 to 2015, despite a slight decrease in core funding, demonstrating interest and confidence in UNIDO.

Top priority for 83% of partners surveyed
Providing new, flexible funding modalities for voluntary funds is a top priority for 83% of partners surveyed.

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84 Partner representatives interviewed
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42 UNIDO staff members interviewed
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68 Survey responses from UNIDO partners and staff
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Evaluations
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Key findings in relation to evaluation criteria
- UNIDO’s relevance to funding partners is strong and increasing in relation to their own priorities.
- Funding partners believe that UNIDO’s delivery of projects and programmes is generally of high quality and good value for money.
- In general there are positive operational-level partnership arrangements and relationships with funding partners.
- Key areas with lower-performance and future risks that were consistently highlighted were strategic-level partnership management and sustainability of results.
- Partnerships that engage country governments and private sector partners: Funding partners value UNIDO’s capacity to act as a “neutral broker” between governments, private sector and vulnerable communities and environments. The mutual benefits of UNIDO’s engagement with private sector companies of funding partners’ countries is particularly appreciated.
- Flexible funding models for partner contributions: Some partners have provided ‘lightly tied’ funds. This allows UNIDO to be accountable for the funds but have flexibility in their allocation. It also provides a way for funding partners to support mutual priorities with lower transaction costs.
- In-country offices with partners: The UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Offices (ITPOs) and donor liaison offices that work with partner governments and private sector are highly appreciated by partners.

Lessons from experience of other UN Organizations:
- Partnership strategies across whole organisations and sufficiently resourced partnership management ensure that partners are provided with appropriate support, clear & consistent messages and strong coordination.
- Accountability & transparency to partners is important. Investments in demonstrating performance in these areas are of benefit to partners.
- Ongoing liaison around shared interests is a key basis for partnerships and can result in identification of opportunities for funding contributions.

WHAT’S NEXT
1. Partnership strategy and supporting systems across the whole organization to ensure that there is a clear and comprehensive approach across UNIDO.
2. Review and reform the cost structure for managing funding partnerships aligned with the needs of funding partners and the level of voluntary contributions, to ensure sufficient staffing & resources for strategic relationship management.
3. Expand the scale and impact of programmes by shifting toward larger programmes (e.g. thematic, regional, multi-disciplined) to reduce transaction costs, while increasing the quality & extent of results.
4. Strengthen focus on long term results and wider impact by translating short-term and project-level results into knowledge and wider impact.
5. Enhance visibility of UNIDO’s products & capability. In particular, demonstrating how successful programmes, projects & approaches are achieving results and impact.