

Scaling Up Support to the MDGs

Final draft approved by UNDP MDG Steering Committee
July 2008
MDG Support Team, UNDP

Summary

This document outlines a framework for strengthening the UN system support to governments to accelerate progress towards MDG targets by systematically combining policy support for the MDGs with capacity development for service delivery, strategic planning, and resource mobilization. The framework outlines how development partners can enhance support for the MDGs in different country contexts (e.g. conflict/post-conflict, low-income, middle income) and within different governance settings and resource endowments. The main recommendation is to focus in-depth support in 1-2 areas, where proven interventions can be implemented at national scale to achieve large-scale progress. For countries that face high inequality and experience sharp regional divide, the strategy proposes to roll out area-based development initiatives for improved development outcomes at the sub-national level. The end goal is to strengthen national agencies and systems so that they are fully able to deliver on MDG services and reach their national targets by 2015.

I. Motivation

Success stories abound that show how national MDG targets can be met through strong government leadership and donor support, implementation of sound national and local development plans, targeted investments in individual and institutional capacities for key MDG sectors, and adequate resource mobilization through domestic resources and increased ODA. **The challenge now is to support countries in replicating these success stories and taking them to scale.**

Poor countries that face deeper development challenges, such as low institutional capacities, low human capabilities, and lack of natural and financial resources, may not be able to scale up MDG investments across all sectors at once, and thus may need to prioritize 1-2 key public sectors over a medium-term that may deliver the biggest impact on MDGs. In this way, governments will be able to concentrate the necessary political and administrative attention as well as resources to build delivery capacities and achieve demonstrable results at a national scale. Where significant policy reforms are required to ensure effective use of resources, the focus on national-scale programs offers an opportunity to mobilize the political leadership, targeted capacity investments and domestic resources and ODA to address these implementation challenges head on. Examples for effective national-scale programs are Malawi's success in reducing child mortality rates; Nepal's program to reduce maternal mortality; or the large number of FTI-supported education programs in low-income countries. By achieving strong results in the respective sectors, governments can demonstrate their ability to design and execute national-scale

programs, which will strengthen their advocacy for domestic and external resources to scale up in other areas as well.

Countries affected by crises and conflicts need a very specific set of quick-impact interventions to reach out to the most vulnerable groups and deliver the needed services to improve their living conditions. The interventions should be included in peace processes so that consensus may be built around the necessity of immediately restoring the essential services such as water and sanitation, employment, health and education for the affected public. These efforts should be complemented by a set of investments in restoring public administration, strengthening rule of law, human rights and accountability of governments, building social cohesion, ensuring security and addressing gender-based violence and empowering women. For example, Cambodia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone are successfully using the MDG framework to manage the transition from stabilization and recovery during the immediate post-conflict phase towards longer-term development. These countries are now gearing up to implement major national-scale development programs to accelerate progress towards the Goals.

Resource-rich countries struggle with ‘resource curse,’ as the fast economic boom and increase in revenues drive groups and populations to conflict. It is important to engage these countries in helping them use their revenues to fund effective development policies and programmes.

Middle-income countries may need to develop and implement sub-national and local development plans to target the ‘pockets of poverty’ and groups suffering from social exclusion. Some middle-income countries, such as Brazil and Mexico, have launched successful large-scale programs to empower the poor to be more productive through better education, health, and infrastructure. Several programs have made use of conditional cash transfers and changes to the way in which federal resources are allocated across states and sectors with substantial impact on the lives of the poor and headline MDG indicators. Countries with large populations and adequate resources such as Bangladesh, India and China may need to start implementing redistributive policies and self-finance investments to reach the poor.

II. Way Forward: Scaling up interventions at national and local levels

Two complementary approaches are proposed to link capacity development for service delivery, policy reforms and strategic planning, and resource mobilization.

1. Countries will be supported in launching *national-scale* programmes in 1-2 key MDG sectors. By mapping out options for national-scale programs to achieve individual MDGs and highlighting the tremendous development benefits that can be achieved with relatively modest resources, this strategy can play an important role in strengthening the dialogue on national development priorities and the effective use of public revenues. Examples of scaling up in key MDG sectors could be achieving primary education, ensuring comprehensive control of malaria or other infectious diseases, rolling out essential child survival strategies, or ensuring smallholder farmers’ access to essential agricultural inputs (Table 1).

- A. Sector-specific policies**-technical support provided by specialized agencies for the design and implementation of an effective sector policy framework and development of technical capacities across the board for the achievement of the sector targets.
- B. Strategic planning and resource mobilization:**
- Sector needs assessment to quantify human and financial resources required to meet the sector targets;
 - Development of strategy for scaling-up and monitoring;
 - Resource mobilization, drawing on domestic resources and – where necessary – external co-financing.
- C. Strengthening delivery capacity** -the specific areas of support will be determined by the Government, and may address capacity issues of the public administration, and/or of service delivery mechanisms. The areas may include the following:
- Human resource management (e.g. human resource management strategy, incentive systems and remuneration packages, functional analyses and innovative ways to fill human resource gaps)
 - Procurement (e.g. strengthening procurement procedures and systems, harmonization of procurement standards with development partners);
 - Financial management (e.g. procedures and standards for budgeting, expenditure management, and financial controls), and
 - Public administration (rule of law, accountability and transparency).

Table 1. Enhancing capacities for implementing national MDG programmes

Sectors:	Agriculture/ Food Security	Education	Health	Infrastructure: Roads, Energy Trade and Transport	Environment, Water Resources	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	[other]
Areas of Support::	As cross-cutting challenges, of gender equality, environmental sustainability and human rights need to be integrated into sector approaches.						
A. Sector-specific policies and programs							
B. Strategic planning and resource mobilization i. Needs assessment; ii. Scaling-up strategy; iii. Resource mobilization							
C. Delivery capacities i. Procurement ii. Human resources iii. Project and financial management							

2. Countries that need to address regional inequalities and ‘pockets of poverty’ will be supported in developing area-based initiatives to localize the MDGs in addition to national programmes. In the selected sub-national regions, the initiative will provide

support analogous to the activities outlined above, but adapted to the specific needs of designing an area-based program. The output will be target investments in addressing delivery capacities (in human resources, procurement, and financial management) complemented by an integrated area-based development programme. Table 2 describes investments and capacity development support needed to roll out an integrated area based development programme:

Table 2. Integrated services for the MDGs at the local level

<p>Key MDG Areas:</p> <p>Employment generation (for youth and adults), agriculture development and food security (including addressing special needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially in post-conflict situations);</p> <p>Access to and Quality of Education: primary, secondary, pre-school, adult literacy; including vocational training</p> <p>Integrated Health Services (including training of health workers, establishment of health posts supplied with basic drugs, vaccinations, and equipment, emergency obstetrics, etc);</p> <p>Infrastructure (roads, transportation, electricity generation, “green” sources for heating and cooking);</p> <p>Water Supply and Sanitation (access to potable water sources, basic toilet facilities);</p> <p>Integration of environmental sustainability into all sectors plus specific environment interventions;</p> <p>Integration of gender equality into all sector strategies plus gender-specific interventions;</p> <p>Integration of human-rights-based approaches (social justice, right to basic necessities, access to land, property rights, etc)</p> <p>Areas of Support:</p> <p>Capacity Development- Delivering MDG services to communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical assistance/training to service agents (public, community-based, private); - Delivery capacities of the local government and communities (human resource management, - Results-based project management, public administration, etc.); - Support to decentralization processes. - M&E, including development of local statistics <p>Planning, Resource Mobilization and Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs Assessment for all key MDG sectors, - Development of local/regional plans – integration and complementarity with national plans and strategies; - Budgeting (annual and medium-term), financial services (microfinance);
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- Resource mobilization for all key MDG priorities

Community Empowerment:

- Community mobilization;
- Advocacy, awareness-raising, knowledge dissemination;
- Accountability and transparency of results

In practical terms, communities need fertilizer, seeds, clinics, schools, roads, trees, water points, and electricity, administered by local managers responsible for both service delivery and connections with higher levels of government. These investments are crucial for basic provision of social services, as well as for enabling communities to transition from subsistence livelihoods to developing market-based local economies that can link to regional, national and ultimately global markets. They require both financial resources and mechanisms for ensuring successful community-level service delivery. In order to ensure the optimal service delivery mechanism, capacity investments need to be made for all local service delivery agents, including local administration, public-private partnerships and community-based service delivery organizations. Meeting the interconnected needs of communities requires an area-based integration of public policies and investments covering education, health, agriculture, infrastructure, and other critical needs with effective support for business development. By supporting the design and implementation of area-based programs to achieve the MDGs at the local level, governments can demonstrate the feasibility of achieving economic viability, and generate lessons for how national programs should be crafted to achieve the required integration across sectors.

III. The proposed response

Country level:

To help countries support the roll-out in the above areas, it is proposed that UN Country Teams (UNCTs) provide three sets of services that will focus either on one or two sectors or a number of local authorities or districts:

1. Specialized agencies (UNICEF/UNFPA/WFP/FAO and others) will provide technical support for the design and implementation of an effective sector policy framework and technical capacity development that will support the achievement of the sector targets. As necessary, the UNCT will draw on existing regional and global expertise in the UN system to mobilize the best available technical support.
2. The UNCT will work with the Government to support needs assessments to design a scalable sector and area-based programs; establish a monitoring framework; and assist in mobilizing the necessary domestic and external resources.
3. UNDP in collaboration with the respective specialized agencies will help strengthen Governments' delivery capacity in the respective sectors. This support will focus on procurement, human resource management, financial management, and the rule of law.

These services will be delivered through a joint initiative by all UNCT members under the responsibility and supervision of the UN Resident Coordinator. The initiative will mobilize additional resources to strengthen the capacity of UNCTs, particularly in technical and functional capacities. In each region a team backed up by a small global support team will provide advisory services and knowledge products to UNCTs and help consolidate lessons across countries.

Roll-out of the work will follow a review of UNDAFs/CPAPs and the subsequent design of MDG implementation programs. As part of this process, detailed capacity assessments will be conducted to identify key capacities (and staff) that are needed to provide high-quality and integrated services on the ground.

Regional level

To support the country-level services provided by the UNCT, UNDP will reinforce teams in its regional service centers¹ to (i) provide training and backstopping on human resource management, procurement, financial management, and strategic planning and resource mobilization; and (ii) transfer lessons across countries and consolidate best practice. Part of the program resources can be used to support secondments from other UN agencies, funds, and programs to the regional centers to better provide integrated technical support to Governments in the region.

Review of internal capacities will be conducted at the regional level through the regionalization process, and determine key capacity gaps and constraints in the roll out of the MDG strategy. The essential capacities may be identified along the three service areas identified in the strategy above: in-depth technical capacities across sectors, MDG-based planning and budgeting, M&E, functional capacities (project management, procurement, strategic HR management, etc).

Global level

A small number of staff at UNDP Headquarters in New York will (i) provide backstopping support at the regional and national levels as necessary through targeted missions and trainings; (ii) develop knowledge products and training packages, conduct R&D and coordinate associated knowledge management; and (iii) support global initiatives for the MDGs, such as the MDG Africa initiative and coordinate the work with all members of the CEB including the international financial institutions. The staff will mobilize integrated expertise in the areas of human resource management, procurement, financial management, and strategic planning and resource mobilization. Again, UNDP will explore all opportunities for secondment of staff from UN agencies, funds or programmes to support integrated R&D work in support of the MDGs.

Finally, a dedicated initiative will be set up to offer in-depth trainings target at senior staff and national policy advisors to develop integrative technical competencies across key MDG areas: education, gender equality, climate change, health, agriculture, nutrition,

¹ UNDP regional service centers are located in Johannesburg (Southern and Eastern Africa), Dakar (Western and Central Africa), Bangkok, Colombo and Suva (Asia-Pacific), Bratislava (Europe and CIS), Panama City (Latin America & Caribbean), and Cairo (Arab States)

infrastructure, ecosystems, as well as economics, procurement, strategic human resources management and public financial management. Such trainings may contribute to preparing new UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) to effectively play a role of coordinating the work of the UN agencies on the ground, and to promote the One-UN agenda. These trainings will be made available to interested RC and could be made a requirement for UNDP Country Directors. Integrated training packages in these areas may be incorporated into the Virtual Development Academy and other online learning platforms of UN agencies. The senior programme officers and policy advisors in country offices may be required to undergo comprehensive training in their specialized areas. The training materials may be developed in collaboration with UN agencies, funds, and programs, as well as the IMF and World Bank. Over time, the training courses could evolve into a formal technical certification system for key MDG areas to deepen the technical expertise of Resident Coordinator offices and other senior UN staff equivalent to an “executive MBA,” but with a focus on the practical programmatic and scientific issues pertinent to sustainable development.

IV. Anticipated Results and Impact

The proposed approach will strengthen UNCT support for the MDGs in several ways:

- Focus resources on maximum development impact by supporting the design and implementation of national-scale or broad area-based approaches that will achieve effective results and strengthen the case for scaling up.
- Establish a unified approach for MDG support across different types of programme countries, while at the same time enabling UNCTs to adapt support modalities to the countries’ specific needs.
- Mobilize all members of UNCT as well as non-resident agencies under one broad program to increase system coherence and maximize opportunities for joint resource mobilization.
- Establish clear areas of functional expertise that UNDP will provide (e.g. procurement, human resources, needs assessments) that permit RCs to more easily pitch services to Governments and – critically – enhance cumulative learning within the organization.
- Provide an effective platform for resource mobilization.

V. Immediate Next steps by UNDP:

The approach outlined in this document has been reviewed and broadly endorsed by the UNDP MDG Steering Committee. It was decided to pilot the work in a select number of countries, which are now being identified by the Regional Bureaus. The technical work in UNDP will be led jointly by the Capacity Development Group and the Poverty Group.

All focus countries need to demonstrate strong commitment to MDGs and real demand for such services from the Government, along with UNCT/UNDP commitment to devote adequate staff time on the ground to provide day-to-day support. The UNDP Regional Bureaus will make the final decision on which countries will

first pilot the work. The roll out approach is the following: 1) A key national counterpart is selected by the Government where the scale-up will happen (it can be one of the sectoral ministries, department of planning, regional province); 2) CDG and MDG Support Team, and Regional centers together with the UNCT will conduct an initial mission to assess the capacity of the country counterpart and determine in which areas the capacity development support is needed based on the country's development priorities – e.g. strategic planning and budgeting, strengthening functional capacities, and/or technical expertise. Once the needs are determined, integrated support will be provided to address various challenges faced in the chosen MDG sector.

COs should realign existing programs to support this effort by rechanneling existing resources. Upon identification of resource gaps, resources will be mobilized (it is anticipated that UNDP would be able to secure funds for this strategy by 2009 to bridge the gaps). During the roll out of this joint initiative, the support will also be provided to address internal capacity challenges to provide effective support to the Government at national and local levels.

The Capacity Development Group will launch a project on the *Development of National Implementation Capacities* (with the overall budget of USD 3.2 million for 2008-2009) which will support this strategy. The goal of this joint roll out is to identify one key national counterpart (e.g., the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Sanitation) and provide an integrated package of services to strengthen its functional capacities (e.g. procurement, project management, HR), as well as technical capacities for the MDGs (planning, budgeting, resource mobilization, M&E, etc). PG/MDG Support Team together with the Regional and CO MDG Advisors will support the technical capacities for the MDGs, and the CDG would be responsible for strengthening the functional capacities of a selected national counterpart. BDP at the moment has no earmarked financial resources for the roll out of the strategy, but will continue providing the existing technical expertise and knowledge products, such as tools and policy guidance (needs assessment tools, handbooks on MDG-based planning, etc).

Following initial consultations with UNCTs, a more detailed document will be prepared outlining how the work can be carried out in each focus country. This document will include a detailed budget for the work and identify country programming resources that can be used to support the work. Based on a careful mapping of UNDP resources against this work, a resource mobilization strategy will be developed to support the work.