Policy support for mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in Pakistan

Soon after the adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, the Government of Pakistan started the localization of SDGs by establishing dedicated SDG Support Units within the Planning Institutions at the Federal and Provincial level. In February 2016, the National Assembly of Pakistan passed a unanimous resolution declaring SDGs as the country’s National Development Goals.

The SDG Support Units help create an enabling environment for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These Units function in the form of a joint project between the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform at the Federal level and Planning and Development Departments at the Provincial level. The project is based on the UN Development Group’s tool for Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) for SDGs. The project supports the Government of Pakistan in embedding the 2030 Agenda in its long, medium and short-term planning and budgeting processes, and provide technical support for a localized approach for the implementation of SDGs.

Objectives
- To mainstream the SDGs in national and sub-national policies and development plans.

QUICK FACTS

Duration: 2016–2020
Location: Nationwide
Implementing partners: Federal and Provincial Government (Planning Commission and Provincial Planning and Development Departments), Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, UN agencies, private sector (Pakistan Business Council), academia (ITU Lahore, Uni of Balochistan) and civil society.
Funding partners: Federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, Provincial Planning and Development Departments.
Annual budget (2019): USD 2.6 million
Contact: Wajiha khan, Development Policy Unit, UNDP wajiha.khan@undp.org
• To strengthen reporting and monitoring mechanisms for the SDGs.
• To develop a budgeting and financing framework for the SDGs.
• To foster integrated and innovative approaches to accelerating progress on priority SDGs.

Expected results
• SDG frameworks at national and sub-national levels developed with an agreed list of priority indicators, baselines and targets, along with a monitoring mechanism.
• National capacities and systems for data and reporting on SDGs established.
• Budgeting and financing frameworks developed to align existing resources to SDGs while exploring innovative financing instruments for SDG financing.
• Partnerships with the private sector established for enhanced implementation of SDGs.
• Innovation promoted to address priority issues hampering SDG implementation.
• Functional coordination with multiple stakeholders at federal and provincial levels and learning alliances on SDGs established to identify, analyse and consolidate best practices, and exchange solutions locally and internationally.

Current progress

The SDG Support Units have been established at federal and provincial levels.

During 2018 the National SDG Framework was approved by the Economic Coordination Council under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The National Framework identifies and sequences national priority SDG targets and indicators. Following suit at Federal level, the provinces are now finalizing their respective Provincial SDG Frameworks.

The SDG Units helped the planning institutions establish institutional mechanisms for planning, coordination and overseeing of SDG agenda at the provincial level. These comprise cluster groups/thematic committees, comprising of diverse stakeholders including bureaucracy, academia, civil society and think-tanks established in all four provinces.

The project facilitated a review of statistical landscape in Pakistan with an aim to strengthen the Government’s capacity to monitor and report on SDGs progress. As a result, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics aligned its various surveys to SDGs and with these revisions Pakistan is now reporting on 53 SDG indicators.

In order to facilitate the government to leverage the use of technology not only for enhancing accessibility and visibility of data but also to enable the government in reporting on indicators where data is missing, an SDG Tech Lab was established. The project has also developed an online SDG dashboard to track progress on SDGs.

The project also piloted a few innovative partnerships with the private sector. In Sindh, Islamkot Taluka / Tehsil is being developed a model SDG village through a tripartite collaboration between Govt. of Sindh UNDP and Engro Foundation. The Islamkot model is unique model of Public Private Partnership targeting the most under developed regions with the objective of leaving no one behind. It is also unique as the private sector has taken upon itself to lead the achievement of prioritized SDGs as part of their core business processes. To engage private sector through innovative financing, UNDP also explored avenues for impact investment in areas of low-cost housing and agriculture digital market place. The project is also exploring a Pakistan Diaspora Fund for impact investment around SDGs in partnership with various stakeholders.

What’s next?
• Support government in forming evidence-based policies. The project will continue reviewing public policies and plans in the context of SDGs with the objective of providing recommendations for their alignment to SDGs.
• Provide support for the development of National Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda in consultations of all stakeholders.
• Strengthen reporting mechanism by developing solutions for existing data gaps and capacity development of statistical institutions to report on SDGs.
• Develop innovative communication tools to increase outreach to target groups and effectively engage them for the achievement of SDGs.
• Help in costing of SDGs at the sub-national level with the objective to get the approximate implementation cost of SDGs preferably at the provincial level. The results will be presented to the government to allocate the budget to those Goals which have multiplier effect on the remaining. Provincial Units will also be engaged for consultation and feedback.
• Develop partnerships with private sector entities and generate dialogue with government for solutions to address gaps in policy architecture.
• Set up an Innovation Fund to accelerate progress on priority SDGs.