

# SUPPORTING “ACCELERATION” IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 2030 AGENDA

## “ACCELERATING” SDG PROGRESS

UNDP has been supporting countries across Asia-Pacific to bring the 2030 Agenda to the national level using the “MAPS” approach (Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support). Most country-level efforts so far have focused on putting in place the building blocks necessary to support SDG achievement—the core elements of “mainstreaming”. For example, many countries are reviewing and improving institutional arrangements for decision-making and coordination across sectors and government levels, analyzing the alignment of development plans and budgets with SDG targets, and assessing the availability of data and the capacity of statistical systems to monitor progress and inform policy-making.

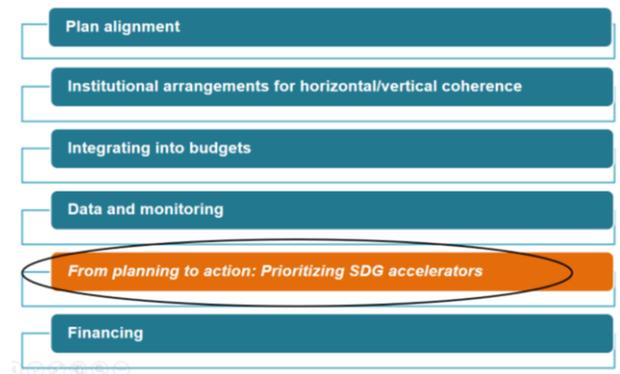
The next stage involves moving from planning to action (Figure 1). Because while setting up conducive systems is an important first step to SDG achievement, governments will still need to prioritize and put in place actions that will contribute directly to progress. This represents a shift in focus to “acceleration”.

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For UNDP, work on “acceleration” means supporting the identification and allocation of resources to interventions that will have the most positive impact across multiple SDGs.

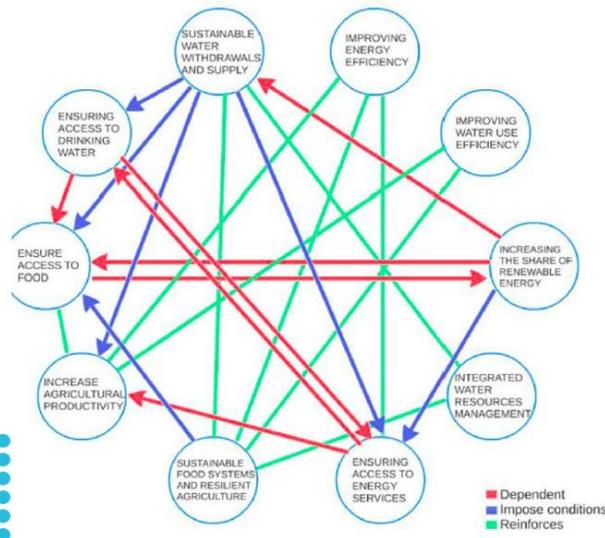
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**Figure 1. Activities to support localization of the 2030 Agenda**



This concept builds on the approach to “acceleration” adopted during the MDG era primarily through the introduction of the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF). That methodology aimed to identify bottlenecks to off-track MDGs and offer solutions to “accelerate” progress towards overcoming them. But the 2030 Agenda is more ambitious and details a more complex set of relationships amongst goals and targets. For example, Figure 2 illustrates relationships among only four of the goals.

**Figure 2. Mapping interactions: Water, energy and food nexus**



Source: Weitz, N., Nilsson, M. and Davis, M. (2014) *A Nexus Approach to the Post-2015 Agenda*

Adhering to the principles of the Agenda and meeting the SDGs will require more sophisticated approaches and analyses. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, “acceleration” will require policy-makers to make choices and balance impacts and interests across a set of complex dimensions, including:

- **Development area.** The 2030 Agenda highlights the need for integrated analyses of the impact of interventions on each dimension of sustainable development.
- **Available resources.** Most countries face financing and other capacity constraints in pursuing all goals equally at the same time and some gains will necessarily be foregone by investing in one action over another.
- **Time.** The 2030 Agenda aims at ensuring the sustainability of development results over the long-term and seeks to achieve intergenerational equity. Countries must balance temporal priorities.

- **Distributional and political economy impact.** The impact of an intervention is often unequal across groups, so policy design and implementation need to consider distributional impacts and underlying incentives, along with strategies to communicate and/or mitigate these impacts.

Given this complexity there will be no single tool that will provide countries with the answer for what interventions should be prioritized and how. Instead what will be useful is a platform of tools and approaches that can help decision-makers better understand the bottlenecks preventing progress and the likely impacts (both negative and positive) of interventions across the dimensions of development and on different groups (both in the present and future).

## UNDP BANGKOK REGIONAL HUB’S SUPPORT FOR “ACCELERATION”

UNDP is building its platform of support for “acceleration” in collaboration with other partners. This has resulted in a slate of initiatives that together will help inform the identification of and support for the implementation of “accelerator” interventions.

For example, UNDP is currently supporting:

- **Capacity building on integrated modelling.** A range of modelling tools are being refined to support countries in identifying the inter-linkages and tradeoffs across dimensions of sustainable development (e.g., the Global Climate, Land, Energy & Water Strategies model (CLEWS)). A joint UN-DESA/UNDP initiative is compiling some of these approaches and providing training to UN staff



and country officials. UNDP has already hosted multiple countries and follow up short- and medium-term capacity building programs are being launched in several countries.

- Documenting country approaches to integrated decision-making and developing cross-country guidance.** UNDP launched a research initiative that analyzes country experiences in designing and implementing “accelerator interventions”. Under this initiative, UNDP partnered with national researchers in three countries to document and analyze how a specific intervention was identified and implemented in a thematic area that illustrates the challenges of putting in place policies that support progress towards multiple SDG targets (e.g., transitioning to renewable energy, adopting a less carbon-intensive growth strategy, and managing water resources). The initiative aims to identify lessons across the case studies that can be applied to help policymakers. Additional research exploring different themes and different countries is planned.
- Partnerships to pilot new frameworks to understand SDG inter-linkages and identify accelerators.** Work is also underway outside of UNDP to help better understand interactions among the SDGs as a means of informing better cross-sector decision-making. UNDP is partnering with institutions active in this area and plans to pilot new approaches at the country level. For example, UNDP is partnering with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) to pilot a new analytical framework for understanding the inter-linkages between SDG targets using SEI’s methodological framework and systems analysis (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11625-017-0470-0>). The framework provides an approach for mapping the relationships among different SDG targets to identify

mutually reinforcing actions and minimize negative impacts.

## UNDP’S BANGKOK REGIONAL HUB TEAM

Within UNDP’s Bangkok Regional Hub, the acceleration portfolio will be led and coordinated by the Inclusive Growth team. UNDP’s support for “acceleration” will necessarily extend beyond its platform of analytical support for identifying priority interventions to providing technical support for implementation and monitoring. UNDP will draw on its existing expertise across different practice areas and thematic specialties to support the effective design and implementation of identified interventions (e.g., potentially related to employment generation, climate change adaptation, gender equality, etc.).

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**For more information on UNDP’s work related to the 2030 Agenda in Asia-Pacific, please see its Regional Knowledge Exchange website:**

🌐 <http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/action2030/>

