

DRAFT Terms of Reference

Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) National Focal Points network

Background

Due to the lack of direct access to the sea the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) are faced with challenges related to their geography that deprive them of direct access to seaborne trade, compounded by cumbersome transit and border procedures, and inadequate transport infrastructure of the coastal transit countries. LLDCs therefore face high trade costs that remain a major stumbling block for their integrating into the global economy and their overall development.

The Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA) was adopted at the Second United Nations Conference on LLDCs held in November 2014. The VPoA provides a comprehensive framework to tackle LLDCs' special challenges and improve their integration into the global economy through six mutually reinforcing priority areas: transit, infrastructure development, international trade and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation, and means of implementation. The VPoA is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The VPoA invites Member States Governments to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) into their national and sectoral development strategies for its effective implementation. It also encourages LLDCs to establish national coordination mechanisms, where appropriate. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) is mandated to ensure coordinated follow-up to and effective monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the VPoA, and undertake advocacy efforts at the national, regional and global levels. Paragraph 66 of the VPoA stresses that primary responsibility of development and progress rests with the Member States. It is the responsibility of the LLDCs, with the support of the development partners, transit countries, UN system and other stakeholders to ensure the full implementation of the VPoA. It is important that the LLDCs in particular lead the process of implementing the VPoA at national level.

The UN General Assembly held a comprehensive High-level Midterm review (MTR) on the implementation of the VPoA in December 2019. The review assessed progress made, identified obstacles and constraints encountered, emerging challenges and opportunities, as well as suggested ways to further accelerate its implementation in the remaining five years. The review revealed that LLDCs, transit countries and other relevant stakeholders continue to make efforts to implement the VPoA. It was however acknowledged that progress made was insufficient for LLDCs to achieve the VPoA targets and SDGs. The General Assembly adopted a forward-looking outcome document with a call for action to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA. Strengthening of coherence, coordination and monitoring at the national, regional and global levels is fundamental to accelerating implementation. The role of national focal points is important in spearheading national level implementation and in fostering coherence in the implementation of the National

Development plan, the VPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant development frameworks at national level.

Scope and objectives

The LLDCs' National Focal Points network will facilitate the strengthening of coherence and coordination of the implementation and follow up of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and other global frameworks including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement at the national level. It will also foster peer-learning and exchange of best practices on LLDCs-related issues.

The overarching objective of NFPs is to strengthen coherence and coordination at the national, regional and global levels on LLDCs-related issues and follow up of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and other global frameworks.

The LLDCs' National Focal Points network shall consist of LLDCs Government designated officials from the 32 LLDCs member states. The designated focal point will be an official who is involved in the localization of the VPoA, implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development as well as their national implementation, monitoring and review.

Main Functions of NFPs

1. Play an active role within and/or work actively with the national institutional setup responsible for implementation and follow up of the VPoA priorities and SDGs.
2. Contribute to coherent national, regional and global monitoring, including reporting frameworks, for the VPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and other global frameworks.
3. Keep abreast of programmes, projects and activities carried out by development partners, including the UN system, on the ground and identify potential areas for increased donor collaboration and coordination in supporting the implementation of the VPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) and other global frameworks.
4. Participate in a forum for LLDCs NFPs and meet on a regular/predictable basis to: i) exchange information, share experiences and best practices on mainstreaming global and regional frameworks into national development processes as well their implementation and follow up, ii) network, and iii) better understand existing means of implementation, including viable financing and business models for implementing the VPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs.
5. Support efforts to raise awareness about the VPoA at national level, in particular by ensuring that this programme of action is known and understood by relevant sectoral units of government, the national planning entities, academia and other relevant stakeholders for

continued buy-in and ownership of the framework. These efforts include the dissemination of knowledge materials produced by the office and other relevant stakeholders.

6. Strengthen country level coordination on the preparation of the national report on the implementation of the VPoA and other relevant documents in line with member states' requirements.
7. Provide and coordinate country specific analysis and information to feed in the knowledge products produced by UN-OHRLLS and other relevant development partners.

Modalities of operation

1. Subject to availability of resources, LLDCs national focal points shall meet at least once annually for substantive meetings, preferably in the margins of an international or regional meeting that are closely linked to the implementation of the VPoA.
2. Subject to availability of resources, besides its annual meetings, the network will hold regional consultations on an ad-hoc basis on the sidelines of relevant regional meetings organized by the UN secretariat and other relevant international organizations as well as regional organizations on key thematic areas relevant to the VPoA, including international trade, trade facilitation, promotion of transit, transport infrastructure connectivity, regional integration, structural transformation, broadband connectivity, climate change, desertification and resilience building, sustainable energy, LLDCs' opportunities to the ocean economy, public private partnerships and statistics and data etc.
3. The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) will be responsible, with host countries, where applicable, for arranging, convening and facilitating the LLDCs NFP meetings.
4. UN-OHRLLS will provide support and act as the secretariat of the LLDCs NFP network.
5. The LLDCs NFP network may invite to its meetings, on an ad-hoc basis, experts, NGOs, private sector and other entities whose expertise may contribute to the NFPs work, as observers and contributors to its discussions.
6. The LLDCs NFP network and OHRLLS should ensure that the work of the network complements the work mandated by GA resolution that focus on VPoA implementation including avoiding as much as possible clashes with other LLDCs related international and regional meetings.

7. The LLDCs NFP network shall be guided by its programme of work and keep a public record of the proceedings of its meetings.