

Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions

High-Level Summary

August 2022

Introduction

In addition to claiming millions of lives, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented loss of jobs and livelihoods and exacerbated income insecurity around the world. The impact has been particularly adverse for people without access to social protection, including those working in the informal and care economies, women, children, youth, and those without access to digital technologies. More recently, the conflict in Ukraine has exposed fragilities in the global food and energy systems, as well as in the global economic and financial systems, triggering a cost-of-living crisis around the world unseen in at least a generation. This has to be set against the backdrop of the accelerating climate crisis and its adverse impacts on economies and societies. Constrained by rising debt burdens and shrinking fiscal space, many countries now face an even more daunting policy landscape. Yet it is more important than ever to chart a human-centred green recovery out of the present crisis and facilitate the inclusive structural transformations needed to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

In response to these complex global challenges, in September 2021, the UN Secretary-General launched the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions (Global Accelerator) with the aim of fast-tracking much-needed global actions to promote a job-rich recovery, as well as just ecological, technological, and societal transitions to more sustainable and inclusive economies. The Global Accelerator operates through three complementary and mutually supportive pillars:

- The development of in-country integrated and coordinated employment and social protection policies and strategies to facilitate just transitions.
- The establishment of national financing frameworks and the mobilization of public and private domestic and international resources to support the implementation of integrated policies and strategies.
- Improved multilateral cooperation on jobs and social protection for just transitions, including with the international financial institutions and multilateral development banks.

These three interlinked pillars aim to increase the level and coordination of the multilateral system's efforts to help countries create 400 million decent jobs, including in the green, digital and care economies, and to extend social protection coverage to the 4 billion people currently excluded.

What is the Problem?

While many developing countries have put in place a range of policies and institutions to support decent job creation and universal social protection, they continue to face bottlenecks that constrain their efforts to facilitate a human-centred recovery, increase resilience, and support just transitions for all. These include:

1. Weak capacities for designing and implementing integrated development plans, and insufficient coordination and alignment of national institutions, social partners and development and financial actors.
2. Limited tailored support for specific groups that continue to be excluded from social protection, sustainable and decent work, including women, children, youth, migrants, and displaced populations.
3. The persistence of the informal economy as the lifeline of many working families in developing countries, which poses a major challenge to the realization of workers' rights including the right to social protection and decent work, and to the mobilization of public revenues, strong institutions, and fair competition, in line with relevant international standards.
4. Insufficient awareness and limited practical knowledge among a wide range of policy actors of the potential impacts and multiplier effects of integrated and adequately financed social protection and employment policies and strategies in supporting just transitions and enhancing resilience.
5. Constrained fiscal space for policy reforms and weak financing strategies which result in inadequate budgets for social protection, health systems, education, green transition, and employment policies.
6. Limited transparency of decision-making processes and insufficient accountability that erode public trust and frays the social contract.
7. Insufficient coordination and alignment of policy areas and related institutions.
8. A dearth of timely and relevant data and analysis, including labour market information systems (e.g., employment, skills) and social security statistics.

9. Privatization and outsourcing of service provision (e.g., medical services, employment services) without the adequate accreditation, regulation, and quality assurance processes in place to ensure access to quality services for all.
10. Lack of ICT availability, accessibility and affordability policies and implementation at the national level to enable all people (regardless of age, gender, ability, or location) to access online information and services.

What is the Solution?

Based on a careful and balanced analysis of countries' macroeconomic and social configurations, and informed by national consultations that identify policy priorities for governments, social partners and other stakeholders, the Global Accelerator will:

- generate interest and political alignment.
- support resource mobilization to consolidate the financial backbone.
- provide technical support to strengthen existing capacities at country and regional levels, and facilitate and enable policy development, integration, and implementation.

In doing so, it will build national consensus and coherent support, including from development and financial partners, for the development and implementation of an integrated package of employment, social protection, and environmental policies with strong and sustainable economic and social returns.

To secure political, technical, and financial support, the Global Accelerator has three complementary and mutually reinforcing pillars.

Pillar 1: Integrated and evidence-based national strategies and policies

The design, implementation and monitoring of integrated national strategies and policies that combine investments in decent jobs, sustainable development and universal social protection are at the heart of the Global Accelerator. Policies and strategies will be based on social dialogue and grounded in robust, disaggregated data and policy analysis to be responsive to the needs and priorities of people. They will combine both short- and longer-term objectives to complement and reinforce existing policies and programmes using a well-identified set of entry points for development and impact, for example, investment in universal social protection to reduce poverty and inequality, enable formalization and green transitions; and investments in the care sector to provide quality services that meet social needs and create decent jobs.

Integrated approaches will be crucial in supporting major transitions which are needed for transformative changes as illustrated in the following cases:

The green transition requires the design, regulation and monitoring of adequate sustainability measures to ensure cohesion, complementarity and positive impacts across climate, inclusion and development objectives, maximize win-win outcomes and proactively address negative consequences, create quality jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities with social protection in the green, circular and digital economy, improve occupational safety and health, and increase the skills of the next generation of youth to match labour market needs.

Life and work transitions require policies and strategies to support people to manage risks across the life cycle, to cope with idiosyncratic risks such as sickness and work injury as well as work transitions in the face of increased uncertainties and volatility of the labour market. Women, children, and youth face particular age- and gender-specific risks with data consistently showing that families with children experience the highest rates of poverty. Integrated employment and social protection policies and measures can provide income security through life cycle transitions complemented by skills generation and lifelong learning, support the accumulation of human capabilities, and invest in decent jobs in the care sector.

Supporting people in crisis and emergency contexts requires a transformation in how we prepare, prevent, and respond to crises, from a humanitarian perspective, as well as putting in place specific elements for recovery and reconstruction, which require a context-specific and longer-term approach. Integrated employment and social protection policies can enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian responses (e.g., emergency social assistance support combined with employment and skills development programmes) and help build resilience and a human-centred recovery.

Pillar 2: Integrated financing combining domestic resources and international financial support

Mobilizing financing on the scale required to address the “great finance divide” and overcome the devastating socio-economic hardship and job losses caused by the current multiple crises and the growing climate emergency is vital. It is critical that finance is mobilized to create decent and productive jobs, extend social protection coverage, and protect the chronically poor and those who have been most affected, including women, children, persons with disabilities, migrants, and workers in the informal economy, among others.

The Global Accelerator will support existing or new financing strategies which can mobilize additional resources, support better use of existing resources, and enhance coordination between multiple domestic and international sources of finance including development, climate, and humanitarian finance. It will also harness INFFs and sustainable budgeting as key tools to support and guide policy decisions.

The support will focus on the following complementary streams of work:

- Domestic public resources
- Domestic and international private financing
- International development cooperation

These actions will contribute to addressing debt sustainability and increase fiscal space for the implementation of the integrated policy actions prioritized as part of the Global Accelerator.

Pillar 3: Enhanced multilateral cooperation

Through Pillar 3, the Global Accelerator will increase and improve dialogue and coherence among national policymakers, countries providing official development assistance (ODA), UN agencies, the IMF, multilateral development banks, social partners, civil society, and academia to boost national and international commitments and to secure coherence in policy advice.

Pillar 3 will be achieved through:

- Strengthened institutional structures for interministerial and multi-stakeholder policy coordination at the country level
- Alignment of development and financial assistance and strategies to engage IFIs
- Coalition building at the global/regional levels, including by strengthening pre-existing alliances and multi-stakeholder partnerships

How Change will happen?

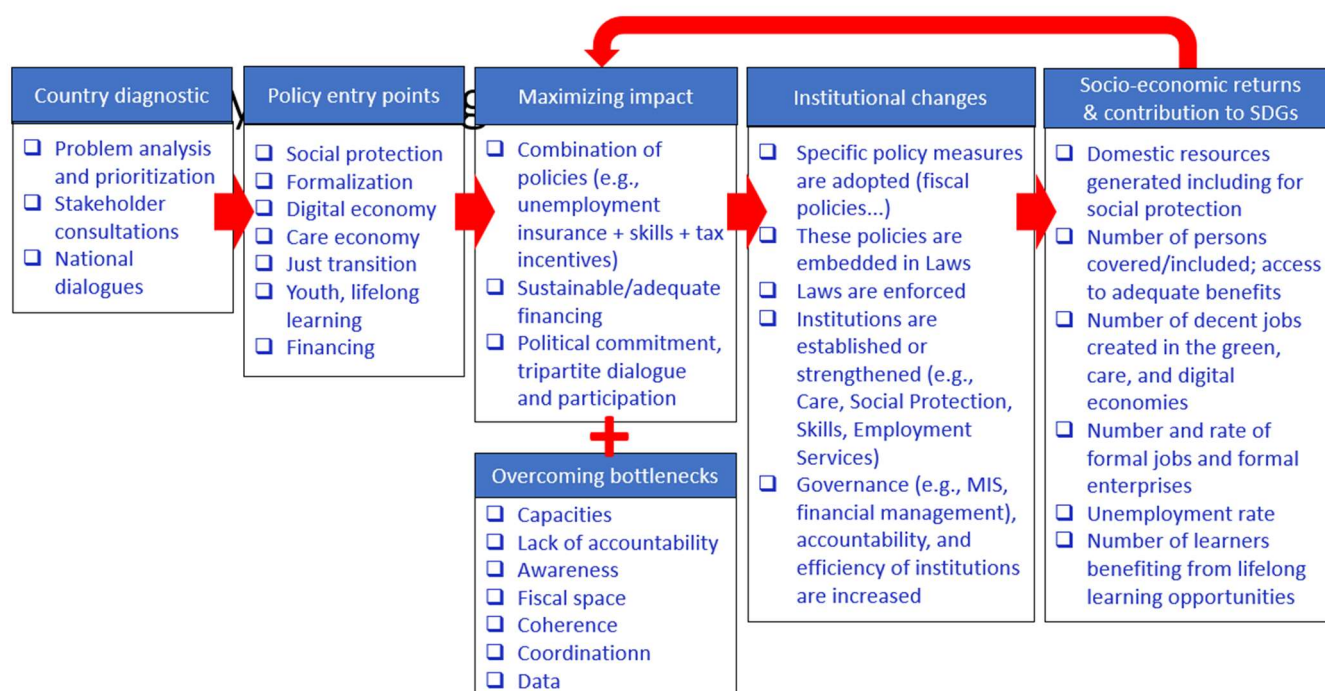
On request, the Global Accelerator’s Technical Support Facility will assist countries in prioritizing entry points (through analysis and consultation) that facilitate critical integration of policies or policy priorities that have the potential to leverage a human-centred climate-resilient recovery and inclusive structural transformation of the economy, including digital transformation. The Global Accelerator will then promote integrated employment and social protection policy and programme approaches to maximize impact, create synergies, and support countries to secure sufficient financial resources.

By harnessing INFFs, it will support financing strategies and sustainable budgeting which can boost domestic resources and expand the tax base, as well as mobilize further ODA and international support. This will be complemented by interventions that aim to create a more effective use and stronger alignment of current financial flows (both public and private) with the SDGs, international climate targets and labour standards, to improve transparency and accountability, and to promote sustainable and job-rich investments in key sectors of the economy.

It will help overcome implementation bottlenecks through policy advisory and technical support and capacity strengthening and contribute to the achievement of long-lasting just, inclusive, and green transformation in line with international standards, by triggering policy and institutional changes across the policy cycle, from strategy development to the design and adoption of policies, and from adoption and implementation of laws to their monitoring and evaluation. It will build the knowledge base,

document country experiences, map, and detail policy interactions, assess success and analyse failures, develop generic methodologies and tools for replication, and build evidence on the economic returns (for instance, more domestic resources for sustainable economic and social development), social returns, the contribution to climate resilience and the achievement of selected SDG targets.

Theory of Change



A results framework focusing on the key outputs and outcomes will be used to monitor the effective implementation of the Global Accelerator at the country level.

Member States' engagement

Member States are invited to support the Global Accelerator as partners and work together towards accelerated implementation of the related SDGs. All UN Member States have committed to the SDG Agenda, so being a partner country of the Global Accelerator is open to any country, regardless of the level of development. Indeed, a diverse group of partner countries will enhance knowledge sharing and accelerate change.

Partner countries can engage by and should commit to:

- developing national policies and integrated strategies for just transitions, leading to the creation of green jobs including policies for employment creation, reskilling, social protection and through social dialogue.
- formulating or having adopted integrated strategies and policies on social protection and employment, and/or having started their implementation through tripartite social dialogue.
- creating a dedicated and inter-ministerial initiative or board involving social partners, which has leverage for change.
- having increased domestic resources for social protection and jobs over the past 10–20 years or having a record in extending social protection coverage and having a contemporary political commitment to further increase domestic resources.
- allocating significant ODA to the objectives of the Global Accelerator, either through the thematic window of the Joint SDG Fund or other funding mechanisms.

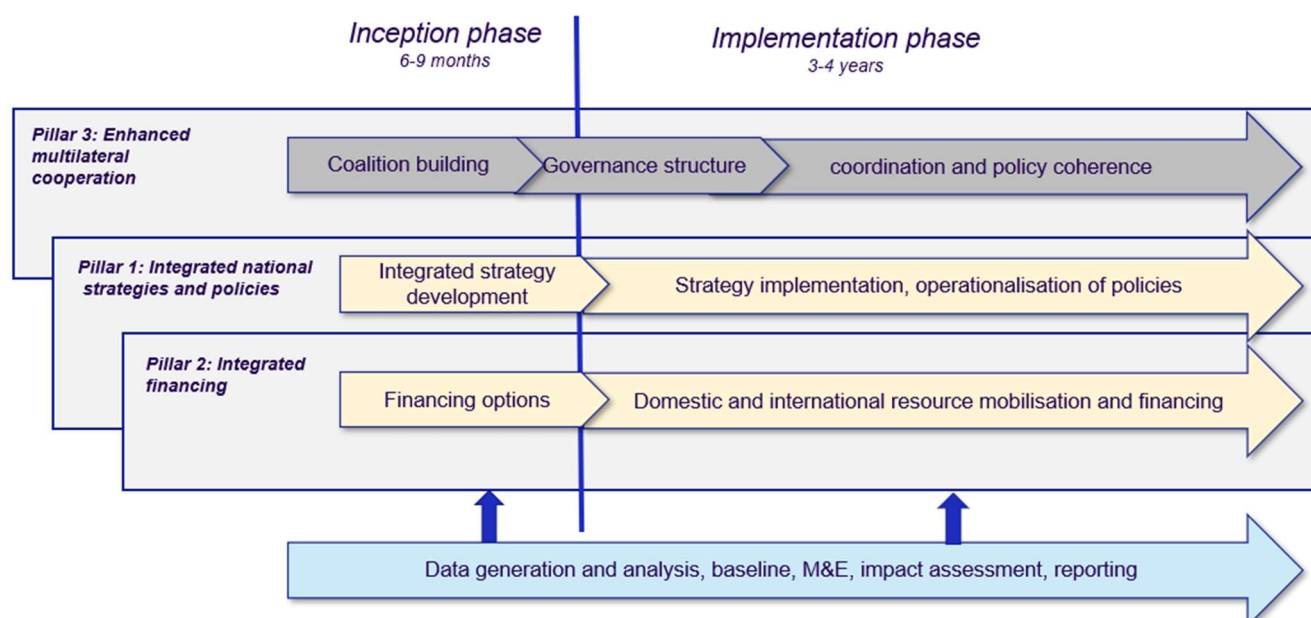
- promoting South–South cooperation on decent jobs, social protection and just transitions.
- advocating for stronger multilateral cooperation, notably with international financial institutions, to implement the ambitions of the Global Accelerator (i.e., in the UN, IFIs, G20 and other forums).

Partner countries can also decide to go further by subscribing to the theory of change and monitoring framework, thus showing the path for others to facilitate just transitions, expand social protection and job creation. As required, pathfinder countries will receive technical and financial support from the Global Accelerator’s Technical Support Facility (TSF) and UN Country Teams, with priority given to LDCs and countries in fragile situations, compounded by the ongoing food, energy, and finance crisis. Technical assistance will be tailored to the specific circumstances in each country, in close consultation with national stakeholders, and will be made available in accordance with available resources.

How will the Global Accelerator be implemented at the national level?

If a government wishes to partner with the UN in the implementation of the Global Accelerator, the implementation strategy at the country level will be developed through a process of co-creation with government, social partners, UN agencies, IFIs and other stakeholders, as relevant. It will build on existing processes and structures at the country level to adapt the strategy to each country’s diverse and specific context and circumstances, including those in fragile and post-conflict settings. Implementation will be aligned with the three pillars of the Global Accelerator, with each workstream rolled out during a six- to nine-month inception phase that would subsequently transition into an implementation phase.

Implementation model



How will the Global Accelerator be managed and governed?

At the heart of the Global Accelerator is the Technical Support Facility (TSF), which provides overall strategic and operational guidance for the Global Accelerator’s activities, including at the country level. The TSF operates at the global, regional, and country levels to leverage existing capacity and enhance support when needed. It will help identify respective country

capacities and existing coordination mechanisms, as well as need and demand for social protection and employment interventions. To ensure the quality and conformity of the country proposals, these will be developed in line with the integrated policy approach of the Global Accelerator and the commitment to rights-based universal social protection systems and decent work.

The TSF has the following composition and functions:

- A coordination team composed of participating agencies' staff and other assigned or seconded experts, which will oversee the management of the TSF including identification of pathfinder countries, programme development, technical advice, development of guidance and knowledge products, results monitoring, maintaining dashboards on fiscal space, and support resource mobilization.
- A global/regional experts hub composed of global and regional experts from UN agencies and international development partners who will be on call to support the design and implementation of country interventions and provide specialized technical expertise that complements available expertise in UNCTs based in the pathfinder countries and at the global and regional levels among UN agencies.
- A portfolio of development cooperation activities, conceived for or aligned with the Global Accelerator, composed of UN joint programmes, stand-alone UN projects, and other projects and programmes aligned with the Global Accelerator's vision for coherent action, using a common results framework, policy guidance notes and expertise from the hub. To the extent possible, existing structures will be prioritized and governance will be streamlined to avoid fragmentation and duplication of structures.

Three types of contributions can be made to the TSF of the Global Accelerator:

- Human resources – staff positions in the TSF (e.g., experts of the hub, coordination team positions or positions in countries) or staff assigned or seconded to participate in the activities of the TSF.
- New cooperation projects – UN agencies, development partners and countries can develop, and finance new projects based on the Global Accelerator's theory of change. Funding can be channelled through the UN Joint SDG Fund Window on decent jobs and universal social protection as well as other global or regional funds. Funding can also be negotiated directly with UNRCs at the country level or implementing agencies.
- Alignment of pre-existing cooperation projects – UN agencies, development partners and countries can also review existing projects for conformity with the Global Accelerator's theory of change and global results framework, adapting approaches where needed.

The Global Accelerator will be governed at national level through a (pre-existing) committee established under the leadership of the Head of State or Government with participation from social partners and civil society. At the global level the global coalition of governments and other stakeholders will provide oversight and strategic guidance to the Global Accelerator's operations, as well as advocate for more and sustainable investments in social protection and employment for just transitions.

How to ensure alignment?

The Global Accelerator will use a coalition-based approach and will not be limited to joint UN programmes only. Current bilateral or multilateral funded programmes may also be aligned with the Global Accelerator at the country level, to support coordination and maximize effectiveness and results under a common framework, following an agreed set of criteria and principles.

How will the Global Accelerator be financed?

Financing of the Global Accelerator comprises two interlinked funding streams, which together enhance the effectiveness of existing finance, and leverage additional financing for decent jobs and social protection.

The **Technical Support Facility** has a budget of US\$600 million, to support at least 30 countries over a period of four years. The budget of the TSF will be financed from a combination of sources, including regular budget resources of participating UN agencies, a Joint SDG Fund Window on Decent Jobs and Universal Social Protection, UN agencies' stand-alone and multi-partner

funds at the country and global levels, joint UN programmes developed locally under the leadership of UNRCs, and development and financial partners that wish to align new or ongoing bilateral and multilateral programmes with the Global Accelerator's results framework.

Catalytic funding streams to leverage financing. The Financing strategy outlined under Pillar 2 and the funding strategy will be closely interrelated. While the bulk of financing needed to achieve relevant SDGs comes primarily from domestic public resources and private financing, the portfolio of projects under the Technical Support Facility will mainly act as catalytic funding streams to leverage public and private financing as well as influence, complement and maximize the effectiveness of major ODA programmes, such as budget support and other debt relief initiatives.

Communications and visibility

Raising awareness regarding the ambition and scope, the integrated approach promoted and, ultimately, the achievements made under the Global Accelerator will be important to stimulate demand for more interventions and replicate its success in other relevant contexts. To ensure a good flow of information between actors of the Global Accelerator and the wider public, a strong communication strategy will be put in place, supported by communication focal points from different agencies.