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TECHNICAL BRIEF

Maximizing Synergies for Cross-Sectoral Policy Implementation and Multilateral Partnership to Accelerate Progress for the SDGs

CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATION

United Nations Office for Sustainable Development

This technical brief is developed with the support of the contributing organizations to inform the 3rd Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of any of the contributing organizations or the conference coordinating organizations.

I. Abstract

A successful SDGs synergy can be achieved through evidence-based knowledge, experiences, best practices, and lessons learned that can enable practical policy implementation and address challenges confronted by the stakeholders who are involved. The pursuit of evidence-based and scientific approaches is also critical for cross-sectoral policy implementation and multilateral partnerships in the means of accelerating the progress for the SDGs. As the SDGs and its targets are highly interdependent to one another, building evidence-based frameworks that are beyond theoretical recommendations must be a priority. Hence, the establishment of effective evidence-based frameworks and mechanisms can lead to practical solutions which can be utilized by the member states to produce tangible outcomes and progress.

In this context, the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), as a technical arm of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, can contribute to the Technical Advisory Group by showcasing examples on maximizing SDGs synergies particularly in the environmental sector. Since its establishment in 2011, UNOSD has been supporting UN Member States in planning and implementing sustainable development strategies through knowledge sharing, capacity development, research, policy advisory service, and partnership. In addition, UNOSD has developed various tools and programmes to accumulate evidence-based practices and experiences for the SDGs, namely the SDG-Policy Support System (SDG-PSS), workshops on Water-Energy Nexus for Sustainable Development, and capacity-building activities on Fossil Fuel to Renewable Energy (FFRE).

These activities are designed not only to share knowledge and tools for the SDGs, but also to harness synergies and partnerships among various stakeholders including government, private sector, civil societies, and academia to facilitate enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable policy implementation. In this regard, UNOSD aims to contribute to the technical brief for the *Third Global Conference on Synergizing Implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* by showcasing its experiences and lessons learned from the above-mentioned programmes on how to maximize cross-sectoral synergies among stakeholders while facilitating more constructive policy dialogues in water-, climate change-, and energy-related sectors.

II. Addressing synergies and trade-offs

As explicitly mentioned, the SDGs along with other following global agreements are highly interdependent and are closely interlinked. Therefore, stakeholders have to collaborate closely and inevitably to enhance and maximize synergies to accelerate progress for the SDGs. However, each sector (public or private) may be different, or even conflicting, interests and targets. Therefore, it is crucial to identify such differences and engage them into conversations to find solutions that would satisfy all stakeholders.

III. Lessons learned on opportunities and challenges

1. Engaging appropriate stakeholders (ministries, international organizations, private sector, and academic institutions) and establishing effective communication channels to maximize synergies
2. Identifying target countries to ensure that no one is left behind
3. Forging new partnerships to engage more stakeholders
4. Securing up-to-date data and information to provide most recent and accurate data

the risk guarantee mechanism for energy-efficient investment projects in Pakistan.

IV. Recommendations for Action: Means of Implementation and Partnerships to Accelerate Progress

For any activity, continuous monitoring and evaluation for result and performance management is crucial to track progress on target goals. In this regard, there is a need to organize regular or periodic follow-up workshops for the stakeholders and participants from previous events to report their progress or challenges. Any information shared through the workshops will enable organizers to establish goal-oriented frameworks and mechanisms that would be used to conduct needs assessments, determine performance indicators, and foster exchange of experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, synergies can be best sought by establishing evidence-based results which are gathered and analyzed through to identify key challenges, existing gaps, and effective means of implementation.

V. Guiding questions

The below guiding questions will provide a roadmap to better engage stakeholders and synergize various activities.

- What are the key priorities, challenges, and issues?
- Who are the key stakeholders? Who needs to be involved in the process?
- What are the ways/methods to engage various actors from different sectors?
- What tools and instruments are available?

The below highlights key activities that were undertaken by UNOSD to create synergies among its activities, target countries, and stakeholders.

SDG6-Policy Support System (PSS)

UNOSD dedicated much of its time and resources in advancing SDG 6 in particular by developing the SDG-Policy Support System (SDG-PSS) which is an evidence-based tool designed to generate an enabling environment of SDG 6 through a framework that shows strengths and weaknesses and missing data across SDG 6 targets and indicators. With such tool, UNOSD believes that countries should pursue more systematic approaches for effective planning and policy implementation to ensure good governance, enhanced synergies and capabilities, and policy coherence.

For the project, UNOSD and its partners (UNU-Institute for Water, Environment, and Health, the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, and the Korea Environment Corporation), selected hub countries (South Korea, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Costa Rica) in Asia, Latin America, and Africa to implement SDG-PSS in water-related initiatives and policies.

Through regional workshops hosted in hub countries, UNOSD also strived to disseminate best practices, lessons learned, and success stories on utilizing SDG-PSS as a powerful policy instrument to achieve SDG 6. The next steps would be exchanging critical feedback and recommendations to further strengthen the tool.

In this context, partnership is key to success as developing such comprehensive tool necessitates multilateral cooperation from government, international organizations, and agencies. Most importantly, accumulation of evidence-based data and results enable governments and institutions to implement sustainable policies through transparent reporting, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms. Moreover, the set of data can also create synergies in other sectors as climate action and the SDGs are often interdependent.

SDG6-PSS Promotional Video: <https://youtu.be/AXJsejxZZw4>

SDG6-PSS Regional Workshops: <https://unosd.un.org/content/policy-research>

Mainstreaming and Implementing the Water-Energy Nexus for Sustainable Development

As water and energy are closely interlinked, UNOSD has previously conducted regional workshops on 'Mainstreaming and Implementing the Water-Energy Nexus for Sustainable Development' to align water and energy policies. An integrated approach to water-energy nexus can enhance energy efficiency, decrease water pollution, ensure affordable and sustainable water and energy delivery, increase access to services, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

With this backdrop, UNOSD gathered various stakeholders including government officials, experts, and practitioners as well as local and international organizations such as UN Environment, UN-Water, SE4All, World Bank, African Union Commission, UN Economic Commission for Africa, and African Development Bank to maximize regional and international synergies and partnerships. Through the workshop, UNOSD facilitated multilateral engagement to discuss cross-sectoral water-energy nexus targets and indicators including challenges and lessons learned for policy implementation.

The workshop developed the capacity of governmental institutions and relevant stakeholders in the African region to effectively manage the water-energy nexus and its interlinkages with other SDGs for sustainable development. In addition, the workshop aimed to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level, enhance knowledge management, share best practices and lessons learned on water-energy nexus while strengthening synergies and advocacy.

UNOSD Workshop on Water-Energy Nexus: [Water-Energy Nexus Workshop \(2018\)](#)

Fossil Fuel to Renewable Energy (FFRE) – Building Capacities for FFRE transition

Energy is a key component of poverty reduction and prosperity as well as climate action. Acknowledging the importance of energy, UNOSD has been providing knowledge management platform and capacity development programmes on phasing out from fossil fuel and its subsidy to renewable energy (FFRE) to promote energy efficiency and sustainability. In this context, UNOSD organized a series

of FFRE workshops to engage UN Member States, particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), into discussions on achieving sustainable energy transformation.

In addition, FFRE events also addressed renewable energy's contribution to green recovery and disseminated good practices and lessons learned shared by countries. During its discussion, the country representatives presented their countries and/or regions' needs in relation to green recovery, fossil fuel subsidy reform (FFSR), and renewable energy financing and investment. Some key questions asked were: What are the challenges and obstacles to FFSR and renewable energy investment? Why aren't governments doing more? What do they need to act? Where are the gaps?

UNOSD Report on Fossil Fuel to Renewable Energy: [FFRE Report \(2015\)](#)

UNOSD Capacity Development Workshop on FFSR: [FFRE Workshop \(2018\)](#)



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