



TRAINING MODULE 1 – Introduction to sustainable development

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UNIT 1.1. – INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations”.

(Brundtland Report, WCED 1987: 43)

1.1.1. Introduction to the concept of sustainable development

In the 1980s, some proclaimed that the concept of sustainable development was no more than a catchphrase that eventually would fade out as some other, newly-emerged concepts did before that (Desta Mebratu, 1998). Contrary to this belief, the concept of sustainable development has become, and continues to be, a core element of key national and international policies.

Today, the concept is connected to a wide variety of definitions and interpretations, all connected to the 3 pillars of sustainable development - social, economic and environmental pillar, the 5 “Ps”¹ - people, planet, prosperity, peace, partnership or the following two concepts or theories:

- (1) “the concept of human needs” or “the ability of human societies to live and meet their needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” and,
- (2) “the theory of natural resources management” or “the ability of human societies to exist and to develop without depleting natural resources”.

Historically, the concept emerged as a result of the global concerns raised for decades by prominent representatives of the environmental, economic and social movements. It was rooted in the principles of equality, justice, and human rights, and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm (1972). The term was defined for the first time in the *Our Common Future* Report or also known as the Brundtland Report² published in 1987 by the UN’s World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), and was formally recognized on an international level at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro.

1.1.2. The pre-millennium development goals

The story about sustainable development started to form decades before its recognition at the UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992). In 1949, the Scientific Conference on the conservation and utilization of

¹ More information on: <https://sdgs.punjab.gov.pk/the-five-ps>.

² The Brundtland Report was named as such in recognition of Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Norwegian Prime Minister and Chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development who was first woman Prime Minister of Norway, and who ‘pioneered the concept of sustainable development and shaped its early agenda’.

resources, held in New York addressed the depletion of natural resources for the first time (Anita Grozdanov, 2018). Although the focus was mainly on how to manage resources for economic and social development, and not from an environmental conservation perspective (Peter Jackson, 2007), this was a starting point for the process that continued to develop.

In 1968, the concerns about environment pollution, conservation and utilization received serious attention by the UN Economic and Social Council (Peter Jackson, 2007). Based on the Council's agenda and conclusions³, the first UN Conference on the Human Environment was organized in 1972. The conference resulted in the adoption of the Stockholm Declaration and the Action Plan for the Human Environment, including several resolutions that set out key principles for the preservation of the human environment (United Nations), and raised the issue of climate change for the first time (Peter Jackson, 2007).

Later, at the Rio de Janeiro's Conference on Environment and Development (the 1992's Earth Summit), the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 were adopted, which reflected a global consensus on sustainable development and environmental cooperation. And in 1997, at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Kyoto, the Kyoto protocol was adopted that commits signatories to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions according to the agreed individual targets⁴.

1.1.3. From millennium development goals to sustainable development goals

In the year of 2000, the historical Millennium Declaration was signed at the, then largest meeting of leaders (of 189 countries) — the Millennium Summit of the United Nations. The Declaration came with a commitment for achievement of 8 millennium goals which ranged from halving extreme poverty and hunger by 2015 to promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternity health etc.

Table: List of the Millenium Development Goals

Goal 1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	In 1990, almost half of the population in the developing countries lived in extreme poverty or with less than 1,25 USD per day. By 2015, the number of people who lived in extreme poverty was 14%.
Goal 2	Achieve universal primary education	In 2000, 100 million children at global level did not attend elementary education. By 2015, the number of children who do not attend primary schools was 45 million.

³ Dag Hammarskjold Library, Index to proceedings of the Economic and Social Council, United Nations, New York, 1968

⁴ France, Portugal, Italy and Greece, signed the Kyoto protocol in 1998. All four countries also ratified the protocol at the same time in 2002. Cyprus, on the other hand, signed the Kyoto protocol in 1999 and ratified the treaty in 2015, while Macedonia signed the protocol in 2004 and the ratification process ended in 2019.

Goal 3	Promote gender equality and empower women	By 2015, the number of women representatives in the Parliament has increased by 7.90% compared to 1995.
Goal 4	Reduce child mortality	By 2015, the child mortality rate (below 5) was halved. From 12.7 million registered cases in 1990 to 6 million in 1995.
Goal 5	Improve maternal health	From 1990 till 2015, maternal mortality rate was decreased by 45%.
Goal 6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Between 200 and 2013, HIV declined for around 40%.
Goal 7	Ensure environmental sustainability	Since 1990, 1.9 billion people have access to drinking water.
Goal 8	Develop a global partnership for development	Official development assistance from developed countries increased by 66% between 2000-2014, or from 81 billion to 135.2 billion USD.

Source: United Nations

In 2012, at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), Member States decided to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be built upon the Millennium Development Goals and meet the post 2015 development agenda.

Aiming to build a new, people-centered, development agenda, a global consultation was conducted online and offline. Citizens, civil society organizations, scientists, academics, and private sector representatives from around the world were actively engaged in the process.

In 2014, the UN Open Working Group (OWG) proposed a document of 17 goals, which set the ground for the new global development agenda 2015-2030. The new SDGs as part of the Agenda for sustainable development 2030 were adopted at the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations.

Table: List of the Sustainable Development Goals as proposed by the OWG

Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all

Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Source: United Nations

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed in 2000 were largely focused on achieving specific social outcomes in the developing countries such as poverty and hunger eradication, health, and education, etc. On the other hand, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted under the 2030 Agenda, laid out a wide range of environmental, social, and economic objectives for both, the developed and the developing countries (K. Morita, M. Okitasari & H. Masuda 2020). Thus, national, regional and local actors' efforts for SDGs are essential, even for the developed countries.

UNIT 1.2. – GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR SDGs

1.2.1. Introduction to good governance for SDGs

Good Governance for Sustainable Development is seen as crucial to the post-2015 development agenda, as it provides the necessary framework and principles to ensure effective, transparent, and inclusive development (UNDP, 2015). The concept of good governance involves a set of practices that contribute to better decision-making, accountability, rule of law, and participation. In that regard, the term itself is being defined as an ideal towards which all national, regional and local actors must work to ensure sustainable development (UNESCAP).

1.2.2. Objectives of good governance for SDGs

The objective of Good Governance in Sustainable Development is to “assist societies to develop an effective government within a democratic system, as well as to implement sustainable development principles through global partnership” (UN 2020). For this to be ensured, developing and developed countries are urged to:

- Establish a structure of a governance system for the SDGs (Okitasari et al. 2019);
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all actors participating in SDGs governance;
- Clearly define their targets and objectives in the three dimensions: environment protection, social and economic prosperity, and fairness and social equality;
- Build multistakeholder partnership for the SDGs on national and local level;
- Build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for SDGs;
- Engage local governments in the national consultation process for SDGs and in the formal national governance system structure (Lisa-Maria Glass, Jens Newig. 2019).

1.2.3. Principles of Good Governance

Depending on the different views and opinions, good governance is characterized by different characteristics or elements. One example is that, good governance for the SDGs is: participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective & efficient, equitable, inclusive and it follows the rule of law. Another example is that, good governance for sustainable development is: participatory, it is based on policy coherence, it is reflexive and adaptable and it is based on democratic institutions. Nevertheless, it's important that the established governance:

- guarantees that corruption is minimized;
- the views of minorities are taken into account;
- the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard, and
- is responsive to the present and future needs of society (UNESCAP).

- **Participation and inclusivity**

The core objective of the inclusivity and participation in the debate and in the decision-making for the SDGs is that the development strategies and policies will address the needs of all segments of society, and that will be built on a consensus and a sense of shared understanding and responsibility of all actors. In that regard, good governance for the SDGs encourages active participation of all stakeholders (private and public), including of the marginalized and vulnerable groups (leaving no one behind).

- **Policy coherence and rule of law**

Policy coherence is explained as consistency and coordination of policies across different sectors and levels of government. It is ensured when policies complement rather than contradict each other, and are “creating synergies towards achieving the defined objectives” (OECD, 2001: p.90).

On the other hand, good governance is built on the foundation of the rule of law, which ensures that laws are fair, just, and consistently applied. This also implies that all individuals, institutions, and entities, are accountable to the law, and that justice, protection of human rights, including a stable legal environment is ensured. Together, policy coherence and the rule of law contribute to building a system that is fair, transparent, and aligned with societal values and goals.

- **Reflexivity and adaptation**

Governance for sustainable development requires “critical self-awareness” and capacity of governments and institutions to effectively adapt and respond to the dynamic and complex sustainability challenges (Meadowcroft, 2011: p.540). By fostering reflexivity and adaptation, governments and institutions can enhance their capacity to navigate the complexities of sustainable development and make informed, context-specific decisions that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

- **Democratic institutions**

The concept of democratic institutions, as defined by the World Bank includes “accountability, transparency, rule of law and government efficiency and effectiveness” and as such are seen as decisive for a country's development (Lisa-Maria Glass, Jens Newig. 2019). Empirical studies have shown that democracy and civil liberties lead to better economic and societal development outcomes, increase equality and people's income, as well as, countries with greater civil liberties and political freedoms show higher levels of environmental quality Lisa-Maria Glass, Jens Newig. 2019).

- **Effectiveness and efficiency**

Good governance also emphasizes the effectiveness and efficiency of public institutions. This involves optimizing resource use and delivering services in a timely and cost-effective manner.

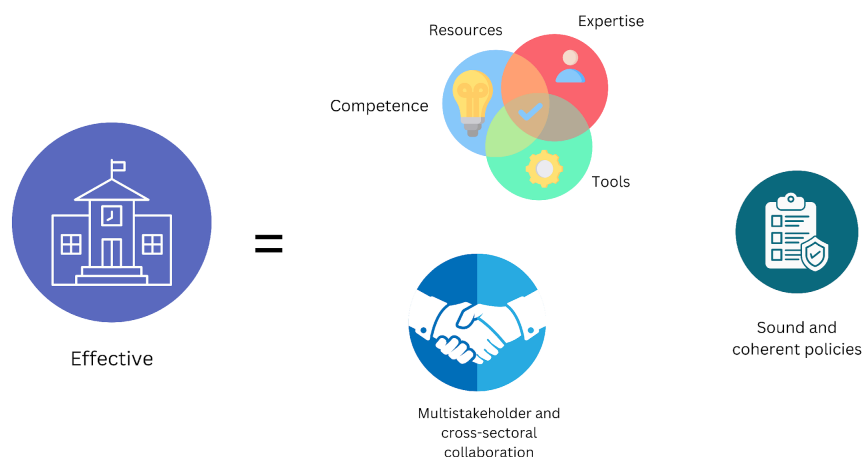


Photo: Effectiveness of institutions for the SDGs

1.2.4. Actors of (Good) Governance

Governments and local governments are one of the formal actors in governance. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), other actors, which in one way or another are influencing the decision-making, including the implementation process, depending on the level of governance can be:

- **In rural areas:** influential landlords, associations of farmers, cooperatives, NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions, political parties etc.
- **In urban areas:** the urban elite that shapes the city, the national/provincial government decision-makers, the appointed local decision makers, formal business decision-makers, elected officials, media, trade unions, NGOs, urban middle class, the urban poor, education providers, etc.
- **On national level:** all the above-mentioned actors including media, lobbyists, international donors, multinational corporations, etc.

1.2.5. Challenges for good governance and effective institutions

Achieving good governance and effective institutions for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is not without its challenges. Several obstacles may hinder progress in these areas, and some of those key challenges are:

- A lack of government leadership and ownership of reform initiatives;
- Complex political-economic challenges;
- Application of technocratic “one-size-fits-all approaches”;
- Poor sequencing and frequent changes in management strategies;
- Corruption;
- Lack of political will;
- Weak rule of law;
- Lack of institutional capacity and coordination;
- Financial constraints
- Technological gaps, etc.

Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from governments, from international organizations, civil society, and the private sector. It involves fostering a culture of accountability, transparency and collaboration, strengthening the capacity, control and monitoring of institutions, investing in innovation, promoting sound policy-making and policy coherence, promoting inclusive policies, and addressing root causes of issues such as corruption and inequality.



Photo: Key steps to good governance for the SDGs

UNIT 1.3. – LOCALIZING THE SDGs

1.3.1. Introduction to localization of the SDGs

In September 2019, the United Nations Secretary-General issued a call for a decade of action to fulfill the commitments outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030 (SEI, 2021). In many ways, the attainment of the SDGs is directly linked to the capacity of local and regional governing bodies to facilitate access to basic services that improve the overall quality of life (SEI, 2021). This capacity, in turn, reflects their preparedness to earnestly undertake the pursuit of SDGs.

Given that each SDG is characterized by specific targets directly associated with the responsibilities of local and regional governments, particularly concerning the provision of public services to local residents, the **Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** is seen as a comprehensive process involving processes of defining, adapting, implementing, and monitoring the implementation of the global, national and subnational SDGs. The process of localization is based on the subnational (local and regional) context, and it refers to “how the 17 SDGs can provide a framework for local development policy”, as well as, “how local and regional governments can support the achievement of the SDGs through a bottom-up action” (SEI, 2021).

Within this framework, the localization of the SDGs acknowledges the diverse contexts, challenges, and opportunities inherent to various regions, cities, and communities. This recognition is indispensable for ensuring that the SDGs remain relevant, achievable, and impactful at the grassroots level.

1 NO POVERTY 	Local governments are in the ideal position to identify people living in poverty on the ground, and to target resources and services to help them escape it.	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	Local governments can integrate technical & vocational training programmes into local economic development strategies, making sure training is valuable to labour market opportunities into account
2 ZERO HUNGER 	LRGs' management of natural resources in rural areas, particularly land and water, underpins food security for the surrounding territory	5 GENDER EQUALITY 	Local governments can act as a model for gender equality and the empowerment of women through non-discriminatory service provision to citizens and fair employment practices.
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	Local governments can contribute to the reduction of deaths caused by water and soil pollution through effective natural resource management and environmental protection	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	Local governments have a role to play in improving water quality through environmental protection measures and sustainable solid waste management

Source: UCLG, 2015

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	Local governments can contribute to energy efficiency directly by investing in energy efficient buildings and green energy sources in public institutions	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	Local governments have a particular role to play in political inclusion at local level
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	Local governments can generate growth and employment from the bottom up through local economic development strategies	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	City governments must develop strategic urban plans to prevent their growth and work with slum-dwellers to improve conditions and provide basic services where slums already exist.
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	Local governments can include the promotion of small-scale industry and start-ups in their local economic development strategies, taking into account local resources, needs and markets.	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 	Local and regional governments can support short supply chains, thereby reducing transport and carbon emissions, through land management, infrastructure, urban planning, education and training, and public markets

Source: UCLG. 2015

13 CLIMATE ACTION 	Local and regional governments, especially in cities, are often on the frontline of dealing with the effects of climate change.	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	This goal calls on local governments to become more effective and accountable to the citizens
14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	Coastal cities must develop and implement planning and building regulations to prevent construction in unsuitable areas of the coast.	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 	Local governments are in the ideal position to encourage and facilitate partnerships between public bodies, the private sector and civil society in the communities
15 LIFE ON LAND 	Local governments' role as service providers coupled with their ability to incentivize behavioral change in our communities, puts us in a unique position to protect natural resources and habitats.		

Source: UCLG. 2015

1.3.2. Steps towards localization of the SDGs

Step 1: Create awareness and engage communities

Local governments must include all local actors - citizens, informal community groups, civil society organizations, educational institutions, local businesses and others to gather in a round-table discussion dedicated to review of existing strategies and plans for achieving the SDGs and identification of priorities, necessary steps, tools and approaches. This will allow an open and constructive discussion about the envisioned local projects, and can support the further understanding of the SDGs, and the Agenda 2030. For this to happen, local governments should:

- Organize awareness raising campaigns and territorial round tables
- Communicate targets, actions and achievements via diverse communication channels

- Engage SDGs ambassadors to promote the local efforts towards Agenda 2030
- Engage experts and education providers to raise understanding of the SDGs and Agenda 2030
- Organize engaging and SDGs related activities
- Call for views and opinions on key aspects to encourage sense of ownership

Step 2: Localize and align the SDGs

Localizing the SDGs requires tailoring the global goals to the specific needs, priorities, and capacities of local communities. This involves **considering the cultural, social, economic, and environmental context of each locality (territory), including understanding the importance of the SDGs in relation to the local development agenda**. For this to happen, municipalities must:

- Train and build capacities around the SDGs (of municipal employees and local communities)
- Open municipal budgets for discussion and input for key actors
- Categorize and align municipal projects with the SDGs and its targets
- Prioritize projects based on predefined set of sustainability criteria and priorities

Step 3: Territorialize and map

After the initial two steps, the localization process becomes more concrete. In this phase, **municipalities should visually represent all municipal projects discussed with participants by mapping them**. This mapping process considers the priorities classified based on specific criteria set in the previous phases. To do this, municipal departments need to geographically position the projects in the local area. The outcome will be a map showing public investments and an overall view of how these projects will impact the lives of the citizens. For this to happen, municipalities must:

- Provide aerial photographs and maps
- Provide urban plans and projects
- Use traditional and digital tools for mapping

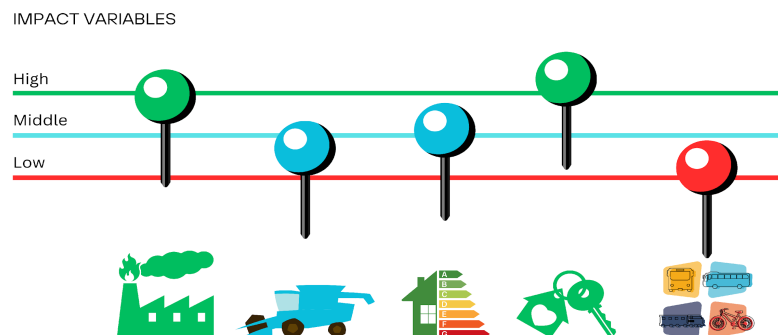


Photo: Territorialization

Step 4: Implement and monitor

The last step of the localization of the SDGs is to create an efficient monitoring system to track the implementation of the envisioned local development projects. To achieve this, municipalities must track each project status, whether projects are in a planning phase or in a different implementation stage. In this case, the map should include four stages of project implementation: 0% proposal (when projects are in a planning phase), 25% approval (when projects have been approved), 50-75% in progress, and 100% competition. For this to happen, municipalities must:

- Develop set of localized indicators, specific for the territory
- That SDGs indicators are used to monitor and evaluate project progress
- Collect data and monitor progress on subnational (local and regional) level
- Ensure that national monitoring and reporting covers the information gathered by the local and regional governments
- Ensure that local and regional governments are included in the national plans review

GEO-LOCATION OF THE MONITORING OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PROGRESS



Photo: Progress monitoring