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MAINSTREAMING

the Sustainable Development Goals in Developing Countries

Chris Dickens, Sibusiso Nhlengethwa and Brown Ndhlovu

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Summary

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promises to achieve change in almost every aspect of life on Earth. Encompassing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, the Agenda marks the first time in history when all nations have agreed on how to chart their future. The SDGs are not just a global reporting exercise, however, but rather involve a global program that embraces country-led efforts. Guided by the ideas contained in the 2030 Agenda, each nation must seek to become more prosperous and sustainable, while contributing to the global effort at the same time. If all the countries achieve this, we will have a sustainable planet and a secure future for all.

This document offers guidance on how developing countries can adapt the SDGs to their own contexts and priorities. It indicates important areas for developing countries to consider when creating their own program to achieve the SDGs, and provides examples of success to demonstrate concrete possibilities for progress.

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Front cover photograph: Sprinkler system used to irrigate farms in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe, on the border of Mozambique, South Africa (photo: David Brazier/IWMI).

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Background

On September 25, 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly launched and adopted the agenda “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (UN 2015). The Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompassing 169 targets, each of which has one or more indicators for quantitative measurement. In the words of the UN, *“the sustainable development goals should seek to envision a more holistic and integrated agenda for advancing human well-being that is equitable across individuals, populations and generations; and that achieves universal human development while respecting the Earth’s ecosystems and critical life support systems”* (UN 2012).

The SDGs, targets and indicators were designed to cover all aspects of development that the UN has deemed necessary for society to have a sustainable future, including food security, climate, gender, water resources, education, etc. To paraphrase the remarks of former UN secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, implementation of the SDGs is the true measure of commitment to sustainable development; everyone, everywhere needs to use the SDGs as a guide or to-do list for people and the planet, and as a blueprint for success.

From the start of the SDG program in January 2016 until recently, the task of detailing the indicators has received overriding emphasis, along with collecting and reporting data for the first time. The uptake or “domestication” of monitoring at the country level has gained less attention, despite its clear

importance for leading individual countries and the planet towards a sustainable future.

This document presents guidelines for mainstreaming the SDGs at the country level. With emphasis on developing countries, we give particular attention, where appropriate, to the SDGs focused on food and water.

Target audience

This document is designed for country-level stakeholders involved in the implementation of the SDGs, including the following:

- Government agencies
- Civil society and the private sector
- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs)
- Decision-makers
- Policymakers
- Development planners

The call for countries to participate in the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda is clear in emphasizing that each country must champion the primary effort to achieve the SDGs, and that their implementation at the country level is the key to success.

Box 1 highlights statements in the 2030 Agenda concerning countries’ responsibilities for the success of the SDG program. The challenge for each country is to develop its own strategy for mainstreaming the SDGs – one that reflects local economic, social policy and political realities.

International guidance on mainstreaming the SDGs

Box 1. Extracts from the 2030 Agenda that highlight country responsibilities for SDG implementation.

- 41. Recognizes that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development.
- 47. Governments have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review, in implementing the goals and targets over the coming 15 years.
- 55. Each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances; and decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies.
- 59. Recognition of different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities.
- 66. For all countries, public policies and the mobilization and effective use of domestic resources, underscored by the principle of national ownership, are central to the common pursuit of sustainable development.
- 74. Follow-up and review will be voluntary and country-led, will take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development, and will respect policy space and priorities.

To mainstream the SDGs, countries need to take into account the national and subnational context. This involves a wide range of issues – from the environment and socioeconomic setting to government policies and management strategies. Key tasks include setting goals and targets, determining the means of implementation, and using indicators to measure and monitor progress.

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has suggested four steps that may apply to countries in the initial stages of SDG mainstreaming (UNDG 2015):

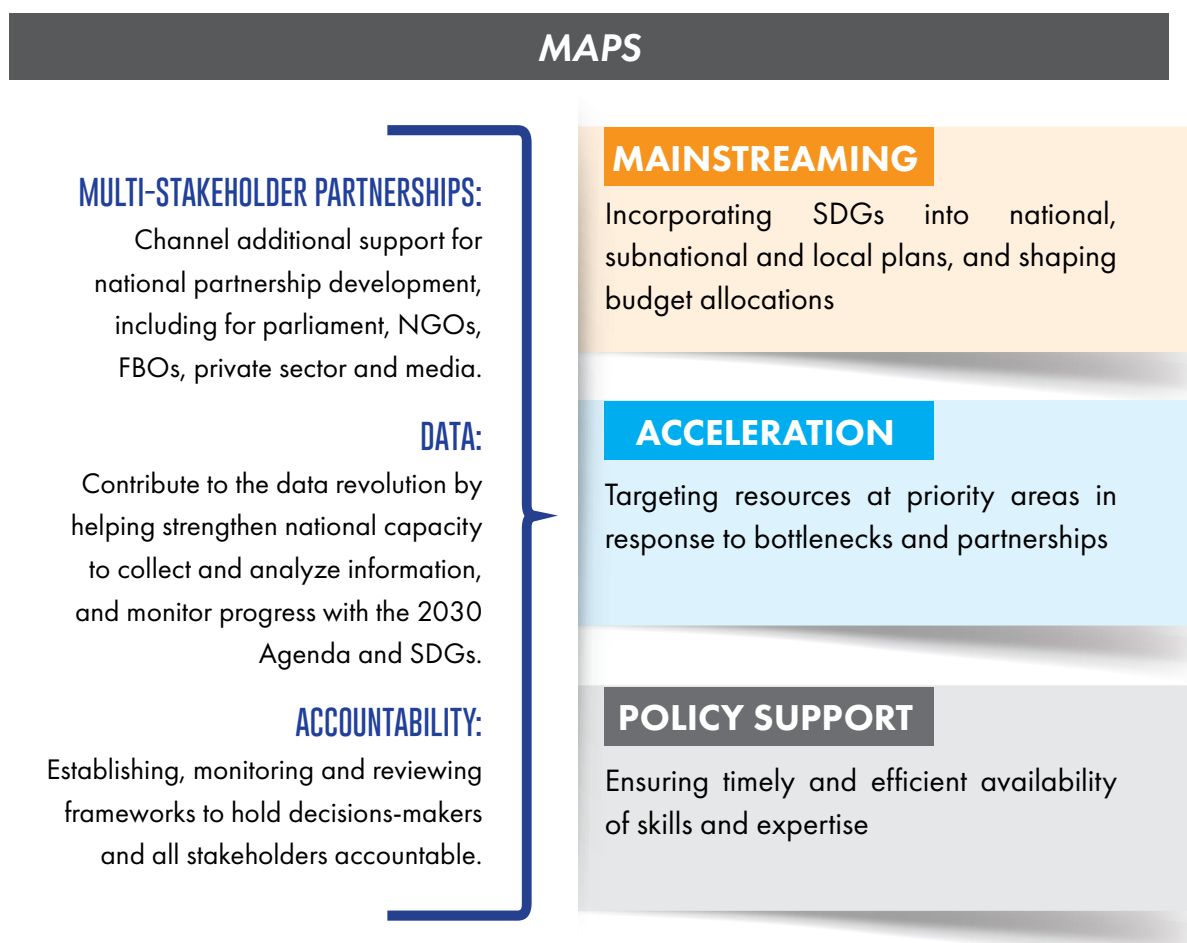
- 1. Review current strategies and plans, and identify areas for change.**
- 2. Making initial recommendations to the leadership of the national government**

3. Set nationally relevant targets.

4. Formulate a strategy and plans, based on integrated systems thinking and commitments with respect to resources and capacities.

In response to member states' requests for coherent and integrated support from the UN development system, the UNDG has identified the elements of a common approach for effective and coherent SDG implementation, referred to as 'Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support' (MAPS) (UNDG 2015) (Figure 1). The approach aims to achieve policy coherence and multi-stakeholder engagement, paying special attention to several crosscutting elements – partnerships, data and accountability.

Figure 1. The Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) cycle.



Source: Modified after UNDG 2015.

Mainstreaming focal areas

The UN has suggested eight guidance areas (Figure 2) for mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda. UNDG (2015) provided detailed information on these areas as well as other issues to take into consideration, as the SDGs filter down to the local level.

These guidance areas are used as the basis for this report and are given greater and more pertinent detail in the pages that follow. The UNDG publishes a periodic update of its guidelines (available at <https://undg.org>) and provides other information needed to domesticate or localize the SDGs.

Figure 2. Areas of guidance for mainstreaming the SDGs.



Source: Modified after UNDG 2015.

Developing country experience in mainstreaming the SDGs

In the period since the SDGs were adopted, countries have mainstreamed these goals in a variety of ways. Developed countries have had wide scope to diversify their approaches, given significant financial resources and advanced technological capabilities. The efforts of developing countries have been constrained

by reduced capacity. Nonetheless, developing country experience has produced success stories that offer useful lessons from which other countries can learn. Below is a summary of the process, focusing on developing country experiences and following steps outlined by UNDG (2015).

1 RAISING AWARENESS

Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda depends on raising awareness through engagement with national, subnational and local stakeholders. The SDGs Domestication Roadmap provides a standardized package for advocacy and sensitization, which can be used at all levels of government (GTF, UN-Habitat and UNDP 2016). Countries in southern Africa have relied on similar awareness-raising strategies, which include the following:

- **Introductory workshops:** Present the 2030 Agenda and SDGs to government officials and stakeholders.
- **Public awareness campaigns:** Raise awareness among the general public, particularly women and youth.
- **Opportunity management:** Influence other government and UN-sponsored meetings

and forums to raise awareness among government officials and stakeholders.

Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa and Kingdom of Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) translated the SDGs into local languages, so that more people can clearly understand them. Some countries have focused on sectors that are active in development. South Africa, for example, reached out to businesses and the government through dialogues and conferences. Electronic and print media have also contributed importantly. Figure 3 describes other ways in which countries in southern Africa have raised awareness of the SDGs.

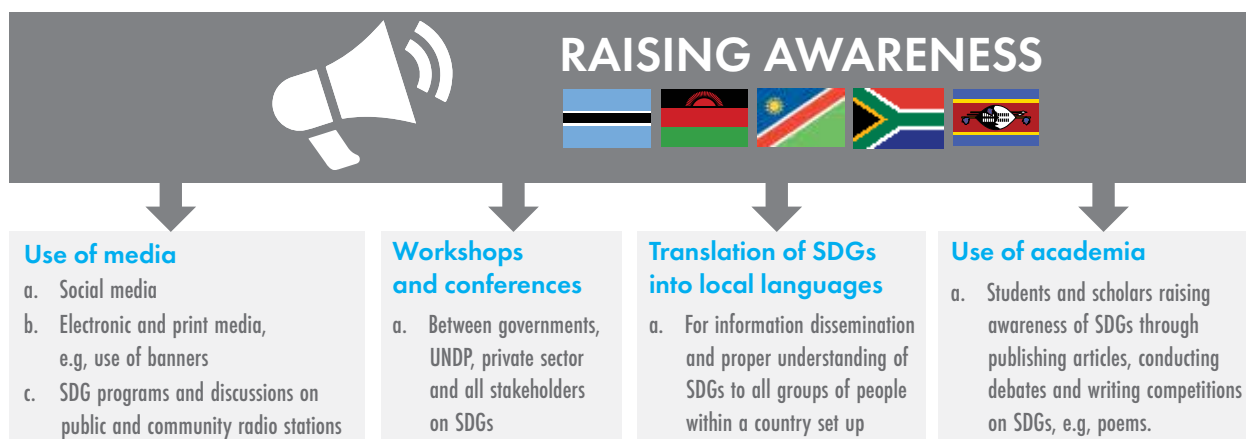
Innovation was the order of the day in Zimbabwe, where youth organizations, in collaboration with politicians and other stakeholders, raised awareness through cycling (see Box 2).



Example of raising awareness by members of the Centre for Global Solutions and Sustainable Development (CENGSSUD) in Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria (photo: <https://newsbreakers.ng/cengssud-inaugurates-committee-to-tackle-unsustainable-consumption-and-production-practices-in-nigeria/>).



Figure 3. Raising awareness in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa and Eswatini.



NB. Point to consider: Use of windows of opportunity to publically promote the SDGs
e.g. Politicians can utilise election campaign opportunities to promote the SDGs as part of their development manifestos.

Box 2. Raising awareness in Zimbabwe.

Six Zimbabweans cycled 54 km to raise awareness of the SDGs. Tinotenda Chimanikire, aged 11 years, was the youngest cyclist, accompanied by Tapiwa Kubvo-runo, Munyaradzi Muzenda (from the Network of African Youths for Development [NAYD]), Anyway Shoriwa, William Mapati and Antony Makwindi (mayor of Marondera). Each cyclist wore an SDG-branded t-shirt from the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG). This drew the attention of motorists and the general public. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Ma-honde said their cycling is a testimony to what the government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are stating about the SDGs: that their implementation requires the involvement of everyone – men, women and children. He commended Afrika Speaks for taking up the SDGs, considering that it is a community-based youth organization in Marondera, about 100 km east of the capital, Harare.



Source: <http://nayd.org/?s=zimbabwe+cyclist&lang=en>

Countries in southern Africa, as shown in the example here, are using all the avenues available to them to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda.

2 MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACHES

To foster ownership of the SDGs and legitimize the process of mainstreaming them into national policies, plans and programs, governments need to create opportunities for dialogue. The idea is to offer spaces and mechanisms for engagement, which can not only strengthen people's basic political rights but also lead to better policies and development outcomes (GTF, UN-Habitat and UNDP 2016). An African perspective on this is given in Box 3.

The SDGs form part of a people-centered, society-wide agenda that requires multi-stakeholder participation nationally, subnationally and locally. According to UNDG (2015), most member states

have pre-existing processes for planning, budgeting and monitoring, with varying degrees of stakeholder engagement. In addition, countries can undertake the following:

- **Work with national multi-stakeholder bodies and forums** to review existing plans.
- **Guide multi-stakeholder dialogues** to promote engagement and accountability.
- **Foster public-private partnerships (PPPs)** to leverage the ingenuity, scaling-up ability and investment potential of business.

Box 3. National post-2015 consultations across Africa.

Africa's post-2015 consultations on the SDGs have benefited from a rich legacy of long-term development plans (vision documents) and short- to medium-term plans – including poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and national development plans (NDPs) – which involved broad consultation with stakeholders.

Building on this foundation, countries have included new forms of stakeholder consultation and brought in groups who would not normally participate in national planning. Using largely similar methodologies, most of these consultations were organized by United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), national governments and key actors from civil society, including women and youth groups, people with disabilities, people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), academia and the private sector.

The consultations relied on the following methods:

- Face-to-face meetings in various formats – the predominant methodology in all 30 countries conducting national consultations
- Focus group discussions
- Stakeholder interviews
- Radio phone-in programs
- Television panel interviews
- Specific group and expert group meetings
- Online and off-line surveys in several countries, including 'MY World' (UN global) surveys
- Text messaging, which captured feedback from 17,000 young people in Uganda

In total, close to 350,000 stakeholders were consulted on the post-2015 Agenda in Africa. Many countries consulted in selected districts, regions, provinces or zones as representative of entire countries, followed by consultation and validation at the national level.

Source: UNDG 2013.

UNDG put forward two core principles as a foundation for consultation:

1. INCLUSION: Consultations should be open to all stakeholders in the country who will be affected by the 2030 Agenda, with a particular focus on those who are commonly underrepresented or marginalized in decision-making (UNDG 2015).

2. ACCOUNTABILITY: People who participate in consultations should have access to relevant information as well as opportunities to provide feedback, and influence the results and process. In any consultation, accountability depends heavily on who controls the information generated, and how this information is analyzed and subsequently used.

3 TAILORING SDGs TO NATIONAL/LOCAL CONTEXT

Each country's political and institutional framework determines government roles in implementing the SDGs. Each level of government (national, subnational and local) has the responsibility and autonomy to set its own priorities, and put them into context through policies, plans, strategies and programs (see Box 4).

Regional and local governments should set priorities within the framework of the SDGs, promoting local

ownership of these priorities by all stakeholders. SDG working groups or task forces can be established to connect the various institutions interested in the implementation of the SDGs. These groups are best led by high-level officials, including the national president as well as governors and mayors. The role of these groups is to secure the commitment of all government ministries, departments and agencies as well as other institutions to work together.

Box 4. UNDG guidance on tailoring SDGs to national/local contexts.

1. **Review current strategies and plans:** to survey the landscape of strategies and plans in place at the national, subnational and local levels, and compare them with the SDGs and targets to identify gaps and provide the basis for recommending areas for change.
2. **Make initial recommendations to national leadership:** to address SDG gaps in current strategies and plans, while recognizing that the SDGs "are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental."
3. **Set nationally relevant targets:** for nationally adapted and inclusive SDGs that are achievable, yet ambitious.
4. **Formulate a strategy and plans using systems thinking:** to incorporate recommendations and insights from the steps listed above into strategies and plans, and match ambition and commitments with resources and capacities.



Source: Tailoring SDG to national, sub-national and local contexts. Available at <https://undg.org/programme/2030-agenda-section/tailoring-sdg-to-national-context/> (accessed on January 7, 2018).

Tailoring the SDGs in Botswana

Botswana has taken significant steps to ensure that its citizens are aware of the SDGs. The government has developed a national Vision for 2016-2036 (Government of Botswana 2016) that is aligned with the SDGs, as is its National Development Plan 11 (2017-2023) (MoFDP 2016). Sector plans are also beginning to integrate the SDGs. A national structure, headed by the president, was established to coordinate their implementation through an “all-of-government approach,” including the development of a roadmap for rollout of the SDGs. It recognizes that the SDGs are not the business of the government alone but of all actors, including the private sector and every community (source: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/botswana>).

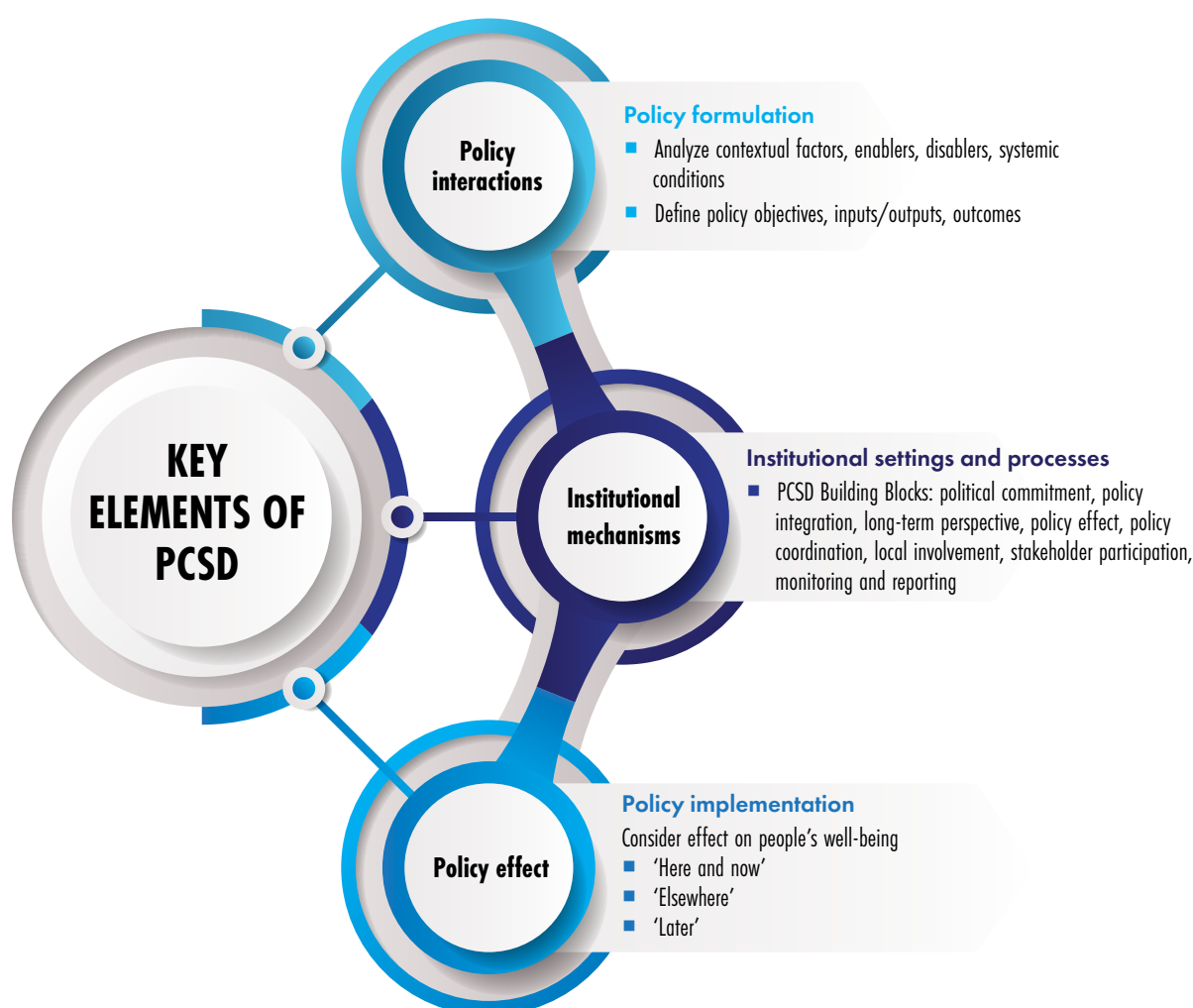


4 5 CREATING HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL POLICY COHERENCE

The 2030 Agenda calls for an integrated approach to the search for solutions – one that overcomes barriers between sector silos. The resulting policies should reflect the overall aspirations of the SDGs

and effective coordination between different sectors and ministries. Figure 4 indicates the key elements of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD).

Figure 4. Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development as depicted from UNDP in Asia and the Pacific 2017.



Horizontal policy coherence

Sustainable development is about eradicating poverty in all its forms, preserving the planet, achieving sustained growth and fostering social inclusion. This requires interdependent measures made possible by the types of interventions described as follows (UNDG 2015):

- **Integrated policy analysis** to ensure that proposed policies, programs and targets support nationally tailored SDGs.
- **Coordinated institutional mechanisms** to create formal partnerships across sectoral ministries and agencies.
- **Integrated modelling** to help clarify and articulate interconnected goals and targets, and analyze and inform policies, programs and projects for impact on nationally tailored SDGs.

Vertical policy coherence

The term “glocalize” refers to the integration of policy from the global to local levels. Glocalizing the Agenda within a country is vital if it is to realize the SDGs within the 2030 timeframe. Creating policy coherence and integrating efforts through partnerships among government, civil society, the private sector and other actors are essential.

Glocalizing has five aspects:

1. **Institutional coordination mechanisms** to foster partnerships across levels of government
2. **Multi-stakeholder consultative bodies** and forums to foster partnerships and coordination
3. **Local Agenda 21s and networks** to scale up actions for sustainable development at the local level
4. **Monitoring and review at the local level** as a means of localizing nationally tailored SDGs
5. **Impact assessment** to ensure that large public and private development projects take into consideration nationally- and locally-tailored SDGs
6. **Integrated modelling** to explore the benefits and impacts of key national policies and programs at the subnational and local levels

Source: UNDG 2015.

INNOVATIVE CASES

Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Namibia and Tonga have recently piloted a prototype tool developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Referred to as a Rapid Integrated Policy Assessment, it helps countries gauge their readiness for SDG implementation (www.undg.org). The tool provides an overview of a country's level of alignment with the 2030 Agenda through a gap analysis of SDG targets that are not prioritized in current national development plans and strategies, and relevant sector strategies. It also identifies linkages between targets, including those prioritized by multiple sectors and sectors whose actions can impact multiple SDGs.

In Bhutan, the assessment found that the SDG targets are integrated to a high degree into the 11th national plan, which prioritizes 93 targets. The targets excluded are those pertaining to SDG 14 on oceans (as Bhutan is a landlocked country) and SDG 17 on means of implementation. The results illustrate close philosophical alignment between Bhutan's National Vision 2020 and the principles of the 2030 Agenda. The gaps identified and possible cross-sectoral linkages could serve as entry points for further elaboration of plans to implement the 2030 Agenda.



Source: Tailoring SDG to national, sub-national and local contexts. Available at <https://undg.org/2030-agenda/mainstreaming-2030-agenda/tailoring-sdg-to-national-context> (accessed on February 26, 2019).

CREATING HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL POLICY COHERENCE

(excerpts from Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa and Eswatini)



In **Botswana's** Vision 2036 framework, agriculture

brings together information and communication technologies (ICT), water (and environment), energy and good governance programs to facilitate the eradication of poverty (Government of Botswana 2016). The Ministry of Agriculture has embarked on a Climate-smart Agriculture Program (2015-2030), which brings together the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism (for environmental sustainability); Ministry of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources (for water use and sustainability); and Ministry of Lands and Housing (for land sustainability). These ministries run concurrent programs that contribute to climate-smart agriculture (MoFDP 2016). Stakeholders in Botswana and **Namibia** chose to prioritize four SDGs linked to the environment: 6, 12, 13 and 15 (MoAWF 2015). Climate-smart agricultural development is aligned with the AU/NEPAD CAADP, Agriculture Sector Policy and Strategy, and draft National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan. The programs are also aligned with six strategic priority areas that are sources of Botswana's agricultural development and growth in a changing climate.



Malawi has embarked on a sustainable agriculture program under its National Agriculture Policy (NAP) (2016), which is

drawn from the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III (Agriculture and Climate Change Priority). This program is linked to the sustainable irrigation development program, which is also in the NAP (2016). The programs incorporate SDGs 2, 6 and 13, and are also aligned with the AU/NEPAD CAADP and SADC RISDP (Government of Malawi 2017).



In **South Africa**, the NDP promotes the land, water and energy nexus as a focus for mitigating climate change in view of the 2008 Long-

Term Mitigation Scenario (LTMS). The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) drafted the South Africa National Adaptation Strategy, which complements current policies, including the NDP, National Climate Change Response White Paper (2011), and draft Sustainable Agriculture Policy. It also responds to the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the African Union's (AU's) Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Through the NDP, the National Adaptation Strategy links SDGs 2, 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15 (Nhamo 2016).



Eswatini's National Development Plan (NDP) stipulates that the Ministry of Agriculture together

with the Ministry of Natural Resources, Parliament and Ministry of Economic Planning should fast-track approval of the Land Policy and implementation of the Water Act (2003). This will facilitate programs in the Ministry of Agriculture that promote water harvesting, and promote efficient use and conservation of water and soil for agriculture. The NDP links SDGs 6 and 13 with Agenda 2063 goal 5. The Ministry of Agriculture has embarked on programs to promote diversification of agricultural production, while strengthening agricultural research, early warning systems and extension services. The Ministry of Agriculture together with the Ministry of Public Works has worked together to build 12 earthen dams to be used for irrigation. This is linked to SDGs 2 and 12, and Agenda 2063 goal 5 (MoEPD 2016).

Member states need to manage their budgets and finances creatively to implement the SDGs. The idea is to transform national budgeting processes to fit the results-based orientation of the SDGs. To this end, countries can take into consideration the following options:

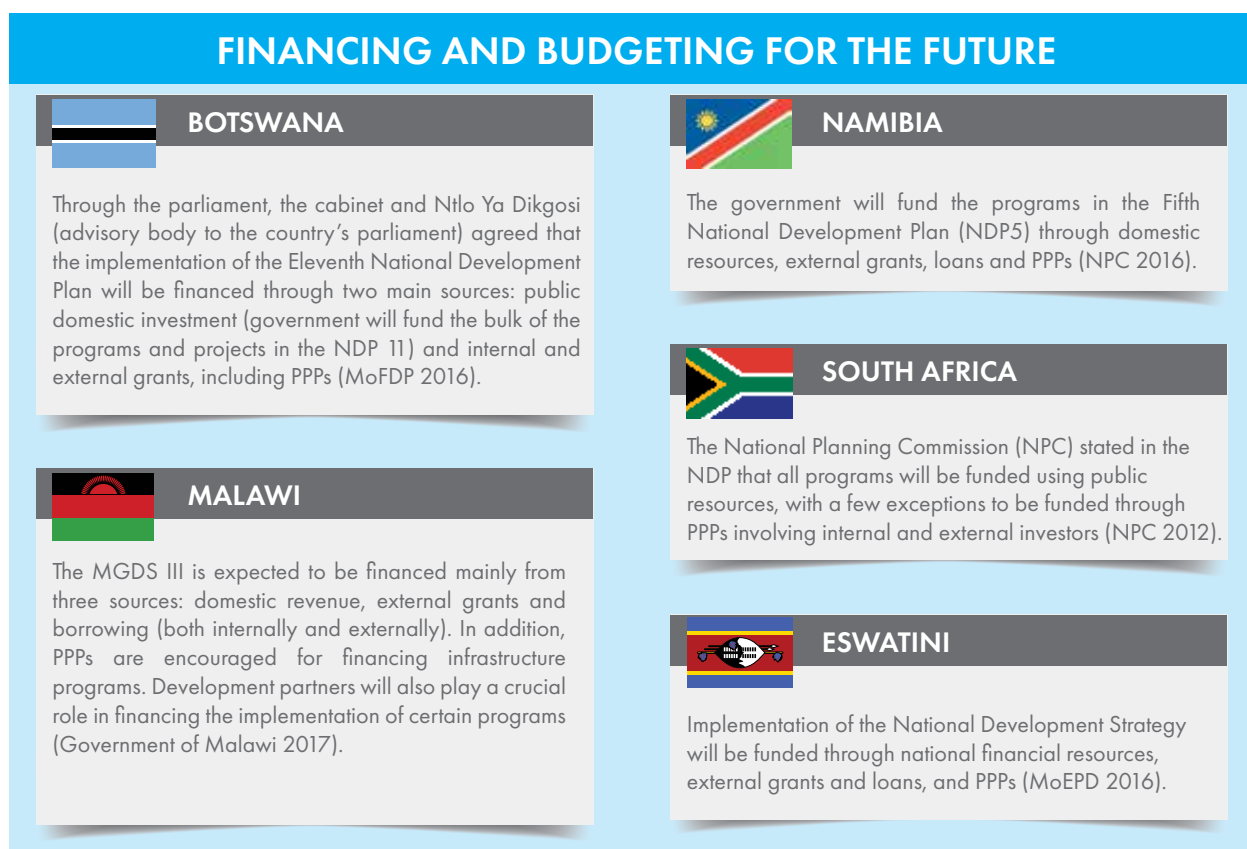
- **An array of mechanisms for financing the 2030 Agenda.** These should encompass all sources of finance, such as public resources, domestic and international private business and finance, international development cooperation, and international trade and debt.
- **Outcome-based and participatory budgeting,** in line with the results-based framework and participatory nature of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. **United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs)** can work with member states to develop capacity building programs that explore and implement outcome-based and

participatory budgeting approaches, drawing on the experience of leading governments and experts. Results-based budgeting (RBB), or performance-based budgeting (PBB), as it is also called, is a means of organizing and reporting a government's allocation of fiscal resources in relation to high-level goals.

- **Budget mainstreaming** to integrate specific issues, such as gender mainstreaming, into fiscal budgets (UNDG 2015).

In a nutshell, five countries in southern Africa have proposed to finance their national development strategies and plans through domestic resources, supplemented with external grants, loans (internal and external), and funds from PPPs (Figure 5). The strategies these countries are using conform to the principle that they need to mainstream the SDGs with their own funding.

Figure 5. Financing and budgeting for the SDGs in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa and Eswatini.



7 MONITORING, REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Monitoring

Without proper monitoring, it is impossible to implement the SDGs and chart a way forward to a sustainable future. Yet, this important measure is neglected. According to the UN report on the SDGs in 2018 (UN 2018), the data available are not sufficient to report on the SDGs, making it impossible to “populate” many of the SDG indicators, with many others inadequately reported.

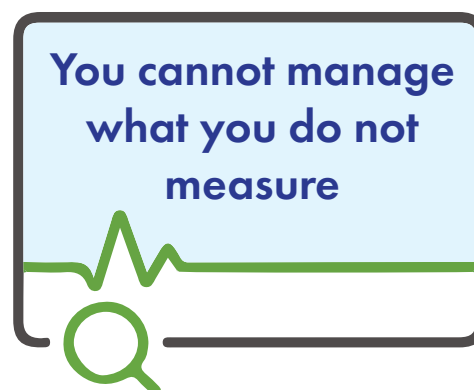
Monitoring the SDGs depends on the participation of member states. Most countries have monitoring programs focused on aspects of governance and management, ranging from health and food security to water resources and sanitation, etc. Many of these programs will continue to operate independently of the SDGs, as they may have different objectives. Nonetheless, since there is bound to be overlap, it should be possible for monitoring to serve both the local and SDG agenda. Therefore, monitoring programs need to be synthesized so that they can serve both purposes.

Countries need not abandon their prior commitments to monitoring, but rather should synchronize current monitoring with commitments to the SDGs.

Monitoring within a country requires coordination to ensure efficiency and maximum value from the 2030 Agenda.

Maximum in-country coordination is needed to gather SDG data from multiple government agencies as well as civil society, industry, etc. The national statistical office is generally the focal point for communication between countries and the UN system, especially the UN Statistical Commission, which is part of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA).

In most countries, the national statistics office, being somewhat removed from the actual collection of data, will need input from others, especially government agencies, to provide data for submission to the UN. Thus, in most countries, SDG



6, for example, will be monitored by the ministries of water, environment and health. SDG 2 will be monitored by the ministries of agriculture, economic development, health and so forth, with the rest of the 17 SDGs monitored similarly. In some places, civil society, industry, academia and other actors can also provide data inputs. The 2030 Agenda is all about participation at all levels of society and should not depend on a “top-down” approach to the collection and use of data.

Monitoring should also be aligned successfully at the regional level. A good example is the African Union’s alignment of its Agenda 2063 with the requirements of the SDGs.

The convergence between the 2030 and 2063 Agendas (see Table 1) has enabled African countries to use the mutual accountability tools of Agenda 2063 (designed mainly for the CAADP) to monitor progress in implementing the agricultural part of both Agendas. Among these tools are the Joint Sector Review (JSR) and Biennial Review (BR). Since the two processes have similar indicators, they can be used concurrently to monitor the agricultural part of both Agendas. Countries across the continent can thus use common tools to monitor implementation of both the agricultural SDGs and Malabo Declaration, although some countries have their own monitoring strategies and programs.

Table 1. Convergence of the 2063 and 2030 Agendas.

EIGHT PRIORITY AREAS OF THE ISTANBUL PROGRAM OF ACTION			Agenda 2063	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Areas of convergence
	A	Productive capacity	Goals 1, 4, 6, 7 and 10	SDGs 2, 7, 8, 9 and 17	Productive employment, ICT development, sustainable energy, industrialization
	B	Agriculture, food security and rural development	Goals 1, 4, 5 and 7	SDGs 1, 2, 6, 9 and 12	Eradication of poverty and hunger, infrastructure development
	C	Trade	Goals 4, 5, 8 and 19	SDGs 2 and 17	Improved export competitiveness
	D	Commodities	Goals 4 and 8	SDGs 2, 8 and 9	Economic diversification
	E	Human and social development			
	E1	Education and training	Goals 1, 2 and 17	SDGs 4, 5 and 8	Equitable education
	E2	Population and primary health	Goal 3	SDGs 2, 3 and 5	Health services
	E3	Development of young people	Goals 5 and 8	SDGs 4, 8 and 10	Employment of young people, training
	E4	Shelter and water and sanitation	Goal 1	SDGs 6 and 11	Liveable habitats
	E5	Gender equality and empowerment of women	Goal 17	SDG 5	Gender equality
	E6	Social protection	Goal 1	SDGs 1, 5, 8 and 10	Social protection
	F	Multiple crises and other emerging challenges	Goals 5 and 7	SDGs 1, 2, 13 and 15	Climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity conservation
	G	Mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity building	Goals 12, 16 and 20	SDGs 10, 16 and 17	Resource mobilization and financing for development, reducing corruption
	H	Good governance at all levels	Goals 11 and 12	SDG 16	Governance

Source: UNECA 2017.

Reporting

Several UN agencies are responsible for reporting on the SDGs. UN-Water, for example, including its Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS), oversees all water-related contributions but in the process engages UN Environment, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO) and others. They are responsible for collecting SDG data from countries and presenting the collated data to the UN Statistical Commission, which reports this to the High-Level Political Forum tasked by the UN to oversee the 2030 Agenda.

Table 2 indicates some differences between the needs for global and country (national) reporting on the SDGs. Country reporting presents major challenges. One is to ensure that reports from across the world are homogenous, so that the UN can readily synthesize the sustainability stories it needs to tell in promoting global sustainability. However, global data are not always valuable for management on the ground at the country level. According to Section 75 of the 2030 Agenda, countries are thus encouraged to adapt the SDGs to local purposes, designing their own indicator methods and setting locally relevant targets. What remains to be seen is whether the UN will collect this locally derived information or whether it will remain for use in each country without being shared globally.

Table 2. Summary of the difference between global (left) and national (right) reporting on the SDGs.

TWO TYPES OF SDG DATA	
GLOBAL	NATIONAL
Reporting to the UN – all data in a prescribed format to align with other countries.	National reporting on the SDGs – data specific to the requirements of a country and in a format suitable for in-country use.
These data need to be aligned with global data. Thus, the method of collection, units of measurement, frequency of data provision, etc., should all ideally be synchronized at a global level. This allows direct comparison of data from different countries.	These data are country specific, in that the indicator methods may be adapted from the global SDG methods or may be unique to the country. These data give the country the ability to manage its own resources in its own way but in line with the overall mandate and vision of the SDGs. Thus, the resulting storyline of national data collection can be submitted to the UN as part of SDG reporting.
Examples of global SDG reporting data: SDG 6.1.1 – “Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services”. These data are a simple percentage of the population and needs to be established using the precise guidelines provided by the UN (which can be found at www.sdg6monitoring.org). SDG 6.6.1 – “Change in extent of water-related ecosystems over time”. This indicator has a number of sub-indicators, each with its own data collection method and units of measure to be used. This will include: “Percentage change in 5-year average of spatial extent of lakes, rivers and estuaries” and “Percentage change in 5-year average of discharge”, and several others.	Examples of country SDG reporting data: A country may decide that provision of water to schools is a particular priority and requires independent monitoring. Thus, the country may have its own indicator: “Proportion of schools using safely managed drinking water services”. Such an indicator can be used to assign management objectives to national departments, while contributing to the SDG Target for SDG 6.1 (“by 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all”). Similarly, a country may decide that a particular animal (e.g., the manatee in the Inner Niger Delta in Mali) may be an important indicator of sustainable management of the Delta and deserves to have its own indicator. Thus, under SDG Target 6.6 (“By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes”), the country may have an indicator to monitor the health of manatees. While these data will not contribute to the overall global report on SDG 6.6.1, the storyline of the data should be submitted as part of the country report in support of SDG 6.6.1. The mechanisms for doing this remain undeveloped within the UN system, but will be established soon.

Accountability

The 2030 Agenda (Section 75) clearly indicates that global targets are not necessarily relevant at the local or country level. Hence the importance of adapting the targets to the local context, so that the results prove valuable for country-level implementation of the SDGs. Assigning numerical values to the targets is important, as this provides a country with measurable targets for local efforts to monitor progress. Most of the 169 SDG targets do not include numerical values.

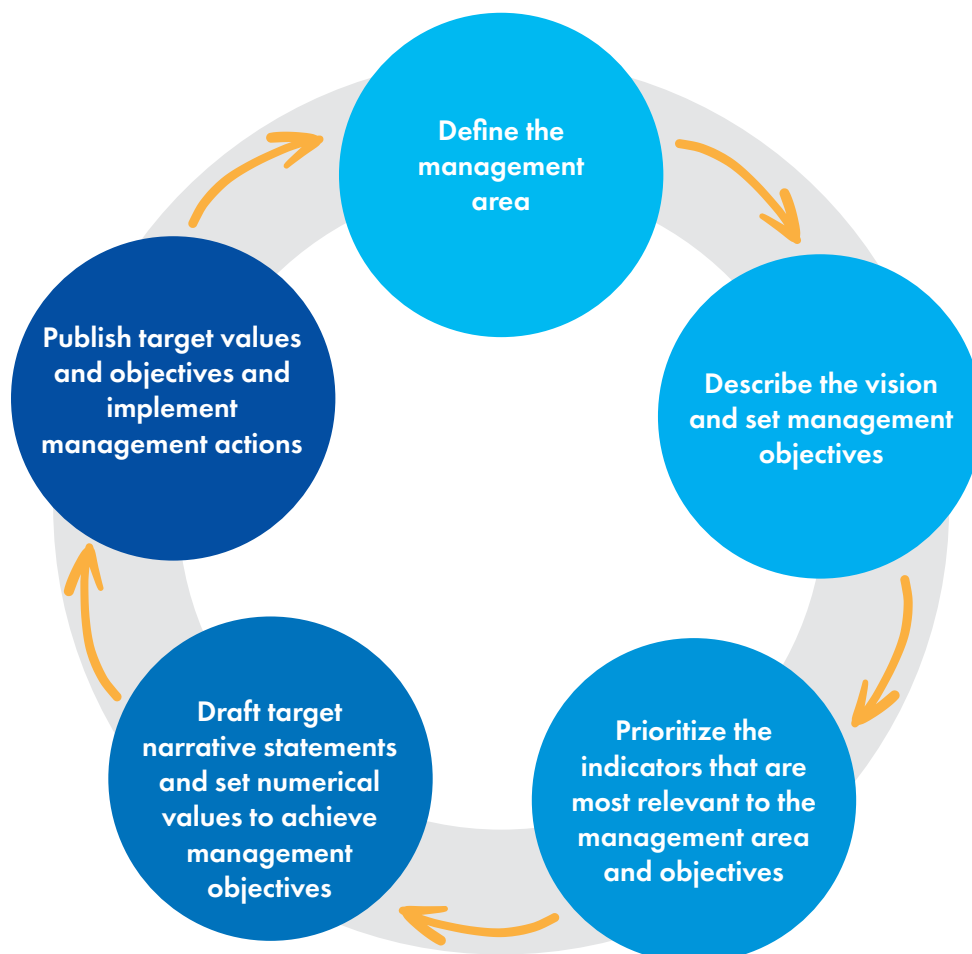
How each country sets numerical values for SDG targets will depend on local environmental and socioeconomic conditions. Botswana, for example, may decide on targets and indicators that specifically concern management of the Okavango Delta, given its importance for the country. Similarly, poor

Many SDG targets do not have numerical values; each country needs to set them

countries may give priority to targets related to food security over others covering less fundamental issues. Alternatively, a country may decide to protect 100% of its wetlands, as part of its commitment to Target 6.6 (protect and restore water-related ecosystems), while another may choose to protect only 20%. In any case, the country needs to justify its decision and explain how it aligns with the 2030 Agenda.

Figure 6 summarizes an approach that each country should follow in setting numerical values (or benchmarks) for the SDG targets (Dickens et al. 2019).

Figure 6. A procedure for countries to set numerical values for SDG targets.



Source: Adapted from Dickens et al. 2019.

8 ASSESSING RISKS AND FOSTERING ADAPTABILITY

According to UNDG, identifying and addressing risks and emerging issues are critical for achieving the SDGs (see example, Box 5). Careful reflection on lessons learned from implementation of the SDGs and timely course corrections along the way are also integral to effective follow-up and review. Countries willing to take these steps can explore a range of approaches for assessing risk and fostering adaptation through planning and policy development. UNCT guidance in this regard is threefold:

1. **Adaptive governance** to provide a general framework for effectively navigating uncertainty, change and surprises.
2. **Risk analysis and management** for systematic identification and management of the risks involved in implementing national, subnational and local plans.

3. **Scenario planning and stress testing** for regular use in development planning and policy-making to detect emerging issues and examine the ability of plans, policies and programs to perform under a range of plausible future conditions.

A **UNDG** reference guide – **Assessing Risk and Fostering Adaptability** – helps understand how to assess risks. Available at <https://undg.org/2030-agenda/mainstreaming-2030-agenda/assessing-risks-and-fostering-adaptability/> (accessed on February 26, 2019).



Box 5. Assessing risks and fostering adaptability.

Lessons learned from the Ebola crisis and the collapse in international iron ore prices informed the development of the national Ebola recovery strategy and presidential recovery priorities (2015-2017). The objective is to ensure that the country maintains zero cases of Ebola, while ‘building back’ better national systems for resilience and development, including preparedness to face future shocks and epidemics. The national strategy comprises seven presidential priority sectors: **health, education, social protection, private sector development, water, energy and governance**. Implementation of the first phase ended in March 2016. Discussions are underway for the presidential priorities to integrate the SDGs.

Source: UNDG 2016.

Conclusion

This document offers a simple overview of the process for domesticating or mainstreaming the SDGs in developing countries. The literature abounds with country examples, making it easier to find guidance from others. Even so, the sheer volume of literature makes it difficult to get a clear perspective on what is required. This document will hopefully help to clarify the situation.

Domestication is a key requirement for the success of the 2030 Agenda. To date, the drafting and initiation of the Agenda have received the main emphasis, but now the onus is on each country to apply the details and the spirit of the SDGs to achieve a sustainable future. Only if each country plays its role, will the sustainability of the entire planet be secured. The stakes have never been higher. Success is an imperative.

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