Policy support for mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in Pakistan

Soon after the adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, the Government of Pakistan started the localization of SDGs by establishing dedicated SDG Support Units within the Planning Institutions at the Federal and Provincial level. In February 2016, the National Assembly of Pakistan passed a unanimous resolution declaring SDGs as the country's National Development Goals.

The SDG Support Units help create an enabling environment for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These Units function in the form of a joint project between the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform at the Federal level and Planning and Development Departments at the Provincial level. The project is based on the UN Development Group’s tool for Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) for SDGs. The

**QUICK FACTS**

**Duration:** 2016–2020

**Location:** Nationwide

**Funding partners:** Federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, Provincial Planning and Development Departments

**Annual budget (2020):** USD 1.9 million

**Implementing partners:** Federal and Provincial Government (Planning Commission and Provincial Planning and Development Departments), Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, UN partners, private sector, academia and civil society

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project supports the Government of Pakistan in embedding the 2030 Agenda in its long, medium and short-term planning and budgeting processes, and provide technical support for a localized approach for the implementation of SDGs.

**Objectives**
- To mainstream the SDGs in national and sub-national policies and development plans.
- To strengthen reporting and monitoring mechanisms for the SDGs.
- To develop a budgeting and financing framework for the SDGs.
- To foster integrated and innovative approaches to accelerating progress on priority SDGs.

**Expected results**
- SDG frameworks at national and sub-national levels developed with priority indicators, baselines and targets identified, along with a monitoring mechanism.
- National capacities and systems for data and reporting on SDGs established.
- Budgeting and financing frameworks developed to align existing resources to SDGs while exploring innovative financing instruments for SDG financing.
- Partnerships with the private sector established for enhanced implementation of SDGs.
- Innovation promoted to address priority issues hampering SDG implementation.
- Functional coordination with multiple stakeholders at federal and provincial levels and learning alliances on SDGs established to identify, analyse and consolidate best practices, and exchange solutions locally and internationally.

**Current progress**

Pakistan’s Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiative (PD&SI) hosted a national conference to share key findings and highlights from Pakistan’s first Voluntary National Review (VNR) of SDG implementation. Pakistan is one of 47 countries presented its VNR during the July 2019 session of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

National SDG Framework and provincial SDG frameworks have been developed. These framework defines short, medium and long term SDG priorities, identify baselines and set targets for SDG indicators. Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir are in the process of finalizing their respective SDG frameworks.

- For effective localization provinces has also framed District Level SDGs Plans. In Punjab the district plans are prepared for Bakhar and Rajanpur. Similar plans are being developed for Killa Abdullah and Naushki in Balochistan.
- Balochistan Comprehensive Development and Growth Strategy has been prepared. BCD&GS provides the vision of prosperous Balochistan with a focus on balanced development, inclusive growth and livelihood, and improved image and living standard. BCD&GS 2020-25 will act as a hallmark in the future planning and development of Balochistan.

- An online dashboards for effective monitoring and reporting of SDGs is being developed. Dashboards will help easy access and analysis of data on SDG indicators. The launch of the online dashboard is expected in November 2020.
- Federal and provincial budgets 2019-20 have been analysed along with analysis of the Public-Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for alignment with SDGs.
- In 2019, research have been undertaken for policy advise on; Assessment of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) practices, resources functioning in Federal Administered Areas (ICT, GB & AJK); Exploring Structural Bottleneck to Inculcate/Mainstream “Quality” in the Existing Public/Private Education System, and Measuring cost of remittances.

- A high-Level Policy Dialogue on SDGs was held which was led by Chief Minister Sindh and had participation from all political parties present in the provincial assembly of Sindh who pledged their support to work towards achievement of SDGs in the province.

- In Sindh, with collaboration of the Finance Department, Government of Sindh developed a tracking system of provincial budget to track public sector financial allocations and expenditures on the SDGs. This system will lead to generation of quality information for policy and decision-making on SDGs at critical stages of
resource distribution, as well as during implementation throughout the fiscal cycle.

- A comprehensive review of and revision of Mine Rules 1952, Excise Rules 1969 and Auction Rules was conducted for Mines and Mineral Department, Balochistan. A booklet on investment opportunities in mines and minerals sector in Balochistan was designed for Board of Investment, Balochistan.

- In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, extensive review of data eco system was conducted to cater for the unprecedented data needs for SDG indicators. Against the one hundred and seventy eight (178) provincially relevant indicators, a baseline was established for 82 indicators from various data sources while data gap for ninety six (96) indicators still exists. A two-dimensional approach has been adopted by the Unit in consultation with Provincial Bureau of Statistics. The Unit is focusing on broadening the scope of existing data sets to report on additional indicators and also reviewing the potential of administrative data for estimation on additional SDGs indicators. The approach will result in narrowing down the data gap.

**What’s next?**

In 2020-21, the project will:

- Strengthen reporting mechanism by developing solutions for existing data gaps and capacity development of statistical institutions to report on SDGs.

- Engage local stakeholders including local government and district administration to strengthen their role in creating awareness around SDGs and monitoring and implementation of SDGs at district level.

- Establish partnerships with academic institutions to define the research agenda around SDGs.

- Develop innovative communication tools to increase outreach to target groups and effectively engage them for localizing the SDGs agenda. Create community awareness around SDGs through publication of articles, expert opinions, and op-eds.

- Develop integrated financing frameworks for SDGs including costing of SDGs. The results will be presented to the government to allocate the budget for priority SDGs.

- Develop partnerships with private sector entities to enhance private sector engagement on SDGs.

- Set up an Innovation Fund to accelerate progress on priority SDGs.