SDG PUSH
Process Guidelines

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SDG PUSH
PROCESS GUIDELINES

The SDG Push process guides policymakers to identify context specific acceleration pathways to meet development needs and ambitions. The process is evidence based, innovative, and actionable. It's very design is based on adaptivity to every country's context, prioritising principles of flexibility rather than being static.
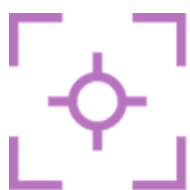
TIP!

Having a core team that sits across all phases, to help with insights integrations into each module will significantly help ensure that insights are weaved across the whole process. Ensure to bring on board the core national 'PUSH' team that should include a Country Economist, National Planning Expert, Dialogues Facilitator, Modelling Expert as well as data analysts, and process coordinators.

This guidebook is aimed at providing easy to follow processes to run an SDG Push process in-country, either independently led by its government, or with UNDP or UNCT support. Different models of engagement are offered to ensure flexibility and choice in process implementation. These are noted against each stage of the process.

There are four key modules to an SDG Push process, which should ideally be run in linear order to ensure that each step builds on the step before. However, countries may also choose to only run specific modules, and build on existing processes.

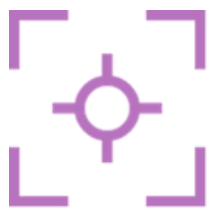**Scoping**   **Acceleration Dialogues**   **Modelling**   **Sustainable Financing**

A full SDG Push process will take 4-6 months.

Module 1
Scoping

Scoping is a foundational process that provides an integrated analysis that combines historical trends, current priorities and draw from UNDP's Flagship reports such as ASSESSING COVID-19 IMPACT ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS and SDG Push+: Effects of accelerating universal access that illustrates potential futures when available.

The main objective in this phase is to bring all relevant analysis that are qualitative and quantitative (including the National Development Plans) into one frame that allows insights to be clearly understood. The data gathered during this phase also directly supports the modelling phase. The government is expected to guide and endorse the scoping note.

The SDG Insights Report can serve as the foundation for the Scoping Note, or in fact even replace the Scoping Phase.

WHO WILL CONDUCT THE SCOPING?

The scoping is done together with country experts to support country specific needs that clearly articulate the story of SDG progress, challenges, and opportunities. Ideally, a National Policy Planning Expert is needed to lead this work.

WHAT ARE THE OUTPUTS FROM THE SCOPING PHASE?

The scoping phase should produce two documents.
1. A comprehensive report detailing all the findings.
2. A two-page insight on top level findings and priorities.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE SCOPING?

The scoping should be completed within one month.

METHOD

Download the Scoping Insight Template to complete for baseline landscape analysis:

[Scoping Insight Template](#)

Run an SDG Push Diagnostics report to get country level data on its status and potential conflicts between growth, environmental concerns, and societal well-being.

The Diagnostic Report provides a dynamic visualisation of the development landscape. It integrates multiple data sources to establish a rapid landscape analysis that showcases SDG trends, national priorities, interlinkages, and potential futures.

- Go to https://sdgdiagnostics.data.undp.org/
- Choose your country of exploration to produce the Integrated SDG Insights Report. This report provides the following analysis:
- SDG Moment: Assesses challenges and opportunities in national growth trajectories with insights on environmental sustainability and inclusiveness.
- Trends and Priorities: SDG trends tracks progress from 2015 to date for the 231 indicators. National priorities are analysed using machine learning to reveal the most prominent SDGs referenced in national policy documents.
- Global target-level interlinkages are drawn from the KnowSDGs Platform by the European Commission. SDG interlinkages are retrieved through a structured literature review to tap both grey literature and peer-reviewed publications as a source of information.
- Finance and Stimulus: Provides insight into indicators of fiscal and financial stress with options (INFF) for stimulus and other means to accelerate progress.
- Run interviews with country experts to further contextualise the data and fill in gaps.
- Undertake baseline insights analysis from the data collected.

[Bridging Notes](#)

*Detailed step by step on how to interrogate the findings can be found here:

Complete the Scoping Insight Template according to the instructions, with diagrams and visualisations copied from SDG Diagnostics Report for ease of reference.

CONSIDER!

There are some limitations to this report:

1. It cannot natively handle multilingual data. For documents in unsupported languages, we recommend using machine translation to English (e.g., using [Google Translate](#)) that has been proven to provide robust results.
2. Without appropriate guidance on the types of interventions to be included in the report by the National Policy expert, it risks providing scant details for the next phase of the process - Dialogues.

TIP!

1. The SDG Insights Report in 90+ countries can serve as the scoping note in some cases. It provides the SDG Moment for the country, state of the SDGs, an analysis of national priorities and interventions that could serve as accelerators in the countries. This can be updated with additional data and analytics as necessary
2. The data that is available in the SDG Push Diagnostic is drawn from what is publicly available. To deepen the analysis and to ensure it is appropriately contextualised, consider investing time in updating data on SDG trends and national priorities. This will help improve insights and build common understanding of gaps and challenges. Additional space such as [Data Futures Exchange](#) and the [Geohub](#) can provide a valuable tool to analyse data at the global, regional and country level.
3. Data by itself does not produce insights. Invest time into undertaking the sensemaking of the data and what it points to, what blind spots it might have, and hot spots you might need to interrogate further in subsequent phases.
4. Ensure that the National Policy Expert has formal guidance or parameters for identification of an appropriate range of interventions to be included in the report, that are endorsed by the Government.

PRODUCT OUTPUT
Scoping Report

Module 2
Acceleration Dialogues

The Acceleration Dialogues are multi-stakeholder workshops. They provide the space to interrogate the scoping analysis done, interrogate previous policies and chart joint decision making.

These dialogues occur in two main phases at the start but are supported by other smaller touchpoints or feedback loops occurring throughout the lifecycle of the process.

The first phase (in-person) is designed around a structured interrogation and validation of the insights from the scoping phase.

The second phase (either online or in-person) will examine relevant interventions needed to be put in place to drive existing policies and strategies forward.

The two dialogue phases should be heavily facilitated to ensure the group is both supported through its structured process, and in creating a space where there is room for diverse views and debate.

By the end of the two phases, the strongest accelerators (or points of interventions) for the country should be identified.

WHO FACILITATES THE DIALOGUES

A Dialogue Facilitator for each country will be needed to lead this process with the support of the core national team and SDG Integration. It's important that another resource person is responsible for capturing notes, recordings, and pictures of the dialogues.

WHAT ARE THE OUTPUTS FROM THE DIALOGUES?

- A comprehensive dialogue report that captures the process and outcomes
- A summary document outlining the 2-3 potential proposals that are agreed upon.
- A baseline draft budget or costing estimate for the above

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE DIALOGUES?

Both phases of the dialogues should be completed within one month. It's important to leave sufficient time to review the information from the phase 1 dialogues and prepare for phase 2. It's advised, in between the two phases, to continue engagement virtually with the participants through sharing of relevant information, online surveys, feedback forms and short meetings.

METHOD

Prepare well in-advance the following documents and resources needed for the Dialogues phase:

- Dialogue Agenda and detailed plan
- Scoping Note and two-page insight

Development priorities
Diagnostic results (SDG trends) including 3-5 SDGs with strong interlinkages.
List of challenges (development priorities X SDG gaps)

- Stakeholders Analysis for invitations:

List of participants mapped based on their category of work, needs, roles

- In-person and virtual facilitation materials

Documents to be shared during and after the sessions.
Presentations
Follow up surveys

Structure the dialogues into two distinct, interconnected phases:

- **Phase 1: Sets the stage for the process.**

This convening of diverse stakeholders is designed to have the group collectively interrogate, validate, and build on the results of the scoping phase by drawing on their personal and professional lived experiences on the ground with the various complex issues being discussed (this may lead to the adding of new issues not previously identified in the scoping phase).

Stakeholders will individually and collectively work on a systematic mapping of the priority needs using their vantage point and experiences to identify bottlenecks, cross-sector interlinkages, and causal relationships. In taking a more expansive temporal view (past➔ present➔ future), the group will layer the systemic analysis focused on how the needs/issues are manifesting today, with an identification of key milestones from the past that have shaped or influenced the needs/issues till date.

Lastly, the group will be facilitated to surface emerging opportunities/risks/events that must be factored into these discussions that will ultimately lead to identifying potential high impact accelerators and their financing.

Phase 1 is designed to take place over the course of 2-3 days.

- **Between Phase 1 and Phase 2**

Using the three categories above, the group will identify on-ground initiatives to learn from as a group in Phase 2. The goal is to select initiatives that can offer insights and provocations that will help identify potential accelerators/leverage points to invest in to close the gap of their priority needs and associated SDG targets by 2030.

- **Phase 2: Participants reflect on Phase 1, review additional materials, and provide feedback through further online discourse. This phase focuses on facilitating decisions on a range of prioritised interventions as key accelerators to be put forward for modelling.**

Phase 2 of the dialogue series can be held either virtually or in-person. It is modelled after the UNDP Portfolio Sensemaking and Acceleration Protocol ("Sensemaking"). It builds on the work of Phase 1 but shifts in focus and style. This is a structured dialogue process, where the same stakeholder group convenes to deeply understand the preselected set of 10-12 initiatives. The intent is to surface critical insights and lessons learnt from all initiatives. The group will draw upon these insights to inform the identification of 2-3 potential combinations of the strongest accelerators to explore in the next phase.

Detailed methodological process for structuring the Dialogues can be found here, including agenda outlines:

[Guidance Note](#)
[Bridging Note](#)

CONSIDER!

1. While we strongly suggest following a 2-phase approach for Dialogues, this can be adapted to the country context as appropriate.

TIP!

1. The Dialogues will be truly effective if the insights from the Scoping report are properly synthesised and read in advance by all participants, including ensuring that an appropriate number of interventions are identified. Dialogue sessions should only be convened after the Scoping synthesis is fully discussed and understood, and through that an appropriate participant list generated that can speak to the insights and interventions identified.
2. Utilise a mixed methods approach based on what is most appropriate for the context – blended between foresight, generative listening and sensemaking.
3. The period between Phase 1 and Phase 2 are integral to maintain momentum, deepen analysis and bring expanded insights into the next Dialogue phase.
4. Ensure enough time is invested into logistics and preparation, including workshop materials, key roles, and responsibilities.

PRODUCT OUTPUT

Acceleration Pathways proposals and potential budget considerations

Module 3
Modelling

Modelling is essential for analysing development strategies at the national and sub-national levels. In the SDG push framework, modelling consists of designing an analytical tool to:

1. Build scenarios combining the SDG accelerators identified and agreed upon in the Dialogue Phase.
2. Conduct an analysis of the scenarios using models that mimics the socio-economic interactions of the countries BALANCING the fiscal space.
3. Show the pathways for achieving the SDGs in the country based on the SDG accelerators and scenarios.
4. Present a prioritisation that looks at internal and/or external financing options.

Building from the Scoping and Dialogues stages is an analytical modelling exercise with a few investments required to operationalize them (Cost). The acceleration proposals will be subjected to rigorous modelling and analytics to ensure its feasibility. Ideally a participatory modelling approach is applied however, that might not always be possible.

The SDG Push exercise predominantly employs a CGE (computable general equilibrium) or a combination of Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model and a Micro-Simulation (MS) model to understand the potential impacts of drivers and interventions identified in the Dialogue stage. This model is used to build a case for policy intervention and assist policymakers in understanding the extent to which some sectors of the economy might be affected by change. Its main advantage is its flexibility which focuses on the structure and detail of agent-specific behaviour and allows the capture of detailed economic relationships and connections that would otherwise be missed in other models. This complexity allows the models to be applied to a wide range of 'what if' questions. It is also a common modelling framework that Ministry of Economy/Finance and Central banks are familiar with globally to analyse policies that mimics the structure of the economy. The Micro part of the CGE simulations is critical for understanding several socio-economic issues related to the SDGs.

Note: Generally, a specific model is not identified, but guidance is provided on how to extend some of the standard general equilibrium models such as the computable-general equilibrium models to analysing SDG pathways. Other macro micro models can also be applied but may need to be extended to allow for the outcomes in the SDGs.

WHO DOES THE MODELLING?

The modelling should be completed by an Economic Modelling Expert and supported by national experts. It is important that the Economic Modelling Expert is involved in the Dialogues to draw insights on pain points and leverages. This is integral in contextualising the Accelerators identified that will feed into the modelling.

WHAT ARE THE OUTPUTS FROM MODELLING?

- A scenario (or set of scenarios) that provide an impact analysis of the SDG acceleration pathways (identified through the Dialogues)
- Analysed policy options considering trade-offs showing how they will move the needle on key SDGs.
- An analysis of the implications of the different options of financing the acceleration pathways.

These policy options can then serve as inputs for the development of pragmatic investments plans at country level.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE MODELLING

The modelling should be completed within a period of one month if the required data is available. The process of building the database may be longer if for example there is no Social Accounting Matrix or Supply and Use table that reflects the economy or level of disaggregation necessary.

METHOD

Prospective analysis is performed to examine likely future trends in SDG indicators under various scenarios that would reflect the realities of each country. The analysis provides useful information on country-specific investments, as well as potential gains when policies and institutional arrangements that are needed to ensure that set goals and targets are achieved effectively and efficiently.

Construction of baseline scenario

The Baseline or Business as Usual scenario (BaU) acts as a reference point or benchmark to which the proposed policy changes are compared. In other words, the BAU defines a development trajectory without the proposed SDG Accelerators.

The baseline (BaU) scenario builds on the international or national projection of the national GDP, total investment, import and export volumes of goods and services, current account balance, government revenue and expenditures, and unemployment rate. The values for when forecasts are not available, could be generated by extrapolation, i.e. if forecasted trends will continue.

The baseline calibration is validated through other economic variables such as the household final consumption expenditure and sectoral value added expressed in percent of GDP. The baseline calibration is validated when the results from the baseline simulation is comparable to the historical trends for these economic variables.

The baseline scenario is calibrated to indicate the current 'as is' state, so that comparison with the SDG Push scenarios can be compared on an evidenced basis.

Construction of the SDG Push scenario(s)

The SDG Push Scenario identifies the input requirements related to the possible and desired outcomes to be pursued under the SDG acceleration.

The implementation of the SDG Push scenario is based on a selection and combination of values of input variables and parameters. The input variables and parameters include various public expenditures, tax receipts, and other macroeconomic variables, as well as parameters related to production, consumption, and external trade behavioural equations. Through this process, a range of SDG Push scenarios that are both plausible and probable are constructed.

SDG Status and Progress Assessment

The SDG Push result framework is used to evaluate progress towards the SDG targets under the baseline and SDG Push scenarios.

The analytical framework lists a country's progress status against their SDG achievements, noting that some of the indicators that are reliant on government and unilateral sovereign decisions are not included in this table:

The SDG Push result framework is used to evaluate progress towards the SDG targets under the baseline and SDG Push scenarios.

The analytical framework lists a country's progress status against their SDG achievements, noting that some of the indicators that are reliant on government and unilateral sovereign decisions are not included in this table:

- Available socioeconomic data for years 2020 and 2021 are gathered from the national and international statistical databases.
- Progress data against specific SDG indicators are assessed using micro data with appropriate estimates.
- Projections against these indicators are provided under various scenarios for SDG Push using CGE and MS models, which show how progress might be affected by different policy interventions, under various conditions.
- When the projection value is equal or superior to the target value, the country is on-track to meeting the target set for the indicator (with the inverse to also be true). The number of indicators on track is expected to be superior under the SDG Push scenario compared to the baseline scenario.
- Top ranked SDG Push scenarios are selected to extract relevant input data on public and private investments and other relevant economic parameters to be prioritised to advance the achievement of SDGs as well as to progress towards the national development goals.

Detailed methodological process for structuring the Dialogues can be found here, including agenda outlines:

[Bridging Note](#)
[Framework on SDG Push Modelling](#)

CONSIDER!

Consider pushing out scenarios beyond what is considered 'business as usual'. Imagination and radical ambition can help push the boundaries of what is possible to achieve a country's National Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Policy coherence is an important issue to consider in developing the SDG Push to assess the likely future delivery on the SDGs. The issue to address at this stage is whether an individual country's vision and goals are coherent with its global commitments.

Whilst the framework is flexible enough to focus on a limited number of SDGs, it requires more complementary approaches to assess a greater number of SDGs that cannot be adequately captured with this modelling approach.

The methodology relies on accurately estimated elasticities for specific countries, which in many cases is not always available. As with any model, the results have certain caveats such as modelling assumptions (the choice of the baseline year, the rate of technological change, scenario design, data quality) and its difficulty to fully capture the many SDG interlinkages. Ideally a modelling group in the country should deliberate on the caveats based on policy context.

TIP!

It is integral that outcomes (potential accelerators) from the Dialogues module feed into the Modelling module. Depending on the outcomes and consensus of the stakeholders, different modelling methods will be proposed that can best explore the potential impact of a particular policy intervention.

The Economic Modelling Expert should be involved in the Dialogue listening in to the pain points and various voices. This will be important to contextualise the SDG Push accelerators that will come out of the Dialogue.

The following key information will be important for the modelling:

- From the Dialogue: Potential SDG accelerators which represent opportunities for progress toward the SDGs. The accelerators will help conduct the analysis of growth scenarios and/or policy options.
- From the Scoping and Dialogue: Test potential synergies or interconnections between accelerators.
- From the Costing exercise: the cost of implementing the SDG Push accelerators.
- From the SDG Financing: The information on the potential schemes for financing the required investments in the SDG Push will be critical for the modelling. This will allow the constraint of financing the acceleration of the SDGs to be factored into the modelling process. However, the modelling exercise can also analyse potential financing options. Use of potential schemes for financing the required investments under SDG push scenario.

PRODUCT OUTPUT

A set of evidence-based policy measures. These policy interventions then serve as inputs for development of pragmatic investments plans at country level

Module 4
Sustainable Financing

Sustainable Financing options are provided for the SDG Accelerators identified in the Modelling module. UNDP Sustainable Finance Hub can support this process, but an external financial modelling expert can also provide the same analysis.

In this Module, the accelerators are costed based on the different interventions identified. Together with country stakeholders and development partners, this component integrates SDG finance tools and experience in financing the SDGs to develop investment options.

The different financing options presented will help decision makers with prioritisation of different accelerators that fit within National Development Agendas.

CONSIDER!

Ensure to prioritise appropriately within a constrained fiscal space.

TIP!

Utilise analysis from a diversity of tools including the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) and UNDP's 'Budgeting for SDGs" to weigh options and implications of different policy choices.