**NATIONAL INITIATIVE AND MAINSTREAMING, ACCELERATION AND POLICY SUPPORT**

**FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

**PAKISTAN**

**Mid-Term Evaluation, 2016-2019**

***Final Report***

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**Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AJK Azad Jammu and Kashmir

APR Annual Progress Report

CPD Country Programme Document

CSO civil society organization

DAC Development Assistance Committee

DPU Development Policy Unit

GB Gilgit-Baltistan

KP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

M&E monitoring and evaluation

MAPS Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

MoPD&SI Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives

MPI Multi-dimensional Poverty Index

MSU Management Support Unit

MTE mid-term evaluation

NEC National Economic Council

OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

P&DD Planning and Development Department

PC-I Planning Commission pro forma Number I

PCSW Punjab Commission on the Status of Women

PILDAT Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency

PIPS Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services

PKR Pakistani rupees

PSX Pakistan Stock Exchange

PTF parliamentary task force

RBF responsible business framework

RBM results-based management

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

TOR terms of reference

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund

UNRCO United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office

UNSDF United Nations Sustainable Development Framework

USD United States dollars

# **Project Profile**

**Table 1: Basic project data**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Project/outcome title | National Initiative for Sustainable Development Goals/An enabling policy and institutional environment exist to facilitate the achievement of SDGs in Pakistan. | |
| Atlas ID | 00093481 | |
| Corporate outcome and output | * Country Programme Document Outcome 1: Increased effectiveness and accountability of governance mechanisms. * Output 9.3: Through active citizen engagement, national/provincial governments shape public policy priorities and establish planning, financing and monitoring mechanisms, facilitating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. | |
| Country | Pakistan | |
| Region | South Asia | |
| Date project document signed | 17 October 2016 | |
| Project dates | Start: January 2016 | Planned End: August 2021 |
| Project budget | USD 8.47 million | |
| Expenditure at time of evaluation | USD 8.41 million | |
| Funding sources (2016-2019) | * Federal and Provincial Government contributions: USD 5.99 million * UNDP: USD 2.01 million, including USD 0.28 million contributed by the United Nations Population Fund | |
| Implementing Party | UNDP in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, and Provincial Planning and Development Departments. | |

The National Initiative for SDGs supports the Government of Pakistan (national and provincial) in localizing the SDGs in Pakistan, at the national and subnational levels, and creating an enabling environment for their implementation. The project has four, interlinked, mutually reinforcing outputs: (1) plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to the 2030 Agenda; (2) SDG monitoring and reporting strengthened; (3) financing flows increasingly aligned to the 2030 Agenda; and (4) innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs. The project includes activities at the federal, provincial and district levels involving multiple stakeholders and facilitating vertical and horizontal coordination.

**Figure 1: Project organizational structure**

**Project Board (Federal and Provincial Representatives, provincial project managers, UNDP)**

**Project Assurance**

**UNDP Development Policy Unit**

**Project Steering Committees (AJK and GB)**

**Provincial Technical Committees (one per province)**

**Federal SDG Unit**

**SDG Unit Sindh**

**SDG Unit Punjab**

**SDG Unit KP**

**SDG Unit Balochistan**

**SDG Unit GB**

**SDG Unit AJK**

**Mechanisms for Engaging Line Departments (with variations across the project):**

**Thematic committees, cluster groups, departmental focal persons, District SDG Committees, district focal persons**

Note: Dotted lines signify information sharing and coordination.

# **Executive Summary**

**Project Background**

The project is a nationally-owned initiative in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the Government of Pakistan’s commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda during 2016-2021. Its strategy reflects: (a) some of the lessons learned from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Pakistan; (b) the United Nations (UN) common approach to SDG localization, namely, Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS); and, (c) the devolved system of governance that has been in effect since the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment (2010). The project’s expected results are shown in the text box.

**Project results**

* Impact (indirect): Pakistan’s progress towards the SDGs is significantly higher than that for the MDGs
* Outcome (direct): An enabling environment exists to facilitate the achievement of SDGs in Pakistan
* Outputs: (1) Plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda; (2) SDG monitoring and reporting strengthened; (3) financing flows increasingly aligned to 2030 Agenda; and, (4) innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs.

The project works with the Federal Government and the Provincial Governments of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh. It works in the federally-administered areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) through the Federal Government.

The project has established SDG Support Units within the provincial Planning and Developments Departments (P&DDs) and the Federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI) to act as the hubs for localizing the SDG agenda. Engaging the legislatures, private sector and civil society, broadly defined to include academic and research institutions, the media, and civil society organizations (CSOs), is integral to the strategy. The initial expectation was that UNDP would mobilize resources from various donors and contribute 50 percent of the project budget. This was not possible, and government contributions have accounted for 76 percent of project expenditure. The UNDP share includes contributions arranged through linkages with other UNDP projects.

**Evaluation Scope and Methodology**

The mid-term evaluation (MTE) is expected to: (a) assess the project, with particular reference to its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, UNDP’s leave no one behind approach, and contributions to women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations; (b) assess signs of success or failure, and challenges and opportunities; and (c) recommend ways in which UNDP may improve the results of the project. The assessment revolves around six key questions and 16 sub-questions that elaborate the key questions (listed in Annex 5, the evaluation matrix).

The MTE is based on: (a) a large amount of secondary information provided by UNDP’s Development Policy Unit (DPU) and SDG Units; and, (b) interviews with a sample of the project’s target groups and service providers. For the latter, the evaluator held 34 individual and group meetings with 88 people, including parliamentarians, senior government officials, representatives of UN agencies, team members of SDG Units, and academics, consultants and civil society representatives. UNDP and the SDG Units provided feedback on an earlier draft through extensive personal interaction and 188 written comments, 91 of which led to correction, clarification or reassessment in the revised report.

**Key Messages from Findings and Conclusions**

The conclusions of the MTE in terms of project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of benefits are briefly highlighted below. Assessed in these terms, the project, overall, has done well in relation to the magnitude and complexity of the challenge on which it embarked in 2016. This relates, in particular, to the first half of the project’s theory of change statement, which refers to “localization and nationalization of the SDG agenda with continuous monitoring and evaluation against national targets”.

The second half of the theory of change anticipates “increased commitment, resources and accountability for achieving the SDGs in Pakistan.” This reflects a higher level of ambition in view of the challenging context and the project’s reliance on the government in pursuit of these expectations. At the same time, project interventions have abstracted from the political economy of public revenues and expenditures, the requirements for enhancing external accountability and parliamentary engagement, and the mechanisms for implementation through line departments and ministries down to the district level and points of service delivery.

**Conclusions in Terms of Evaluation Criteria**

Although improvements in approaches (introduced below) are possible in view of project experience and the country context, project interventions showed a high degree of relevance to country-level results and priorities. It is evident that project actions led to the implementation of planned interventions at a sustained pace, except in Output 4, which shows limited progress. Effectiveness is satisfactory or moderately satisfactory for nine of the 17 project activities assessed for this purpose.

The project maintained a satisfactory level of efficiency in the use of resources, while confronting challenges in the work load and availability of funds. With considerable effort and collaboration, the project introduced international good practices in the public and private sectors, which might have achieved more with greater government acceptance. In comparison with UNDP guidance and precedents, the project fell short in terms of leave no one behind and a systematic approach to women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations.

The project’s focus on capacity development has contributed to operational knowledge and, through that, to institutionalization throughout the country. The institutional impact of knowledge-based interventions for planning and monitoring has been unprecedented in terms of the scale, hugely significant in terms of its depth, and more substantial than that observed for the MDGs. The higher-level effects reflected in human capital and institutionalization have also enhanced the sustainability of project benefits.

The countrywide structure created by the project, capacitated by operational knowledge at the federal and provincial levels, has attracted financial contributions and technical expertise from UNFPA, UNICEF and non-profit organizations in addition to government and UNDP resources. The government, UNDP and project staff are aware that there is untapped potential for more such partnerships, and they are engaged in ongoing discussions to facilitate progress in this connection.

**Recommendations**

It is proposed to modify the theory of change in a realistic manner and align the project more closely with comparative advantage and resources of the partners. Changes indicated in brackets are germane to this recommendation:

The project theory of change is that localization [~~and nationalization~~] of the SDG agenda with continuous monitoring and evaluation against national, [provincial and district] targets would lead to increased commitment [~~, resources and accountability~~] for achieving the SDGs in Pakistan [and greater efficiency and equity in the use of public resources].

Going forward, the overarching challenge is to work within the system to broaden institutionalization across the line departments and deepen it at the district level with increasing efficiency and greater equity (the latter in line with the leave no one behind approach). The four provinces, AJK and GB would need to develop their own specific approaches for these purposes, combining available evidence, administrative and political decisions, public consultation and other ingredients, as is the prevailing norm. Suggestions for operationalizing relevant approaches are offered in Annex 13.

In addition, institutional arrangements need to be strengthened by bringing on board two sets of institutions for specific reasons:

* One of them consists of the Ministry of Finance and provincial finance departments. They need to be engaged more effectively not only for budget allocations but also for policies and incentives for inter- and intra-provincial resource allocation, private sector engagement, public-private partnership and efficiency in the development and recurrent budgets. Appropriate mechanisms for more effective engagement may be devised by the government.
* The second one consists of the Ministry of Information and provincial information departments. They are important for ownership as well as large-scale outreach. Following the example of the Sindh P&DD and SDG Unit, the content for awareness raising would be provided to the official information machinery by the MoPD&SI and the provincial P&DDs with the assistance of the respective SDG Units.

In addition, as UNDP and key stakeholders recognize, it is possible to develop additional partnerships within the UN system and the private and non-profit sectors. The UN Resident Coordinator’s Office is ideally placed to facilitate greater coordination within the UN system. Stronger collaboration with UN agencies could aim to strengthen the planning, monitoring and reporting aspects of the 2030 Agenda corresponding to respective mandates. Private sector and non-profit players are of value in specialized niches, as the project has discovered in the partnerships that have materialized so far.

It is also possible, based on project experience and the prevailing context, to conceive of certain improvements in specific interventions. These are discussed in Annex 13 with reference to approaches for: enhancing general awareness, systematic learning and specific knowledge for accountability and operational purposes; strengthening capacity for effective parliamentary engagement; exploring feasible unconventional data sources in collaboration with interested government organizations and UN Agencies; and, engaging interested academics and students and relevant university-based experts.

Helping parliamentarians address their systemic and capacity constraints is likely to require additional government or donor resources. The focus on the two most-lagging districts in each province can be subsumed within the broader approach to departmental engagement across a province, as described in Annex 13. Feasible innovative solutions for acceleration of SDG achievement can be found nationally as well as internationally as part of an expanded focus on systematic learning.

A few additional implications for project management and resources are also indicated:

* AJK and GB need their own PC-Is in support of adequately-resource SDG Units.
* The provinces may wish to review staffing requirements if they decide to broaden and deepen institutionalization as proposed above.
* UNDP and its partners need to consider orienting staff to incorporate gender as a cross-cutting subject in project activities.
* The project could be strengthened by: (a) correcting and updating the results framework with attention to UNDP RBM guidelines and international good practices; (b) developing a standard and comprehensive results-oriented reporting format with guidelines and examples for the benefit of all concerned; and, (c) adding a dedicated and qualified M&E specialist to project staff in the DPU, where this skill set is missing.
* Most importantly, all partners need to ensure adequate and timely availability of funds for the project and commit to the same for the remainder of the decade.

1. **PROJECT BACKGROUND**
   1. **Project Strategy**
2. The project is a nationally-owned initiative in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the Government of Pakistan (GOP)’s commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda. The project strategy reflects:

* some of the lessons learned from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Pakistan;
* the United Nations (UN) common approach to SDG[[1]](#footnote-1) localization, namely, Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS), which is described in Annex 1; and,
* the division of authority between federal and provincial governments in the devolved system of governance that has been in effect since the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment (2010).

1. The overall strategy, illustrated in Figure 2, is to create an enabling environment for the implementation of the SDG agenda in Pakistan. The project supports the federal and provincial governments[[2]](#footnote-2) to embed the SDG agenda in their long-term planning and budgeting processes and to adopt localized SDG frameworks as guiding documents for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the SDGs. The project has established SDG Support Units within the provincial Planning and Developments Departments and the Federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives[[3]](#footnote-3) to act as the hubs for localizing the SDG agenda at the national and subnational levels.[[4]](#footnote-4)
2. The SDG Support Units serve as intra- and inter-provincial and government platforms to plan, budget, review, analyse, monitor and propose policy measures to the government and political leadership on how to implement the SDGs through engagement and inclusive process. Engaging the legislatures, civil society (broadly defined to include academic and research institutions and the media) and the private sector is integral to the strategy. Through the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (UNRCO) and the SDG Support Units, the project coordinates with other UN agencies and their offices at the provincial level to facilitate and UN-wide approach towards the SDG agenda in Pakistan.

**Figure 2: Illustration of project strategy (from the project document, 2016)**

**Mainstreaming**

* Data ecosystem
* National and provincial reviews/ reporting
* National voluntary reporting
* National/subnational long-term strategy and plans aligned (including sector policies, medium-term development framework and budget framework, budget, annual development plans, project PC-Is)
* SDGs framework (2017-2030) endorsed by provincial cabinets
* Review of government plans/ budgets
* Establish baselines and set local targets
* Prioritization and sequencing

**Monitoring, reporting and evaluating**

**Localizing**

**Consultations/Research**

1. The project document states that interventions in support of the overall strategy reflect three strategic thrusts consistent with MAPS:

* The interventions will target capacity building of provincial and district level governments to effectively localize SDGs in public planning and budgeting for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This would include establishing baselines and targets at the national and subnational levels (including AJK and GB); increasing awareness raising for SDGs within government and across civil society stakeholders at the grass roots; identifying means to increase domestic capital mobilization; accelerating development progress in priority areas by fostering innovation and providing seed funding for potential projects; and increasing engagement with the private sector for it to contribute towards sustainable development through improvement of business practices and increase in funding for development programmes.
* The interventions will build the capacity of federal and provincial statistical institutions to strengthen data ecosystems with regular reporting of data to enhance planning, implementation and monitoring for inclusive and sustainable growth.
* The interventions shall increase evidence-based policy making by developing policy development tools backed by research and analysis. Additionally, under this pillar the UNDP’s Development Policy Unit (DPU) will support inclusive and informed debate for improving the policy landscape of Pakistan.
  1. **Theory of Change, Expected Results and Main Interventions**

1. As stated in the project document, “The project theory of change is that localization and nationalization of the SDG agenda with continuous monitoring and evaluation against national targets would lead to increased commitment, resources and accountability for achieving the SDGs in Pakistan.” The country-level results identified in the document are:

* Country Programme Document (CPD) Outcome 1 (UN Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) Outcome 9): Increased effectiveness and accountability of governance mechanisms.
* CPD Output 9.3: Through active citizen engagement, national/provincial governments shape public policy priorities and establish planning, financing and monitoring mechanisms, facilitating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

1. At the project level (refer to Table 2), the project document includes:

* four outputs;
* a total of 11 qualitative indicators for these outputs, with a scale provided in the project document for assessing progress for each indicator (refer to Annex 2);
* 17 derived activities[[5]](#footnote-5), including five that are mentioned in Section III (results and partnerships) of the project document but not in Section VII (the multi-year work plan), and four for which there is no description in Section III (these are identified in Table 2); and,
* 29 main interventions found in the description of these 17 activities, including 14 for Output 1, four for Output 2, seven for Output 3, and four for Output 4.[[6]](#footnote-6)

1. The project provides flexibility for work plans and implementation to reflect provincial priorities and context. Thus, the way in which the main interventions are pursued varies across the units. This is reflected in priorities as well as timelines and implementation approaches. In addition, UNDP developed specific approaches to define the scope of some of the activities during implementation. Through discussion with UNDP, the evaluator identified such developments and listed them in the activity column of Table 2 to facilitate their assessment during the MTE.

**Table 2: Project outputs, output indicators, activities and main interventions**

| **Output Indicators** | **Activities (listed in the project document work plan, Section VII)[[7]](#footnote-7)** | **Main Interventions (described in Section III of the project document)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Project Output 1: Plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | |
| 1.1. Extent to which SDGs integrated in existing and new institutional structures  1.2. Extent to which SDG frameworks at national/ subnational level are developed and planning tools are SDG-aligned  1.3. Extent to which key stakeholders have enhanced awareness and understanding of SDGs  1.4. Extent to which private sector is engaged in the implementation of SDGs  1.5. Extent to which parliament is engaged in the implementation of SDGs | 1.1. Institutional structure created within the government for effective policy coherence and coordination on SDGs | * Establish SDG Units in the federal and provincial governments through cost-sharing arrangements with the government * Establish cluster or thematic working groups or committees * Designate focal persons in federal ministries, provincial departments and district governments * Convene SDG advisory council/steering committees |
| 1.2. National and provincial SDG frameworks formulated including establishing baselines, setting local targets and identifying priorities | * Develop national and provincial SDG frameworks * Establish national and provincial baselines and targets * Identify priorities and sequencing approach for holistic planning |
| 1.3. Technical and institutional mechanisms strengthened for SDG planning and implementation (\*) | *No description in Section III* |
| 1.4. SDG awareness and advocacy enhanced for multiple stakeholders, including government, UN agencies, academia, research and statistical institutions.   * Focus for academia during implementation has been on introduction of SDG-related curricula and various forms of cooperation with the project | * Organize national workshops or consultations for various audiences, including government, parliamentarians, civil society, academia, business and industry, the media and the general public * Link national counterparts to knowledge and learning platforms from other countries to share success stories, best practices and lessons learned[[8]](#footnote-8) * Engage mass media and social media to advocate SDG implementation and report progress |
| 1.5. Private sector engagement on SDGs enhanced (defined during implementation to include):   * Develop a tool for SDG reporting by public listed companies through the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) * Develop a responsible business framework (RBF) for adoption by the government | * Mobilize and coordinate state and non-state actors, including civil society, academia and private sector * Set up mechanisms and platforms for all stakeholders, including the UN agencies, to discuss and coordinate their actions * Engage private sector to improve business practices, embed sustainable practices in value chains and mobilize financial resources. Key areas: * enabling policy and institutions, embedding the SDGs, financing for SDGs |
| 1.6. Parliamentary mechanisms strengthened for greater engagement of parliamentarians to discuss and address SDG-related issues (\*) | * Engage parliament and work with relevant standing committees (finance, education, health, environment, statistics) and national and provincial SDG task forces in line with their roles, specifically: * Oversight: (a) monitoring implementation of SDGs; (b) promoting accountability * Representation: (a) engaging people and facilitating public participation; (b) creating a local response in the context of local communities * Legislation: strengthening the enabling legislative environment for SDGs |
| ***Project Output 2: SDGs monitoring and reporting strengthened*** | | |
| 2.1. Extent to which framework for monitoring and reporting on SDGs is developed and implemented  2.2. Extent to which technical skills of national and provincial statistical institutions enhanced to effectively monitor progress on SDGs | 2.1. Data gaps for SDG indicators analyzed and recommendations to address gaps proposed | * Collaborate with Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and provide technical support in aligning national surveys to SDGs[[9]](#footnote-9) * Develop standard reporting protocol for SDGs |
| 2.2. Baseline established and development of online dashboard initiated to report and track progress towards the SDGs | * Strengthen the monitoring and reporting mechanism for SDGs: * using dashboard (reflecting baselines, targets and ongoing progress) and annual reports; and, * exploring potential for including financing flows and programmes/initiatives in the dashboard. |
| 2.3. Capacity of statistical institutions for data collection, reporting and analysis enhanced | *No description in Section III* |
|  | *Included in Section III of the project document but not in Section VII* | |
| Exploring unconventional data sources for SDGs (defined during implementation as):   * Establish SDG Technology Lab (initially to conduct urban slum mapping in selected cities) | * Explore the use of non-traditional data sources, including big/open data, digital platforms, social media, satellite imagery, etc. |
| ***Project Output 3: Financing flows increasingly aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | |
| 3.1. Extent to which performance-based criteria are used for resource allocation at national/ sub-national level  3.2. Extent to which MIS operational and technical capacity of relevant stakeholders enhanced for effective aid coordination  3.3. Extent to which result-based and inclusive processes inform budget allocation at national and sub-national level | 3.1. Linkages between budgetary and planning frameworks strengthened for effective SDG mainstreaming (\*)  Section III states this as “Aligning public finance resources to SDGs” | * Analyze resource allocation policies and budgets at various tiers of government (including annual development plans, public sector development programmes and budgets) to assess their level of alignment to SDGs * Guide national and provincial governments on the reallocation of resources required for improved alignment with priority SDGs and impact areas with the largest multiplier impact |
| 3.2. Online MIS system operationalized to monitor development assistance | *No description in Section III* |
| 3.3. Evidence-based and inclusive processes to inform budget allocation institutionalized for SDGs | *No description in Section III [or any other document]* |
|  | *Included in Section III of the project document but not in Section VII* | |
| Tracking resource allocation to SDGs | * Track expenditures at goal/sectoral level to analyze amount of resources being allocated at the national and subnational levels * Examine allocation of non-public resources, including donor funding, corporate philanthropy and other sources at district level, by thematic area |
| Exploring alternative sources of financing (defined during implementation to include):   * Develop Green Sukuk energy financing strategy for the government[[10]](#footnote-10) * Develop proposal for the government on debt-for-nature swap | * Explore alternative sources of financing from non-public institutions, including private/ corporate sector philanthropy, individual diaspora funding, bilateral/ multilateral funding and others * Explore establishment of a social impact financing facility based on a model of blended finance with grant and investment components * Mobilize resources that can de-risk private investment and attract investors in areas that generate both economic and social returns |
| ***Project Output 4: Innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs*** | | |
| 4.1. Extent to which innovative approaches are applied and implemented to accelerate progress towards SDGs | 4.1. SDG plans for 3 pilot districts to mainstream SDGs in planning tools and implementation frameworks (\*) | * Develop district-specific SDG plans for selected poorest districts in each province * Through consultations, evidence-based research and literature review, develop and apply innovative approaches for districts lagging behind most others |
| 4.2. Innovative solutions for acceleration to achieve SDGs adopted (\*) | * Promote innovative approaches and ideas that can accelerate progress on SDGs * Support innovative ideas with tools such as contests, design thinking workshops, hackathons, innovation labs and others |

1. The Punjab Unit of the project was established in August 2016, the Federal Unit in February 2017, Sindh in May 2017, Balochistan in November 2017, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in April 2018,[[11]](#footnote-11) AJK in June 2018 and GB in November 2018. The AJK and GB units are smaller (staffed by two-person teams) than the provincial units and were established through Federal Government component. Some of the preparatory activities in Balochistan, KP and Sindh started in 2016 with UNDP resources.
   1. **Project Financing, Budget and Expenditure**
2. The project was conceived with UNDP and the federal and provincial governments as the implementing and financing partners. The initial expectation was that UNDP would mobilize resources from various donors and contribute 50 percent of the project budget. This was not possible, and government contributions have accounted for 76 percent of project expenditure, with UNDP contributing 24 percent, including funds mobilized from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Together, the federal and provincial governments pledged USD 15.5 million as their cost-sharing contribution, out of which UNDP had received USD 5.99 million (39 percent) by January 2020. The Federal Government pledged USD 5 million, Balochistan, KP and Sindh USD 2.5-3 million each, and Punjab USD 2 million (Figure 3). Thirty percent of the pledged amount received so far has come from the Federal Government. Punjab and Sindh together have contributed 45 percent, and Balochistan and KP 26 percent.

**Figure 3: Amounts pledged by and received from federal and provincial governments, 2016-2019 (in USD millions)**

Source: Development Policy Unit, UNDP Pakistan

1. For the project as a whole, 51 percent of the output budget was allocated to Output 1 and 26 percent to Output 2 (Figure 4). For Output 1, the proportion was lower (47-50 percent) in the Federal, Punjab and Sindh units and higher (60-62 percent) in Balochistan and KP. Outputs 3 and 4 together were allocated less than one-fourth of the budget.

**Figure 4: Output shares in federal and provincial budgets, 2016-2019 (percentage)**

Source: Development Policy Unit, UNDP Pakistan

1. In addition to government and UNDP agreements for the project:

* UNFPA provided USD 275,000 to UNDP for activities implemented during October 2017 to September 2019. This supported: (a) strengthening the capacity of federal and provincial SDG Units for integrating population dynamics in SDG frameworks; and, (b) validation by the Federal SD Unit of data gap analysis at the provincial levels.
* The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) signed a memorandum of understanding with UNDP in 2016 for cooperation on MAPS and a monitoring and evaluation framework for SDGs. The two agencies subsequently signed a contribution agreement under which UNICEF provided USD 200,000 for November 2019-December 2020 to support evidence-based analysis on poverty targeting and private sector engagement on SDGs.
* The UNDP-implemented Strengthening Electoral and Legislative Processes Project supported parliamentary engagement on SDGs by coordinating its work plan with the SDG Units.
* The international charity Sightsavers translated SDG awareness-raising information into Braille for the visually impaired at a cost of approximately USD 100,000 from its own resources.[[12]](#footnote-12)
* The non-profit Thar Foundation forged a tripartite partnership the Government of Sindh and UNDP for making the Islamkot Taluka in Tharparkar District of Sindh a “model SDG taluka”.

1. **EVALUATION SCOPE, PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY**

* 1. **Purpose and Audience of Evaluation**

**Text Box 1: Purpose of evaluation**

***From UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (Section 1, p. 3)***: Evaluation is a means to strengthen learning within our organization to support better decision-making and promote **learning** among stakeholders. At the same time, it is essential and important for **accountability** and **transparency**, strengthening the ability of stakeholders to hold UNDP accountable for its development contributions.

***From international evaluation principles:***

“The **accountability** notion of evaluation referred to here relates to the **developmental results and impact of development assistance**. It is distinct from accountability for the use of public funds in an accounting and legal sense, responsibility for the latter usually being assigned to an audit institution.”

***Author’s note:***

In evaluation, results are assessed in terms of standard evaluation criteria (introduced below), which are also integral to the MTE.

1. The MTE, according to its terms of reference (TOR), which are reproduced in Annex 4, is expected to review the project since its inception in 2016. It has been conducted in accordance with *UNDP Evaluation Guidelines*[[13]](#footnote-13), read with the evaluation principles adopted by the international development community[[14]](#footnote-14) (briefly referred to in Text Box 1). The MTE is expected to:

* Assess progress towards the achievement of the project outputs and contribution towards the UNSDF/CPD outcomes as specified in the project document.
* Review the project with regard to its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of major interventions. (These are standard evaluation criteria.)
* Specify what the project has achieved so far.
* Assess early signs of project success or failure and identify the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results.
* Assess challenges, opportunities and lessons learned and recommend ways in which UNDP may improve the results of the project.

1. The MTE evaluates the progress made through the four project outputs and the progress made towards the SDGs’ integration and localization at the federal and provincial levels. In addition, progress is also assessed in relation to the leave no one behind approach and contributions made towards women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations.
2. As described in the TOR, the main audience of this evaluation is the UN in general and UNDP Pakistan in particular, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI) and the provincial Planning and Development Departments (P&DDs). The evaluation recommendations will help UNDP as well as government counterparts in making timely course corrections.
   1. **Evaluation Management**
3. In furtherance of the *UNDP Evaluation Guidelines*, the Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Pakistan is the commissioner of the evaluation.[[15]](#footnote-15) Reporting to her, UNDP Pakistan’s Results Based Management Analyst/Head of Management Support Unit (MSU) is the evaluation manager.
4. Supporting roles of the programme unit, evaluation manager and project manager include:[[16]](#footnote-16) (a) briefing the evaluation team on the evaluation and explaining the expectations of UNDP and its stakeholders. Come to a joint understanding on the TOR and objectives of the evaluation; (b) ensuring that all information is made available to the evaluators; and, (c) providing preliminary … information for the evaluation team. However, the evaluation team will identify whom they wish to meet. The guidelines also describe the evaluation review process, which was followed during the MTE as described in Section 2.4.

**Text Box 2: OECD DAC evaluation criteria**

***Relevance*:**The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners’ and donors’ policies. Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.

***Effectiveness***: The extent to which the development intervention’s objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

***Efficiency:*** A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

***Impact***: Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

***Sustainability*:** The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

* 1. **Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions**

1. The TOR included a preliminary list of 21 evaluation questions on the five main evaluation criteria (defined in Text Box 2). These were reviewed, fine-tuned and consolidated during the inception phase with reference to the “Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management” of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC)[[17]](#footnote-17), evaluation good practice and the project context. Thereafter, the MTE proceeded to focus on six key questions and 16 sub-questions elaborating the key questions. These are listed in Annex 5 (the evaluation matrix), together with corresponding sources of information and data collection methods.
2. Summarizing the key questions and sub-questions:

* Key question 1 is about the relevance of project outputs to UNDP’s country-level results, national policies and the priorities and needs of the partners and target groups. It also calls for an assessment of the relevance of localization, project interventions[[18]](#footnote-18) and institutional mechanisms, and the extent to which project design incorporated the leave no one behind[[19]](#footnote-19) approach and focused on women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations.
* The second key question is about project effectiveness, that is, the extent to which the project achieved its outputs, cross-cutting and communication objectives, and country-level results. The contribution to effectiveness of project design, including its strategy and theory of change, is also addressed here.
* The third key question is about efficiency: how adequately and efficiently is the project resourced to produce its outputs? Staffing and the project’s M&E function are included here.
* The project’s higher-level effects are considered under key question 4, which is on impact. There is a specific focus here on enhanced awareness and technical skills, institutionalizing the 2030 Agenda in target institutions, and the project’s influence on progress towards the SDGs.
* The sustainability of benefits is one of the subjects of key question 5. The other is the willingness and ability of target institutions to resource the project until its completion.
* The last key question is about the recommendations emerging from the MTE, with emphasis on possibilities for UNDP and its partners to improve the results of the project and the availability and use of resources.
  1. **Evaluation Process and Sources of Information**

1. The MTE process consisted of three main phases:

* inception phase, concluding with an inception report presented to the DPU and the Management Support Unit of UNDP;
* field work for primary data collection, covering Islamabad, all four provinces and AJK and GB and concluding with meetings on initial findings with UNDP;[[20]](#footnote-20) and,
* report writing, consisting of a draft evaluation report for feedback and approval from UNDP and a final evaluation report.

1. The DPU and the SDG Units provided a large amount of secondary information for the MTE. This includes notifications of various committees and task forces, minutes of relevant meetings, and reports on project design and implementation. The DPU also provided financial data on the project.
2. The evaluator also collected documents from UNDP’s financing, implementing and collaborating partners, and interviewed a sample of the target groups[[21]](#footnote-21) and service providers; the questions raised in the interviews are illustrated in Annex 6. In the process, the evaluator held 17 group meetings and as many individual meetings[[22]](#footnote-22) with a total of 88 persons (listed in Annex 7):[[23]](#footnote-23)

* one Member of the National Assembly and two Members of the KP Provincial Assembly;[[24]](#footnote-24)
* 23 senior government officials—three from the Federal Government (including the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission), one from Balochistan, 10 from KP (including the Secretary, P&DD), three each from Punjab and Sindh, one from AJK and two from GB;
* 10 representatives of UN agencies, including the UNRCO, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA;
* 29 team members of SDG Support Units; and,
* 23 academics, consultants and civil society representatives, 15 of whom had been engaged by the project as service providers through individual or institutional contracts.

1. All seven SDG Units and the DPU provided detailed comments on the first draft of the report in the audit trail format specified in the *UNDP Evaluation Guidelines*. As required by the guidelines, the evaluator responded to the feedback through the audit trail, noting the actions taken and providing reasons for not accepting some of the feedback. The evaluator received 193 written comments on the report (out of which five did not need a response), and additional feedback and information during hours of discussion over several days with the DPU. Out of the remaining 188 comments, 91 led to correction, clarification or reassessment, which is reflected in the revised report.
   1. **Methodological Limitations**
2. Through individual interviews and group discussions, qualitative methods are expected to provide valuable insight into project achievements, limitations and results and help capture the diversity of perceptions across stakeholder groups. However, purposive sampling used in qualitative methods has the shortcoming of selection bias and is, therefore, not representative or generalizable to a population at large. To address this shortcoming, the MTE triangulates findings across stakeholder groups and provinces and also looks at project and service providers’ reports for additional validation. This is expected to generate robust findings.
3. The sample for primary data collection does not include the people who will benefit over the years from the achievement of SDGs and corresponding targets. This kind of exercise requires a different approach and much larger resources than a one-person evaluation team.
   1. **Structure of Evaluation Report**
4. The MTE report basically follows the structure suggested in the MTE TOR. The first two chapters provide the background to the project and the MTE. The next five chapters focus on the five evaluation criteria. Each chapter addresses the key evaluation question and corresponding sub-questions for the relevant criterion. The five core chapters include the main conclusions for each of the five evaluation criteria and corresponding key questions. The last chapter presents the main conclusions and recommendations based on the conclusions.
5. **RELEVANCE**

**Key question 1: To what extent are project outputs consistent with UNDP’s country-level results, national policies and the priorities and needs of the partners and target groups?[[25]](#footnote-25)**

* 1. **Relevance to Country-level Results and Country Context**

***Sub-question 1.1: How relevant is localization of SDGs, as conceived in project outputs and interventions[[26]](#footnote-26), to country-level results and the country context?***

**Relevance to Country-level Results**

1. The project document includes country-level results from the CPD and describes project outputs, output indicators and activities (summarized in Text Box 3). Under each activity, it provides a description of what the project is intended to do in operational terms. For the sake of convenience, these operational measures may be referred to as interventions (listed in Table 2).

**Text Box 3: Summary of project results**

***Country-level results:***

* Country Programme Document (CPD) Outcome 1 (UN Sustainable Development Framework Outcome 9): Increased effectiveness and accountability of governance mechanisms.
* CPD Output 9.3: Through active citizen engagement, national/provincial governments shape public policy priorities and establish planning, financing and monitoring mechanisms, facilitating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

***Project level (from the project document):***

* Impact (indirect): Pakistan’s progress towards the SDGs is significantly higher than that for the MDGs
* Outcome (direct): An enabling environment exists to facilitate the achievement of SDGs in Pakistan
* 4 outputs, 17 activities, and 29 main interventions found in the narrative description of activities.

1. As they are stated, all four project outputs are consistent with CPD Output 9.3 and its indicators (reproduced in Annex 3). Moreover, the project output indicators are broadly consistent with CPD Output 9.3 indicators. To this extent, ***the logic connecting CPD Outcome 3 with CPD Output 9.3 has been extended in the design to project outputs and their indicators***.
2. The project document speaks of “greater engagement and inclusive process” as part of the project strategy but does not mention citizens among stakeholders or address citizen engagement directly. The PC-Is for Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh, however, include the activity “awareness raising extending the ‘know your goals’ campaign at the local level, encouraging citizens’ active engagement with SDGs”.
3. The Balochistan and Sindh PC-Is add the words “with particular focus on women, youth and marginalized communities” at the end of the sentence quoted above. However, ***the revised Punjab PC-I is the only design document[[27]](#footnote-27) in which gender has been systematically addressed*** through four key activities and the involvement of the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW).
4. While the MTE TOR require the evaluation to identify the project’s “contributions … towards women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations”, these terms are not mentioned in the project document. ***No design document describes youth, the vulnerable, the marginalized, women empowerment and gender mainstreaming in operational terms***, in ways that could facilitate developing well-defined interventions for identifiable beneficiary groups.

**Relevance of Project to Country Context**

High-level Perspective

1. Before Pakistan formally signed up to the SDGs, ***MoPD&SI internalized the SDGs in its development framework in September 2015 and embedded SDGs in its Vision 2025 document***. The seven pillars of Vision 2025 are fully aligned with the SDGs.[[28]](#footnote-28) The Ministry established a coordination mechanism for the SDGs with the provinces. The national parliament adopted the SDGs as the country’s national development goals in February 2016. Pakistan was the first country to adopt the 2030 Agenda through a unanimous resolution of the parliament. After the start of the project, the National Economic Council (NEC) approved the SDG national framework and targets in March 2018.[[29]](#footnote-29)
2. ***The SDG initiative is also broadly consistent with provincial priorities, as stated in the relevant PC-Is***:

* The SDGs are in line with the provincial development priorities and sector plans of KP.
* The project is directly linked with the Punjab Growth Strategy 2018, which provides an overarching framework for the province to meet its challenges for sustainable development, and the achievement of SDGs is one of the key objectives of the Punjab Growth Strategy.
* The SDGs are in line with the provincial development priorities and sector plans of Sindh.

1. ***Project design caters to the need for SDG frameworks, targets, priorities, partnerships and implementation arrangements at both the federal and provincial levels.*** In these and related ways, it addresses localization at the federal and provincial levels of the state. The design is aligned with the federal state structure of Pakistan, as envisaged under the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment of 2010. It also ***incorporated international good practices,*** including the UN’s common approach to SDG localization (MAPS), as reflected in the SDG Units and other institutional (including coordination) arrangements. ***Project design, however, did not provide adequate financial and human resources for the AJK and GB Units,*** which have the same responsibilities and work load as the provincial units and deal with the same sectors, departments and other partners.

Localization through Local Government

1. In the project management section (while elaborating the MAPS approach), the project document says that interventions will target capacity building of local governments to effectively localize SDGs in planning and budgeting. However, the only local government intervention mentioned under Output 1 (alignment with 2030 Agenda) is the designation of focal persons in district governments. At the same time, all the provincial PC-Is speak of aligning district plans with the SDGs, “to the extent possible”. The Punjab PC-I observes that about 70 percent of the SDG indicators are related to the district level, “which necessitates putting in place strong and effective mechanisms at the district level”.
2. During the MTE, provincial government officers also reiterated the importance of local government to the SDGs. They also acknowledged, however, that local government depends largely—and in most cases exclusively—on financial and human resources provided by provincial governments, and the policies and priorities of the latter, a conclusion that has been extensively documented (refer to the analysis in Annex 8, for example, which correctly refers to local government as an arm of provincial government).[[30]](#footnote-30)
3. In the same vein, the district plans prepared by the project in Balochistan conclude that “the existing policy, institutional and fiscal environment is not conducive for the localization of SDGs at the district level. The local government tier remains disempowered and dependent on discretionary vertical transfers from provincial governments.”[[31]](#footnote-31) As matters stand, and pending the emergence of empowered local government, ***localization of SDGs in districts is largely the mandate of provincial departments, rather than local government, but this reality is not reflected clearly or adequately in project design***.[[32]](#footnote-32) Outside the departments, some provinces have established specialized entities for health, education, water and sanitation, but these are also controlled by provincial governments.

Private Sector Engagement

1. The project, at design, started with Output Indicator 1.4 “Extent to which private sector is engaged in the implementation of SDGs” and Activity 1.5 “Private sector engagement on SDGs enhanced”, both of which are loosely-defined and expansive statements. During implementation, however, it introduced actions that reflect an ***approach to private sector engagement that is relevant and realistic in the country context, and undertaken in collaboration with competent and reputable partners***. As clarified by the DPU, the focused actions were conceived and undertaken with the help of a consultancy report[[33]](#footnote-33), interactions with UNDP resources in the region, and reports on private sector engagement on SDGs prepared by the Centre of Excellence in Responsible Business of the Pakistan Business Council[[34]](#footnote-34) and the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy.
2. Subsequently, the ***project conceived and carried out two exercises, both of which are examples of international good practices*** introduced during implementation:

* With participation and inputs from the corporate sector, the project developed and disseminated a tool for SDG reporting by public listed companies that has been adopted by the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and will be used for selecting the top 20 companies every year, starting in 2020. The project assigned this action to Tundra Fonder, a Swedish asset management company specializing in frontier markets, which has been investing in Pakistan since 2014.[[35]](#footnote-35)
* In consultation with the private sector and relevant federal ministries, the project proposed a comprehensive responsible business framework and its implementation mechanisms,[[36]](#footnote-36) which is awaiting final ministerial approval. The study includes challenges, opportunities, national and international examples, and operational recommendations. This action entailed consultation with the private sector as well as relevant government organizations.

Expectation of Increased Resources for SDGs

1. The project’s theory of change anticipates, that “continuous monitoring and evaluation against national targets would lead to increased … resources … for achieving the SDGs”. However, ***project design abstracts from the political economy of public sector resource allocation and utilization***, which is recognized as a key driver of development, and which has been documented in donor and independent analyses. As explained below, this leads to the unwarranted expectation that project initiatives can contribute to increased resources for SDGs.
2. Relevant background includes: development expenditure, as a percentage of the gross domestic product, fell sharply during the thirty-year period from 1985 to 2015; revenue generation was and continues to be inadequate; and social sectors have been consistently underfinanced in comparison with relevant developing countries and lose out to politically-motivated initiatives in the competition for scarce resources.[[37]](#footnote-37) These are important reasons for what the project document calls the “failure” of the MDGs but they are not acknowledged among the reasons for failure summarized in Section IV of the project document.[[38]](#footnote-38)
3. Discussion related to the meaning of alignment and the possibility of increased financing was also a recurring theme in meetings with government officials and SDG Units during the MTE (refer to Text Box 4 for a documented example from Punjab).[[39]](#footnote-39) The acknowledged situation is that:

* A high proportion of the federal and provincial development budgets (estimates of 80-90 percent were mentioned) is consumed by projects that were initiated in the past.[[40]](#footnote-40) What remains is largely taken up by the priorities of elected representatives through processes that have little or nothing to do with evidence-based policy making and priority SDG targets.

**Text Box 4: Alignment of Annual Development Plans with SDGs—a view from the Punjab SDG Support Unit**

It is an understanding both within and outside the government that since the SDGs are a comprehensive agenda, therefore roughly all projects and schemes currently run by the government could possibly be matched with a certain SDG goal, target or indicator. However, alignment within the current global SDG agenda is not defined and understood as aligning the current development investments with SDGs in general but aligning with priority SDGs and not only making progress towards SDGs at the current pace of development but at an accelerated pace.

Source: Punjab SDG Support Unit, Annual Development Plan 2018-19 Preliminary Review

* Recurrent expenditure, which constitutes 70-80 percent of total government expenditure, is hardly ever evaluated for its alignment with government policies and priorities or even its rationale. It is spent in a more-or-less unchanging way on salaries (approximately 80 percent of the total), operating expenses, repairs and maintenance, and some grants and transfers.
* Local governments (as indicated above) are bereft of the authority and resources to take up priorities that are not addressed by senior governments.

1. ***These structural rigidities, in the overall context of lack of resources, would tend to preclude anything more than small and occasional increases for a few SDG targets.*** The economic reform programme introduced with the International Monetary Fund in 2019 and the effects of the pandemic that started in 2020 have created a fluid situation. It is apparent in the fiscal 2020-21 budgets that some sectors (such as health, social protection and employment generation) will be emphasized in the short term. It is also possible (and already evident in the most recent budgets) that governments will aim to encourage private sector investment and public-private partnership more actively.

Mobilizing Alternative Sources of Financing

1. The project’s approach to mobilizing alternative sources of financing for the SDGs is central to Output 3 and starts with reference to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The project document states that “the project will support preparation of national integrated financing framework, which incentivizes the alignment of financing flows to the 2030 Agenda focusing on how government can align a broader set of financing flows to support the implementation of SDGs.” The country context is challenging, as evidenced by the studies commissioned by the project as well as earlier analyses by donors and independent researchers on private sector involvement in development.[[41]](#footnote-41)
2. The project’s response was in the form of ***two timely and relevant initiatives that reflect international good practices***:

* With assistance from the The Global Islamic Finance and Impact Investing Platform, established by the UNDP Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development and the Islamic Development Bank, and with the participation of Pakistani power distribution companies, the project developed an action plan for Green Sukuk energy financing strategy for the Government of Pakistan.[[42]](#footnote-42) This study also includes challenges, opportunities, national and international examples, and operational recommendations.
* In furtherance of the Government of Pakistan’s 2018 initiative to plant 10 billion trees, the project analyzed the country’s external debt in a concept note that proposed a debt-for-nature swap and its implementation arrangements.

Parliamentary Engagement

1. Activity 1.6 in the project document expects that national and provincial assembly members who join the respective parliamentary task forces (PTFs)[[43]](#footnote-43) will facilitate SDG implementation through legislation, oversight and representation. The project document elaborates representation as: (a) engaging people and facilitating public participation; and, (b) creating a local response in the context of local communities. It expects oversight to focus on: (a) monitoring implementation of SDGs; and, (b) promoting accountability. The legislative role is expected to strengthen the enabling legislative environment for SDGs.
2. The PTFs consist of groups of parliamentarians who have an interest in the SDGs for one reason or another. It is possible (as three of the SDG Units noted) that many or most of the parliamentarians view the PTF as a link to a programme launched by the Federal Government, called the Prime Minister’s SDG Achievement Programme, in which projects are identified only by ruling party legislators for their respective constituencies. The programme was launched before the 2018 elections[[44]](#footnote-44) and continued afterwards.[[45]](#footnote-45)
3. Be that as it may, the PTFs are not officially notified committees of the parliament, and the parliament does not support them with any resources. For example, the convenor of the National Assembly PTF observed that the SDG Secretariat “does not receive a penny from the National Assembly”, which has “not adopted us”. At the time of the MTE meeting, the SDG Secretariat consisted of only one person, who was funded by a donor, and three unpaid student-interns. In addition to its capacity constraints, the parliament in the country context is also handicapped by the traditional dominance of the executive in matters of legislation and oversight.
4. For example, the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), which has worked with the project, has for years highlighted the very limited and inadequate participation of parliamentarians in the budget process. This is due to the nature of the budget process in Pakistan,[[46]](#footnote-46) which effectively makes it almost free of parliamentary oversight. PILDAT points out that there are four main flaws in the process, including: (a) the budget debate is spread over 40 working hours, on average, in a house of 342 in the National Assembly, which is so short that “members of the National Assembly have little incentive to prepare for and engage in a serious budget debate”; and, (b) the finance bill is not referred to any committee for detailed scrutiny.[[47]](#footnote-47) The situation has changed at the national (but not provincial) level with the Public Finance Management Act of 2019, but very few parliamentarians know about the new law and its implications.[[48]](#footnote-48)
5. As far as legislation is concerned, it is a time-consuming and specialized process that requires expertise in legislative drafting and the relevant subject(s) as well as inter-ministerial coordination. The techniques for pre-drafting and drafting are explained at length by an experienced drafter who authored a handbook on drafting for the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS).[[49]](#footnote-49) An introductory note written for the handbook by an experienced former senator explains the importance of parliamentarians and drafters working together.[[50]](#footnote-50) Primary legislation, which must be routed through the parliament, is given effect through subordinate (or delegated) legislation, which consists of rules, regulations and other statutory instruments prepared and vetted by more than one organization in the executive branch.[[51]](#footnote-51) There is a paucity of expertise in legislative drafting and legislative review across the country, which is why PIPS and a number of donor-assisted projects have arranged relevant training, manuals and technical assistance in recent years.[[52]](#footnote-52)
6. The main intervention offered by the project for greater parliamentary engagement is awareness raising for parliamentarians through the UNDP-implemented Strengthening Electoral and Legislative Processes Project (2011-2020) in Balochistan and KP. In addition, all the SDG Units have been interacting with the respective PTFs as and when required. Awareness raising for the provincial assemblies was also undertaken by SUBAI, a project assisted by the European Union (launched in March 2017, closed in October 2019)[[53]](#footnote-53) and by the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services[[54]](#footnote-54) at the federal level.
7. While awareness raising and good working relationships are necessary, they do not address the parliament’s capacity constraints and systemic limitations in oversight and legislation. ***While the project approach, as currently defined, recognizes the importance of the parliament, it does not help address the systemic and capacity constraints within which the parliament has to operate***. It is not realistic, therefore, to expect that parliamentarians can be effective in the specialized and time-consuming processes of budget and implementation oversight, and legislative drafting and review, with the resources available to them.

Awareness Raising

1. Several thoughts and a large number of work plan actions lie behind the project’s awareness-raising interventions. These include:

* the interventions that are reproduced from the project document in the description of Activity 1.4 in Table 2;
* references in the PC-Is for Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh; and,
* the logic and implications behind “increased commitment, resources and accountability” in the project’s theory of change.

**Text Box 5: General awareness raising and specific knowledge**

General awareness raising tends to be promotional: the purpose is to ***publicize intentions and achievements*** in support of influencing. Illustrative products: websites, brochures, special publication celebrating an organization’s anniversary and press releases. Specific knowledge may be operational or inspirational.

The purpose of operational knowledge is to ***guide operations in a desirable manner***. Illustrative products: Project design and appraisal guidelines, manuals, standard operating procedures, guidelines for government functionaries, and leaflets for users.

The purpose of inspirational knowledge is to ***disseminate certain approaches*** to inspire a thinking process. Illustrative products: rights-awareness events and publications, Human Development Report launches, and case studies and study tours that illustrate how some have solved common problems.

Source: Author’s note.

1. The project has undertaken workshops and consultations for ***general awareness***, focusing mainly on origins, scope and importance of the SDG goals, for government departments, parliamentarians, civil society, academia, business and the media. The PC-Is for Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh include the activity “awareness raising extending the ‘know your goals’ campaign at the local level”. The design documents as a whole emphasize awareness of global goals, which are not specific to the country or provincial context. Moreover, this kind of awareness raising has a promotional orientation (refer to Text Box 5).
2. The project has also undertaken workshops and consultations for ***specialized technical assistance*** for government, UN and private sector representatives on a wide range of subjects including SDG frameworks, data gap analysis, budget analysis and alignment, capacity needs assessment of statistical institutions, and private sector engagement, often (but not always) based on or leading to project-commissioned reports. This technical assistance has been for operational purposes (as described in Text Box 5).
3. In addition, through international linkages, including interaction with regional UNDP offices, the project has introduced ***international good practices*** in the design and implementation of the project. However, ***the project lacks systematic learning from relevant good practices (operational approaches) from project and non-project experiences across the country***.[[55]](#footnote-55) Events such as national meetings for SDG Units and federal and provincial officials, and inter-provincial parliamentary interaction, have served to disseminate ***inspirational knowledge*** (refer to Text Box 5). These events, however, have not been documented as learning events
4. ***The wide-ranging awareness raising conceived during project design and implementation has been timely as well as relevant for the audiences engaged by the project. However, there is no pathway that explicitly links awareness to the achievement of national and provincial targets***, which is important for progress and accountability as acknowledged in the theory of change. The targets (not the SDG goals) are rightly identified in the project’s theory of change as links to accountability, which cannot begin without monitoring and awareness of targets and achievements. The operational logic behind the theory of change suggests that once the SDG frameworks are established, and targets approved by the government, it is important for both internal and external accountability to track and promote awareness of: (a) national, provincial and district targets compared with achievements over time; and, (b) the extent to which priority targets are reflected in financial allocations and utilization.
   1. **Relevance of Institutional Mechanisms**

***Sub-question 1.2: To what extent are the project’s institutional mechanisms relevant to the partners and target groups?***

1. In view of the importance of aligning government plans with SDGs, ***the project recognizes the lead role of the MoPD&SI at the federal level and the P&DDs at the provincial level. However, the project lacks mechanisms for effectively engaging the federal Ministry of Finance and provincial finance departments.*** Finance is important not only for budget allocations but also for its role in policies and incentives for inter- and intra-provincial resource allocation, private sector engagement, public-private partnership and efficiency in the development and recurrent budgets, all of which could be key concerns for the SDGs as long as resources are limited. According to Federal Government officials, however, a proposal has been tabled for establishing a sub-committee on the SDGs within the NEC that will be chaired by the Prime Minister and include the federal and provincial finance ministers. This is expected to engage Finance more effectively.
2. The ***project document highlights the role of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) and speaks of collaboration and technical assistance for it***. The document mentions the provincial statistics bureaux in Output Indicator 2.2 of the results framework and the project management section, but not in the activity description under Output 2, where collaboration and technical support for the PBS are mentioned. The ***project document did not recognize the relevance of the provincial bureaux to the same kind of role in which it placed the PBS, but all four provincial PC-Is include support for these bureaux.***
3. The federally-administered areas of AJK and GB do not have the kind of expertise in statistics that the provinces have, and they are not included in most of the PBS reports. Thus, they have a significant deficit in the information required for SDG baselines and tracking progress over time. ***The project design, however, does not acknowledge the specific needs of AJK and GB in the area of statistics.***
4. For general awareness, the design documents convey the impression that this kind of awareness raising is the exclusive responsibility of the project. ***The design does not acknowledge the role of the federal and provincial information machinery in publicizing government policies,*** which is important for ownership as well as large-scale outreach. In Sindh, however, the SDG Unit reports that P&DD has assigned it the role of helping official sources communicate SDG-related issues and achievements. Here, the project provides the content that is disseminated through official channels.
5. Coordinating mechanisms at the federal and provincial levels are included in the project document. There is an inter-ministerial and inter-provincial Project Board at the national level and inter-departmental Provincial Technical Committees at the provincial level (AJK and GB have Project Steering Committees). These committees play an important role by guiding the SDG Units in the development of annual work plans and providing formal approval for them.
6. There is also an elaborate system of focal persons at the federal, provincial and district levels. The project design includes thematic or cluster groups at the federal and provincial levels for inter-departmental coordination in pursuit of multi-sector SDGs. ***The extensive arrangements reflect the thinking prevailing at the time of project design, which has been refined and improved during implementation,*** and this process may continue, with differences across the provinces that reflect their context and policies.
7. Project design does not explain the rationale for involving universities, except for a reference to the inclusion of the academia in awareness raising in Activity 1.4. The DPU clarified that the idea is to promote the interest of universities in the SDGs. One method selected for this purpose is to introduce the SDGs in university curricula, which entails a time-consuming process, some kind of capacity development, approval from the Higher Education Council, and uncertain outcomes. Another method is to reach an understanding between the project and a university on a menu of broadly-defined activities to be undertaken by the university.[[56]](#footnote-56) In practice, it is rare to find an entire university or department in Pakistan that is recognized for contributing operationally-useful inputs to the public and private sector.[[57]](#footnote-57) In view of this discussion, ***the project’s overall approach to university engagement, though well-intentioned, lacks focus and realism in the country context***.
   1. **Focus on the Leave No One Behind Approach**

***Sub-question 1.3: To what extent has project design incorporated the Leave No One Behind[[58]](#footnote-58) approach and focused on women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations?***

1. The project document, under Output 4 (Innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs) elaborates on how the project would focus on the leave no one behind approach. ***It envisages a geographical approach targeting two of the most lagging districts in each province,*** as determined by the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2015, for which the work plan (Section VII) provides a budget for district-level SDG plans. However, ***no district from AJK and GB was included among the most lagging districts*** (although AJK identified its lagging districts during project implementation).
2. There are two main issues in the project’s approach to district plans that makes it unfeasible as well as limited in pursuit of SDG targets and the leave no one behind concept:

* As indicated in Section 3.2, service delivery in the districts is largely the responsibility of provincial line departments and specialized entities controlled by the provincial government. The planning and implementation approaches of these departments and entities do not admit of multi-sector SDG district plans that require inter-departmental coordination. The line departments report to their provincial officers and their work plans and budgets are established by provincial authorities.
* Compared with available capacity, focusing on only two districts per province has limited value in pursuing provincial SDG priorities and the leave no one behind approach. Line departments are present in all the districts of a province and provincial governments have the capacity and data for identifying all such districts that are lagging in terms of their priority SDG targets. Thus, it is possible to focus available resources on priority targets and several lagging districts at the same time.

1. Reaching out to lagging districts and priority sectors and services across a province is also consistent with the intention behind the MPI. ***The project has been using the MPI for identifying two lagging districts per province, whereas the MPI is intended and useful for broader purposes.*** According to the Planning Commission and the lead author of the MPI report (refer to pp. ii-v of the report[[59]](#footnote-59)), the MPI is intended to provide a basis for public policy and resource allocation at the national, provincial and district levels. This is reflected only in the Sindh PC-I:

This project will take forward the work on [the] MPI and will produce annual estimates for [the] MPI at [the] district level. Such information can also be used for [the] allocation of [the Annual Development Plan] and other public funds across different geographical areas and to address [the] inequities therein. [The] MPI is also a powerful tool for [the] Provincial Finance Commission Award.

1. The UNDP guidance on leave no one behind, published in July 2018, is summarized in Annex 9. It highlights five factors in relation to disadvantages and deprivations—discrimination, geography, governance, socio-economic status, and shocks and fragility.[[60]](#footnote-60) ***The approach described in the design documents is inadequate in relation to this guidance,*** which appeared after the project was designed and launched.
2. ***There is no mention of women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations in the project document, and no project-level guidelines for attention to any of these subjects*.** However, the Balochistan SDG Unit has taken several steps on its own to promote gender equality.[[61]](#footnote-61)Except in the revised Punjab PC-I, there is no involvement of the federal and provincial commissions on the status of women. The Punjab PC-I includes provisions for:

* institutional review of the PCSW and the Population Welfare Department to ensure institutionalization of gender-related SDG targets in policies and plans;
* partnering with the PCSW on their women economic incubator; and,
* gender and women empowerment policies and plans aligned with SDG 5 and other gender-related targets.
  1. **Relevance of Actions in the Work Plans**

1. Annual work plans revolve around the outputs and activities that are listed in Table 2. Every year, SDG Units, in consultation with UNDP and their official counterparts, plan actions in pursuit of the activities. The national Project Board, Provincial Technical Committees, and Project Steering Committees in AJK and GB guide the development and approval of respective work plans. Progress on actions included in the work plans is reviewed during the year by UNDP and partner institutions and reported annually in the form of the Annual Progress Report.
2. Actions are continued from one year to the next if assessed favourably for their contribution to relevant outputs. New actions are taken up on an ongoing basis as the government formulates new policies, strategies and budgets. There is continuous informal interaction during the year between the SDG Units and their P&DD counterparts on progress and plans. Discussion with SDG Units and government officials suggests that ***the system produces actions that broadly reflect government priorities and differences in context*** across the country from year to year.
   1. **Conclusions on Relevance**
3. The project document and related federal and provincial PC-Is support national and provincial ownership of the SDGs through extensive institutional arrangements for localization that are well-aligned with country-level results, the devolved structure of governance in the country, and national and provincial priorities. The project is supporting key institutions, including MoPD&SI, the P&DDs, bureaux of statistics, parliamentary SDG task forces and coordination mechanisms. It aims to categorize and track budgets and expenditures according to SDG targets, which the project theory of change considers important.
4. Project design incorporated international good practices such as MAPS for the institutional arrangements for localization. During implementation, the project conceived and carried out four initiatives, two each for private sector engagement and exploring alternative financing sources, which reflect international good practices. Actions included in annual work plans reflect government priorities and provincial context. Using the MPI, the project also attends to the two most lagging districts in each province as part of the leave no one behind approach. The Punjab PC-I has a provision for systematic attention to gender equality (other than through the SDG targets).
5. The project approach recognizes the importance of the parliament to the SDGs. The wide-ranging awareness raising conceived during project design and implementation has been timely as well as relevant for the audiences engaged by the project. It has included general awareness as well as specialized technical assistance (specific knowledge). All SDG Units provide technical assistance to government counterparts and UN Agencies. The Sindh SDG Unit has a central role in the government’s awareness-raising efforts.
6. The project abstracts from the extant political economy of public finance, which is characterized by structural rigidities and lack of resources and is at variance with the expectation of increased resources for the SDGs in the project theory of change. The project lacks mechanisms for effectively engaging the federal Ministry of Finance and provincial finance departments, which are important for budget allocations, inter- and intra-provincial resource allocation, private sector engagement and efficiency in the use of public resources.
7. The project does not include interventions for addressing the systemic and capacity constraints within which the parliament has to operate, and which severely constrain parliamentary engagement for the SDGs. Localization of SDGs in districts is the mandate of provincial departments, rather than local government, but this reality is not reflected clearly or adequately in project design. The approach to leave no one behind is inadequate in relation to relevant UNDP guidance, which appeared after the project was designed and launched, and there are no project-level guidelines for attention to women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations.
8. Financial and human resources are, by design, inadequate for the AJK and GB Units. The design does not acknowledge the role of the federal and provincial information machinery in publicizing government policies, which is important for ownership as well as large-scale outreach. Moreover, there is, at present, no pathway explicitly linking awareness to the achievement of national and provincial targets, which is important for progress and accountability as acknowledged in the theory of change. In addition, the project lacks systematic learning from relevant good practices (operational approaches) from project and non-project experiences across the country. The project’s approach to university engagement, though well-intentioned, lacks focus and realism in the country context.
9. **EFFECTIVENESS**

**Key question 2: To what extent, and in what ways, have the project’s outputs, cross-cutting and communication objectives, and country-level results been achieved or are expected to be achieved?**

* 1. **Effectiveness of Project Design**

***Sub-question 2.1: To what extent does project design, including its strategy and theory of change, ensure effectiveness?***

1. As stated in the project document, “The project theory of change is that localization and nationalization of the SDG agenda with continuous monitoring and evaluation against national targets would lead to increased commitment, resources and accountability for achieving the SDGs in Pakistan.” As discussed above in the relevance chapter, project design reflects many of the high-level elements of national and provincial ownership and localization that are required in Pakistan’s federal state structure. Supported by wide-ranging actions for general awareness and technical assistance, these underpin the first half of the theory of change statement. The second half anticipates increases in three key factors—commitment, resources and accountability.
2. Of the three, resource allocation and utilization are readily observed in the governments’ budget and expenditure documents. Commitment may be observed through measures such as establishing and tracking targets, resource allocation and utilization, alignment of policies, strategies and operational approaches, and dissemination of achievements and limitations. Accountability may be observed through various feedback mechanisms, including those internal to the government (in which the project is involved through planning and alignment processes) and external ones that query allocations in relation to priorities and achievements in relation to targets through the parliament, civil society and the media.
3. As it stands, ***project strategy tends to enhance high-level institutional development and commitment but has limited ingress into the domains of public finance, district-level implementation and external accountability***. Factors leading to this observation have been discussed in detail in the relevance chapter, summarized in Section 3.5, and will not be repeated here.
   1. **Achievement and Contribution of Project Outputs**

***Sub-question 2.2: To what extent has the project achieved or is expected to achieve its outputs and cross-cutting and communication objectives and contribute to country-level results, and what factors have facilitated or constrained this achievement?***

1. The evaluator worked with the SDG Units and the DPU during the MTE to assemble a comprehensive list of actions, by unit, output and year, and, on that basis, generated Table 3, which summarizes project actions by unit and output indicator for 2016-2019. (Recall that actions are the activities included in annual work plans.) In the process, it was noticed that different units were reporting the same kind of action under different output indicators. For the sake of consistency, the evaluator used his judgment, where needed, to move reported actions under what appeared to be the most relevant indicator. This was done by referring to the interventions described in the project document (as summarized in Table 2) for three main categories of actions:

* The SDG Units placed most of the workshops, consultations and technical assistance under Output Indicators 1.1 (institutional structures) and 1.2 (SDG frameworks). In Table 3, they have been placed under Output Indicator 1.3 (awareness and understanding of SDGs).
* Some units placed the analysis and mapping of budgets and expenditures under Output 1 and others under Output 3. They are placed under the latter in Table 3.
* Some units reported the SDG parliamentary task forces under Output Indicator 1.1. In Table 3 they are reported under Output Indicator 1.5.
* The same kind of inconsistencies are found in the project’s 2018 Annual Progress Report (APR); refer to Annex 10 for additional information, which is further elaborated in Section 5.3 (M&E).

1. The picture that emerges from Table 3 is one of considerable activity under Output 1, which accounted for 51 percent of the project output budget during 2016-2019 (Figure 4), as well as appropriate actions under the other outputs. ***With the exception of Output 4, which shows limited progress, it is evident that project actions led to the implementation of planned interventions at a sustained pace.***
2. This conclusion is explained below with reference to output indicators (and after incorporating information obtained from field work, the DPU and the SDG Units’ reports):

Under Output 1:

* Institutional arrangements were put in place for all units as envisaged in project design. Differences across the units are also evident, reflecting decisions taken by respective governments and differences in the role of the federal and provincial governments.
* SDG frameworks were developed and SDGs prioritized for all units except AJK and GB, where the work is underway.
* At the request of the Government of Balochistan, the Balochistan SDG Unit developed the Balochistan Comprehensive Development and Growth Strategy 2020-25 with the lens of SDGs and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. This is a strategic instrument that aims to set the medium-term development and growth trajectory for the Government of Balochistan.

**Table 3: Project actions in relation to output indicators, by unit, 2016-2019**

| **Output Indicators and Measures of Progress** | **Unit** | | | | | | | **Continuing Activity** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Federal** | **AJK** | **GB** | **Baloch-istan** | **KP** | **Punjab** | **Sindh** |
| ***Project Output 1: Plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | | | | | | | |
| ***1.1. Extent to which SDGs integrated in existing and new institutional structures*** | | | | | | | | |
| * SDG Unit established through cost-sharing arrangement with government | February  2017 | June  2018 | November  2018 | November  2017 | April 2018 | August  2016 | May  2017 |  |
| * Project Board or Provincial Project Technical/Steering Committee established | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| * Number of meetings held | 3 |  |  | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | ✔ |
| * SDG Advisory Council/Committee established | ✔ |  |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |
| * Core Group for SDGs established |  |  |  |  |  |  | ✔ |  |
| * Number of meetings held |  |  |  |  |  |  | 3 | ✔ |
| * Thematic committees/groups/clusters established |  | ✔ |  |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| * Number of meetings held |  |  |  |  |  | 7 | 6 | ✔ |
| * Departmental focal persons notified | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| * Departmental coordination committee established |  |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  |
| * Number of meetings held |  |  |  |  | 16 |  |  | ✔ |
| * District focal persons/committees notified |  | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |  |
| * Development partners’ coordination committee notified |  |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  | ✔ |
| ***1.2. Extent to which SDG frameworks at national/ subnational level are developed and planning tools are SDGs aligned*** | | | | | | | | |
| * SDG framework developed | ✔ |  |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| * SDGs prioritized by the government | ✔ |  |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| * Baseline/preliminary baseline established | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Target-level priorities analyzed | ✔ |  |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Research/policy studies conducted | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Balochistan Comprehensive Development and Growth Strategy developed |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  |  |
| * SDG-related financing gaps identified/costing undertaken |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  | ✔ | ✔ |
| ***1.3. Extent to which key stakeholders have enhanced awareness and understanding of SDGs*** | | | | | | | | |
| * Consultations/technical sessions held with departments | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Technical sessions held with UN and donors |  |  |  | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Dialogue/consultations held with civil society organizations (CSOs) |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Local Government Summit (2017) organized | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Awareness raising undertaken for youth/students |  | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Material developed/disseminated for SDG awareness | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Voluntary National Review prepared | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| ***1.4. Extent to which private sector is engaged in the implementation of SDGs*** | | | | | | | | |
| * Workshops/consultations held for engaging private sector | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| * Tool developed for SDG reporting and adopted by PSX | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Responsible business framework developed for government approval | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***1.5. Extent to which parliament is engaged in the implementation of SDGs*** | | | | | | | | |
| * SDG parliamentary task force constituted | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| * Policy dialogues/awareness sessions for parliamentarians | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| ***Project Output 2: SDGs monitoring and reporting strengthened*** | | | | | | | | |
| ***2.1. Extent to which framework for monitoring and reporting on SDGs is developed and implemented*** | | | | | | | | |
| * Data gap analysis completed | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |  |
| ***2.2. Extent to which technical skills of national and provincial statistical institutions enhanced to effectively monitor progress on SDGs*** | | | | | | | | |
| * Technical sessions with Bureaux of Statistics | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Workshops/collaboration on departments’ capacity needs and targets | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Technical assistance and equipment supplied to PBS | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***No output indicator: Exploring unconventional data sources for SDGs*** | | | | | | | | |
| * SDG Technology Lab established | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Project Output 3: Financing flows increasingly aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | | | | | | | |
| ***3.1. Extent to which performance-based criteria are used for resource allocation at national/ sub-national level*** | | | | | | | | |
| * Annual Development Plans mapped to SDG targets | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Recurrent budget analyzed or mapped to SDGs/targets | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| * Draft National Finance Commission proposal prepared | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Revision of Planning Commission pro forma PC-I initiated | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Five-year plan mapped to SDG targets |  | ✔ |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  |
| ***3.2. Extent to which MIS operational and technical capacity of relevant stakeholders enhanced for effective aid coordination*** | | | | | | | | |
| * MIS/dashboard developed | ✔ | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***No output indicator: Exploring alternative sources of financing*** | | | | | | | | |
| * Green Sukuk energy financing strategy developed for government approval | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Proposal on debt-for-nature swap developed for government approval | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***3.3. Extent to which result-based and inclusive processes inform budget allocation at national and sub-national level*** | | | | | | | | |
| * No description in project design or other documents |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Project Output 4: Innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs***[[62]](#footnote-62) | | | | | | | | |
| ***4.1. Extent to which innovative approaches are applied and implemented to accelerate progress towards SDGs*** | | | | | | | | |
| * Technical sessions held for district plans |  |  |  |  | ✔ |  | ✔ |  |
| * District plans developed (2 each in Balochistan and Punjab) |  |  |  | ✔ |  | ✔ |  |  |

* Preliminary baselines were established by all units with the data that were available at the time from surveys and administrative reports.
* A large number of research and policy studies were completed across the project according to the priorities of the federal and provincial governments.
* All units carried out wide-ranging awareness-raising activities and provided technical assistance (specific operational knowledge on SDGs) to government line departments and, in some cases, to the private sector and the regional offices of UN agencies. Awareness-raising material was disseminated to the visually impaired in cooperation with the international charity Sightsavers.[[63]](#footnote-63)

Under Output 2:

* All the SDG Units made concerted efforts to enhance the capacity of bureaux of statistics. The PBS reported with appreciation on the enduring and extensive support received from UNDP. Provincial SDG Units initiated supportive measures for the provincial bureaux of statistics.

Under Output 3:

* All units carried out the mapping of Annual Development Plans to SDG targets.
* All units also carried out the mapping of recurrent budgets.
* The Federal SDG Unit prepared a draft National Finance Commission proposal and initiated steps for aligning the Planning Commission pro forma PC-I with the SDGs.

Under Output 4:

* All the provinces and AJK considered district planning for the most lagging districts, Balochistan and Punjab prepared two district plans each, but none have been taken to implementation during the period covered by the evaluation.
* The only tangible result was in Sindh—an initiative for 2,500 households (population of 12,000) in the Islamkot Taluka of Tharparkar District by the non-profit Thar Foundation in partnership with the Government of Sindh and UNDP.[[64]](#footnote-64)

1. Across the outputs, ***UNDP, through the DPU,*** ***has introduced several international good practices in the design and implementation of the project***, foremost among which is the UN’s common approach to SDG localization (MAPS), as reflected in the SDG Units and other institutional (including coordination) arrangements proposed in the project document and adopted by the federal and provincial governments. During implementation, the project adopted international good practices for undertaking data gap analysis and establishing SDG frameworks. The overall design for SDG implementation has been regionally acknowledged in UNDP as a success story.
2. Project design also called for engaging the private sector and exploring unconventional sources of financing through measures that are challenging and innovative for Pakistan. International good practices introduced during implementation (described in the relevance chapter) include the following:

* SDG reporting by public listed companies was adopted by the PSX and will be used for selecting the top 20 companies every year, starting in 2020.
* A responsible business framework was developed and is awaiting final ministerial approval.
* An action plan was developed for Green Sukuk energy financing strategy for the Government of Pakistan but has not been implemented.
* A concept note proposed a debt-for-nature swap and its implementation arrangements but this did not go forward.

1. The next step up from work plan actions leads to the interventions, activities and output indicators listed in Table 2, which is the level at which effectiveness is assessed here. It is recalled (refer to Text Box 2) that effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention’s objectives were achieved. The project does not have explicitly stated objectives for some of its interventions. This required the MTE to infer the objectives from the way output indicators, activities and interventions are stated (Table 2), and the logic that relates them to the project theory of change.
2. Judging from the evidence that is available on the achievement of objectives (summarized in Table 4), the conclusions on effectiveness are:

* Effectiveness is ***satisfactory*** for data gap analysis and recommendations, and baselines established with available data.
* Effectiveness is ***moderately satisfactory*** for government institutional structures, national and provincial SDG frameworks, mechanisms for SDG planning and implementation, budgetary and planning frameworks, tracking resource allocation to SDGs, awareness and advocacy for various audiences, and private sector engagement on SDGs. The main limitations have been in: (a) pursuing targets down to the district level through departmental work plans and budgets; and, (b) lack of interventions for promoting accountability (as envisaged in theory of change) through tracking of national and provincial targets.
* Effectiveness is ***moderately unsatisfactory*** for: (a) strengthening parliamentary engagement (which is subject to capacity constraints on oversight and legislative functions that have not been addressed); and, (b) alternative sources of financing (for which the project’s innovative proposals were not taken up by the government).
* Effectiveness is assessed as ***unsatisfactory for two activities and highly unsatisfactory for four***, as explained in Table 4.

1. Across the project, perhaps the most important point is the ***perception among SDG Units and government officials that progress has been limited at the line departments’ level***. In most jurisdictions, this is related to the role of focal persons, most of whom are subject to frequent transfers and consider their role as an extra burden. Taking an institutional perspective, however, it is important to realize that individual focal persons, on their own, have little or no say in departmental work plans and budgets in pursuit of SDG targets.
2. Moreover:

* There is ***no evidence that universities have contributed in any significant measure*** to any of the objectives that can be inferred from the project document or the PC-Is.
* ***Cross-cutting concerns and the leave no one behind approach are not visibly integrated in project activities*** and have been discussed in the relevance chapter as well as Section 4.3.
  1. **Contribution of the Leave No One Behind Approach**

***Sub-question 2.3: In what ways has the project utilized the leave no one behind approach and focused on women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations?***

1. As noted in the relevance chapter, project design is inadequate in comparison with the 2018 UNDP guidance on leave no one behind approach. ***The project has not yet updated its approach to leave no one behind, and it has not focused on cross-cutting concerns*** with women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations beyond the targets already included in the SDGs. The provincial SDG Units, however, have included youth and students in some of their

**Table 4: MTE assessment of current project effectiveness in relation to project output indicators[[65]](#footnote-65)**

| **Rating Scale** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Satisfactory | | | | Unsatisfactory | | | |
| Highly satisfactory—6 | Satisfactory—5 | | Moderately satisfactory—4 | Moderately unsatisfactory—3 | | Unsatisfactory—2 | Highly unsatisfactory—1 |
| **Project Outputs and Indicators** | | **Activities** | | | **MTE Rating** | **Explanation of Rating** | |
| ***Output 1: Plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | | | | | | |
| 1.1. Extent to which SDGs integrated in existing and new institutional structures  1.2. Extent to which SDG frameworks at national/ subnational level are developed and planning tools are SDG-aligned  1.3. Extent to which key stakeholders have enhanced awareness and understanding of SDGs  1.4. Extent to which private sector is engaged in the implementation of SDGs  1.5. Extent to which parliament is engaged in the implementation of SDGs | | 1.1. Institutional structure created within the government for effective policy coherence and coordination on SDGs | | | 4 | Institutional arrangements are in place at the high level but in incipient stages in the line ministries and departments. | |
| 1.2. National and provincial SDG frameworks formulated including establishing baselines, setting local targets and identifying priorities | | | 4 | Targets have been set at the national and provincial levels but not translated into actionable district-level targets through departmental annual work plans and budgets. | |
| 1.3. Technical and institutional mechanisms strengthened for SDG planning and implementation (\*) | | | 4 | Planning and coordination mechanisms have been strengthened, but mechanisms have been inadequately strengthened in the departments and districts. | |
| 1.4. SDG awareness and advocacy enhanced for multiple stakeholders, including government, UN agencies, academia, research and statistical institutions | | | 4 | Wide-ranging general awareness and technical assistance delivered. Interventions for promoting accountability (as envisaged in theory of change) are not yet evident. | |
| 1.5. Private sector engagement on SDGs enhanced | | | 4 | Innovative mechanisms developed and approved. Implementation partially initiated. | |
| 1.6. Parliamentary mechanisms strengthened for greater engagement of parliamentarians to discuss and address SDG-related issues (\*) | | | 3 | Mechanisms established but capacity constraints on effective parliamentary oversight and legislative functions not addressed. | |
| ***Output 2: SDGs monitoring and reporting strengthened*** | | | | | | | |
| 2.1. Extent to which framework for monitoring and reporting on SDGs is developed and implemented  2.2. Extent to which technical skills of national and provincial statistical institutions enhanced to effectively monitor progress on SDGs | | 2.1. Data gaps for SDG indicators analyzed and recommendations to address gaps proposed | | | 5 | Thorough data gap analysis was undertaken and gaps addressed with government ownership. | |
| 2.2. Baseline established and development of online dashboard initiated to report and track progress towards the SDGs | | | 5 | Baselines have been established with available data. It is assumed that PBS and administrative data will help overcome provincial data limitations to a large extent. | |
| 2.3. Capacity of statistical institutions for data collection, reporting and analysis enhanced | | | 2 | The rating for enhanced capacity is 5 for the PBS due to UNDP’s strong and enduring support, and 2 or 1 for the provinces, AJK and GB. | |
| Exploring unconventional data sources for SDGs | | | 1 | Work by the SDG Technology Lab was limited by its capacity and did not elicit any appreciation from intended users. | |
| ***Output 3: Financing flows increasingly aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | | | | | | |
| 3.1. Extent to which performance-based criteria are used for resource allocation at national/ sub-national level  3.2. Extent to which MIS operational and technical capacity of relevant stakeholders enhanced for effective aid coordination  3.3. Extent to which results-based and inclusive process inform budget allocation at national and sub-national level | | 3.1. Linkages between budgetary and planning frameworks strengthened for effective SDG mainstreaming (\*)  Also stated in the project document as “Aligning public finance resources to SDGs” | | | 4 | MoPD&SI and P&DD processes have been aligned to a great extent, but not yet reflected in operational terms in departmental work plans and budgets. | |
| 3.2. Online MIS system operationalized to monitor development assistance | | | 1 | This relates to off-budget aid management, which the Economic Affairs Division has stated that it does not want. | |
| 3.3. Evidence-based and inclusive processes to inform budget allocation institutionalized for SDGs | | | 2 | Proposals to this end have been mooted but there is no evidence that budget allocations are based on evidence-based and inclusive processes. | |
| Tracking resource allocation to SDGs | | | 4 | Much has been done in this regard in MoPD&SI and the P&DDs, but not so in the ministries, line departments and districts. | |
| Exploring alternative sources of financing | | | 3 | Innovative proposals developed but no implementation initiated so far. | |
| ***Output 4: Innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs***[[66]](#footnote-66) | | | | | | | |
| 4.1. Extent to which innovative approaches are applied and implemented to accelerate progress towards SDGs | | 4.1. SDG plans for 3 pilot districts to mainstream SDGs in planning tools and implementation frameworks (\*) | | | 1 | Balochistan and Punjab district plans have not moved into implementation. KP has put a hold on district plans. GB and Sindh do not have any. AJK intends to select 2 districts. | |
| 4.2. Innovative solutions for acceleration to achieve SDGs adopted (\*) | | | 1 | The Islamkot work by the Thar Foundation is evidently the only innovative approach that has accelerated progress towards the SDGs (for 2,500 households, 12,000 people). | |

awareness-raising events, and Punjab has paid systematic attention to gender equality and collaboration with the PCSW.

* 1. **Conclusions on Effectiveness**

1. As it stands, project strategy tends to enhance commitment but has limited ingress into the domains of public finance, district-level implementation and external accountability. Judging from the evidence that is available for 2016-2019, the project has contributed to an enabling environment in the country’s planning mechanisms and the way budgets and expenditures relate to the SDGs. This is an achievement in terms of the project outcome and a contribution to country-level results. However, lack of evidence on departmental work plans and budgets in pursuit of priority SDG targets suggests limited progress in mainstreaming SDGs in the government’s work.
2. With the exception of Output 4, which shows limited progress, project actions have been implemented at a sustained pace. At the same time, the achievement of objectives for the 17 activities assessed in the MTE has varied considerably, influenced by government commitment, the approach adopted by the project, and the role of the private sector and the academia. The government showed a strong commitment to the international good practices introduced by project for high-level institutional arrangement and coordination.
3. This and the part played by UNDP and the SDG Units contributed positively to the effectiveness of activities related to data gap analysis, baselines, government institutional structures, national and provincial SDG frameworks, mechanisms for SDG planning and implementation, budgetary and planning frameworks, tracking resource allocation to SDGs, and awareness and advocacy. The main limitations here are in: (a) pursuing targets down to the district level through departmental work plans and budgets; and, (b) lack of interventions for promoting accountability (as envisaged in theory of change) through tracking of national and provincial targets. In addition, although proposals to this end have been mooted, there is no evidence so far that budget allocations are based on evidence-based and inclusive processes.
4. The project and the private sector collaborated to develop innovative proposals for private sector engagement and initiate implementation. The project also developed innovative proposals for alternative sources of financing but they did not find favour with the government. While the project supported parliamentary engagement, it was not positioned to address the capacity constraints faced by the parliament in its oversight and legislative functions.
5. Considerable capacity development was reported by the PBS due to UNDP’s strong and enduring support. AJK, GB and the provinces took steps to assess and enhance the capacity of their statistical bureaux but progress in developing capacity has been limited. Capacity issues also constrained the effectiveness of universities, including the SDG Technology Lab at the Information Technology University, to contribute to the project.
6. Although two provinces prepared (four) elaborate district plans, there has been no implementation of these plans so far. Innovative solutions for acceleration to achieve SDGs have been implemented only at a very small scale. Cross-cutting concerns (with women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations) and the leave no one behind approach, as articulated by UNDP, have not been integrated adequately in project activities during project design and implementation.
7. **EFFICIENCY**

**Key question 3: How adequately and efficiently is the project resourced to produce its SDG-related and communication outputs?**

* 1. **Financial Trends**

***Sub-question 3.1: What are the project’s financing arrangements, budget priorities and expenditure patterns and how have they evolved over time?***

1. Project financing, budget and expenditure during 2016-2019 are described in Section 1.3. UNDP’s contribution, including resources mobilized from other UNDP projects and UNFPA (largely for the Balochistan and Federal Units), was 24 percent of the project expenditure, compared with the 50 percent cost share it was initially expected to provide. The government provided 39 percent of the amount it pledged. The proportion was highest (70 percent) for Punjab and lowest (25 percent) for KP. UNDP is the designated implementing partner in the cost-sharing agreements, and government contributions are deposited in a UNDP account and expenditures made from this account.
2. Total expenditure during 2016-2019 was USD 8.41 million. ***Cumulative expenditure exceeded recorded receipts because it includes contributions by other UNDP projects*** (refer to Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Budget, receipts and expenditure by unit, 2016-2019 (in USD million)**

* 1. **Factors Influencing Efficiency**

***Sub-question 3.2: In what ways have financial and other factors influenced the project’s implementation and its direction during the remainder of the project period?***

**Financial Factors**

1. As discussed above, the project has been short of funds due to UNDP’s inability to mobilize resources as expected and the government’s failure to match its pledges with actual releases. ***There is little doubt that implementation has been adversely affected as a result.*** Without considerably more detailed information, it is not possible to say which activities have suffered and to what extent that has impacted project implementation. The federal and provincial governments are considering their commitments to the project, and this is reflected in the discussion in Section 7.2. Meanwhile, as described in Section 1.3, UNDP has mobilized a significant amount of resources from UNFPA, UNICEF and non-profit organizations.

**Administration**

1. UNDP rules and unit rates have been applied in the project’s administrative (including personnel) budget. SDG Unit offices are housed in government departments and consist of one or two rooms, with the staff working from an open-seating room. The offices have been provided with basic furniture and equipment as well as adequate safety features.[[67]](#footnote-67) Although the work is demanding, staff positions in most of the SDG Units adequately match project requirements, the main exceptions being AJK and GB, where both staff and consulting budgets are meagre relative to the requirements. ***Overall, the project establishment in the SDG Units has been costed and maintained efficiently.***
2. The evaluator’s interaction with SDG Units and government officials suggests that inter-personal relationships between SDG Unit staff and government counterparts are cordial for the most part, and interaction with P&DD is seamless in most cases. Turnover among counterparts has been an issue in most units and is the norm in the context in which the affected SDG Units are operating. Staff turnover has been an issue in the DPU and the Federal and Punjab Units; as elsewhere, it has a particular nexus with staff on short-term contracts. ***Providing stability in matching human resources with project requirements has been a challenge for both government and UNDP.***
3. Turnover in the DPU is of particular importance because of its effects across the project. Similarly, the adequacy or otherwise of DPU capacity has project-wide effects. Project management at the DPU revolves around three positions, a programme officer (who also has other responsibilities), a project officer and a finance officer. Viewed in conjunction with the capacity available in the SDG Units, ***the project management capacity available in UNDP can be viewed as adequate, except in relation to M&E and reporting, as explained in Section 5.3.***
   1. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

***Sub-question 3.3: How adequately is the monitoring and evaluation function designed and implemented across the project?***

**Sources and Concepts for Assessing M&E**

1. The project M&E function is assessed with reference to:

* the country- and project-level results summarized in Text Box 3 of this report;
* the project document, which includes a results framework (in Section V) with expected outputs and output indicators, a list of activities (in Section VII, Multi-year Work Plan) and a description of activities (in Section III, Results and Resources);
* the project’s 2017 and 2018 APRs and similar consolidated information provided for the MTE by the SDG Units for 2016-2019;
* the UNDP *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results* (“the UNDP Handbook,” for short);[[68]](#footnote-68) and,
* where required, the OECD DAC “Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management” (“the RBM Glossary”).[[69]](#footnote-69)

1. In most development organizations, including UNDP, results include impact, outcomes and outputs. The project document has four outputs and the following impact and outcome statements (in Section III of the project document):

* Impact (indirect): Pakistan’s progress towards the SDGs is significantly higher than that for the MDGs.
* Outcome (direct): An enabling environment exists to facilitate the achievement of SDGs in Pakistan.

1. Results are generated by resources (inputs and activities). As explained in the UNDP Handbook, resources and results are connected through a results chain. There is a well-established method for formulating statements to describe activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. This is explained in the UNDP Handbook (pp. 55-61). One of the most important requirements of results statements and indicators is that they need to be SMART—Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound. Two tables from the UNDP Handbook are reproduced in Annex 11 to highlight what this means for results statements and indicators. Like most other development organizations, UNDP guidelines accept that both quantitative and qualitative can be measurable, so having indicators that are qualitative is not an issue. The most pertinent questions for the project are for its output indicators:

* Specific: Is the indicator specific enough to measure progress towards the results?
* Measurable: Is the indicator a reliable and clear measure of results?

**Assessing Project M&E and Reporting**

1. The output-level sections in the 2018 APR start with a summary of achievements under four outputs and the 11 output indicators from Section V of the project document. Although reported against output indicators, the text consists almost entirely of activities. Each set of indicators is followed by the sentence “Description of output level results in 2018”. The sentence is followed by headings such as Action 1.1.1, Action 1.2.1 and so on, up to Action 4.1.1. A narrative is provided under each action number, describing relevant activities, reports, processes, decisions, publicity material, reactions of dignitaries and audiences at various events, and other assorted information for each of the SDG Units.[[70]](#footnote-70) It can be concluded with reference to the UNDP Handbook that ***this is not a results-oriented approach to M&E and reporting***. It is, however, what development projects, with rare exceptions, are observed to be doing.
2. It is also observed that there is no text in the action number headings in the 2018 APR, and no explanation of the meaning of “action”. The APR discusses 10 actions, nine of which are activities taken from Section III of the project document and one from Section VII (the details are in Annex 10). Project document Section III, however, has 10 activities and the APR has dropped one of them (Activity 2.3: Exploring unconventional data sources for SDGs). Moreover, project document Section VII has 14 activities and the APR has included only one of them (Activity 4.1: SDG plans for 3 pilot districts to mainstream SDGs in planning tools and implementation frameworks). ***The structure of the 2018 APR is arbitrary, insofar as it does not report on the complete results framework of the project.***
3. In order to develop a complete and coherent understanding of the project, it is necessary to carefully review the project document in light of the UNDP Handbook and the RBM Glossary. This shows that the 14 activity statements in Section VII and the 10 in Section III are so different between the two sections that the total can be counted as 24 activities (for six of which there is no description in the project document). Using an evaluator’s judgment and the descriptions available in Section III, it is possible to conceive of some activities as subsets of others, which leads to the 17 activities listed in Table 2 and assessed in the MTE. The way in which the 24 activities are listed in the project document and merged in the MTE to arrive at 17 activities is described in Annex 12. ***It would not have been possible without this exercise to begin to assess the relevance, progress and effectiveness of the project.***
4. Another challenge in the project is that the output indicators are not specific or measurable in terms of the SMART criteria for indicators (which are reproduced in Annex 11): ***they are not indicators but broad statements of intent in which the desired state of interventions is undefined and the target groups are not identifiable at the operational level***. It is not possible to comprehend and measure these indicators either on their own or with reference to the progress rating system described in the project document (reproduced in Annex 2).[[71]](#footnote-71) For example:

* In “extent to which SDGs integrated in existing and new institutional structures” the word “integrated” is undefined and “existing and new institutional structures” could mean any level of government and any department, directorate, wing or committee, whether existing or new.
* “Extent to which private sector is engaged in the implementation of SDGs” assumes that “private sector” and “implementation” are well defined, which they are not.
* The “extent to which performance-based criteria are used for resource allocation at national/ sub-national level” is vague about performance-based criteria.
  1. **Conclusions on Efficiency**

1. Cumulative project expenditure was approximately equal to receipts, while the budget was constrained by funds not received from UNDP and the government in the amounts and within the time expected. As a result, implementation was adversely affected but it is not possible to say which activities suffered and to what extent. Two-thirds of the total project expenditure took place during 2018-2019, which suggests that the project picked up pace during this period. Expenditure during 2016-2019 (USD 6.40 million) was 76 percent of the total budget (USD 8.47 million). The project also attracted additional resources from UN agencies and non-profit organizations, which was also accompanied by the specialized expertise of these contributors.
2. With the exception of AJK and GB, where both staff and consulting budgets are inadequate relative to the requirements, the project establishment in the SDG Units was costed and maintained efficiently and worked well with the counterparts. However, stability in matching human resources to project requirements has been a challenge for both the government and UNDP. As elsewhere, turnover has a particular nexus with staffing a project through short-term contracts. Project management capacity can be viewed as adequate, except in relation to M&E and reporting.
3. A key limitation of the M&E design is that all but three of the activities mentioned in the project document are phrased the way outcomes are phrased, if UNDP and international RBM guidelines were to be invoked. A second limitation is that the project does not have outputs, the way outputs are generally described at the project level as products, goods and services delivered. Without properly defined outputs, and with outcomes in the guise of activities, the project does not have a results chain. This is the third main limitation of M&E design, and it means that the project is bound to be presented and assessed inadequately in progress reports and evaluations.
4. The fourth limitation is that the output indicators are not specific or measurable: they are broad statements of intent in which the desired state of interventions is undefined and the target groups are not identifiable at the operational level. It is not possible to comprehend and measure these indicators either on their own or with reference to the progress rating system described in the project document. Even after almost four years, the project has been unable to apply basic RBM concepts to its M&E and reporting system. This disables the project from managing and reporting the results it has achieved with the resources made available to it.
5. **IMPACT**

**Key question 4: To what extent, and in what ways, has the project generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?**

* 1. **Effects on Awareness and Technical Skills**

***Sub-question 4.1: What is the evidence that the project has enhanced the awareness of SDGs and related technical skills among its target groups?***

1. A distinction was made in the relevance chapter (Text Box 5) between two main categories of the project’s awareness-raising interventions, namely, general awareness and specific knowledge. It was also posited that specific knowledge could be operational or inspirational. Operational knowledge can be used for planning, implementation and monitoring. Inspirational knowledge can be used for motivating stakeholders to improve implementation, engagement and accountability. These observations are illustrated in Figure 6, with the assumption that knowledge and awareness are not qualitatively different from each other but located on a single knowledge continuum.[[72]](#footnote-72)

**Figure 6: Representation of knowledge as a continuum**

Detailed and specific knowledge

Continuum on knowledge domain

General awareness knowledge

Knowledge for planning, implementation and monitoring

Awareness for engagement and accountability

Awareness of international commitments

Produce evidence on

targets, achie-ments, priorities and alloc-ations

Dissem-inate evidence on

achie-ments and alloca-tions

Know achieve-ments against targets, and alloca-tions relative to priorities

Identify and disseminate good practices

Know the national targets

Know the global goals

Know the provincial targets

Implement actions to achieve targets

Know the global targets

Know the district-level targets

Establish targets and their costs

1. The project’s efforts in its first years—and the first years differ across the SDG Units—were concentrated on specific operational knowledge for planning and monitoring, the right-hand side of Figure 6. This was manifest in a large amount of technical assistance (and equipment in the case of the PBS) for federal ministries and provincial line departments (and UN agencies and the private sector, in some provinces) across the country through SDG Unit staff and consultants. It is evidenced by the summary of progress reported in Table 3 under Output Indicators 1.2, 2.1 and 3.1 and reflected in the effectiveness assessment in Table 4.
2. Notwithstanding the limitations noted in Table 4, ***the institutional impact of the project’s knowledge-based interventions for planning and monitoring has been unprecedented in terms of the scale*** (geographical and administrative) ***and hugely significant in terms of its depth*** (as gauged by the sectors and the tools and preparations required for the SDGs). The project also introduced international good practices in the public and private sectors (described in Chapter 3), which strengthened the mainstreaming and institutionalization of the SDGs.
3. It is premature, at this time, to assess the institutional impact of project contributions to the actual monitoring and reporting of SDGs. Moving further to the left-hand side of Figure 6, it is also premature to expect interventions for producing and disseminating evidence on achievements. ***It should have been possible by now to raise awareness of national and provincial targets, thereby contributing to civic engagement and accountability. This, however, is not part of awareness-raising and communication in the project design.*** Finally, there are many examples of the project promoting general awareness of global SDGs and, to some extent, the global targets. ***The* audience *for this has been diffuse and the impact, if any, has not been assessed and reported systematically.***
   1. **Contribution to Institutionalizing the 2030 Agenda**

***Sub-question 4.2: What is the evidence that the project has contributed to institutionalizing the 2030 Agenda in target institutions?***

1. Institutionalization is important not only to gauge the breadth and depth of impact but also as a driver of sustainability. ***It is visible, at the highest level, in the attention being given to the SDGs, with project assistance, in the NEC.*** There are plans to deepen the involvement of the NEC by forming a sub-committee on the SDGs, chaired by the Prime Minister, for more frequent engagement by the chief executives and key ministers from all over the country. ***The presence of the inter-departmental project board/technical committees is another feature of institutionalization across the country at the strategic level.***
2. ***The federal and provincial planning institutions have owned project-supported SDG initiative for institutionalizing the SDGs.*** Without this, it would not been possible to observe the progress reported in Table 3 under Output Indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1 and 3.1. This progress is also reflected in the effectiveness assessment in Table 4. The assessment also notes, however, that ***initiatives for SDGs have not permeated the operational levels and there is no evidence that SDG targets are being pursued through line department work plans at the district level***.
3. ***Institutionalization outside the administrative machinery of the government, the executive branch, has been limited.*** Progress has been made for private sector engagement through the PSX and initial steps taken for parliamentary engagement. However, institutionalization remains blocked for reasons beyond the control of the project in: (a) the responsible business framework, which is pending with the government; and, (b) parliamentary task forces, which are subject to systemic and capacity constraints. At another level, it is also pertinent to CSOs, for which much of the civic engagement is operationalized at the district and lower levels, where the SDGs are not yet visible.
   1. **Contribution to Progress Towards the SDGs**

***Sub-question 4.3: To what extent are project-induced changes in awareness and institutional policies and practices likely to influence progress towards the SDGs?***

1. The project’s ***focused and extensive interventions for capacity development have contributed to specific operational knowledge and, through that, to institutionalization*** throughout the country at the strategic level as well as the planning and coordination mechanisms and the PSX. Given the government’s acknowledgment of the importance of the SDGs, this is likely to continue to influence progress.
2. The theory of change, however, expects increased commitment, resources and accountability. The fact is that it is ***up to the government to increase commitment within the line departments***, and the project can only play a supportive role. Moreover, as indicated in the relevance and effectiveness chapters, ***public finance and external accountability have been challenging aspects of the country context and the project and its partners are not yet adequately prepared for ingress in these domains***.
   1. **Conclusions on Impact**
3. It may not be possible to assess the project’s impact in the way it is stated in the project document—comparing the progress with that for the MDGs—but in the opinion of the evaluator nothing on this scale was observed for the MDGs.[[73]](#footnote-73) This is due both to the project and the decentralized governance arrangements introduced in the country since 2010. For the SDGs, there is now, with project support, high-level institutionalized engagement through the NEC as well as inter-ministerial project board/technical committees in all jurisdictions of the country. However, institutionalization has not permeated the line departments and districts and has been minimal outside the executive branch of the government.
4. The higher-level effects of the project have been:

* generated by specific operational knowledge developed and imparted for planning and monitoring in the multiple sectors associated with the SDGs;
* embodied as human capital in project staff, associated consultants and government counterparts (largely in the planning institutions and PBS, and a few in the line departments), and some of the UN and private sector colleagues collaborating with the SDG Units; and,
* reflected in institutionalization through decisions and institutional mechanisms for planning, monitoring and coordination at the national and provincial levels.

1. Thus, the project’s focus on capacity development has contributed to operational knowledge and, through that, to institutionalization throughout the country at the strategic level as well as in the planning and coordination mechanisms. This will influence progress towards the SDGs. On its own, the project will not be able to influence the commitment of line departments, availability of resources or external accountability.
2. **SUSTAINABILITY**

**Key question 5: To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to continue, and how resilient are they to risk?**

* 1. **Sustainability of Higher-level Effects**

***Sub-question 5.1: What is the likelihood that the higher-level effects of the project will be sustained and enhanced in the years to come?***

1. The higher-level effects of the project, as summarized above, are reflected in human capital and institutionalization. ***Increases in human capital are generally sustainable for long periods***, regardless of the duration of the project that invested in them. Human capital may be further increased if the demand for the corresponding skills and competencies is maintained, which is likely for the foreseeable future, with or without the project.
2. The nature and extent of institutionalization can change over time, depending on the influence of driving forces at the national and provincial levels. Considering the international, national and provincial momentum behind the SDGs, ***the*** ***institutionalization achieved will continue and can be enhanced*** during the remainder of the project period. The ***longer-term outlook can be expected to include course corrections*** initiated in view of implementation experience and exigencies.
   1. **Sustainability of Project Activities**

***Sub-question 5.2: To what extent are the target institutions willing and able to resource the project until its completion?***

1. All the SDG Units and their activities are supported by UNDP and government commitments for the duration of the project. None of the partners has delivered fully as expected or signalled any intention to withhold resources during the project duration. It is not yet clear what amounts will be contributed by UNDP and the government during 2020-2021.
2. Some of the partners have indicated their willingness to continue project activities beyond the planned project duration. Other partners report that the matter is under consideration.
   1. **Conclusions on Sustainability**
3. The project’s higher-level effects have been generated by specific operational knowledge, embodied as human capital and reflected in institutionalization. Increases in human capital are sustainable and likely to be enhanced. Given the momentum behind the SDGs, the institutionalization achieved will continue and can be enhanced during the remainder of the project with appropriate course corrections.
4. The partners are expected to sustain the project until its completion but the amounts available for 2020-2021 are not known. At least some of the partners are likely to continue project activities after project completion and others may follow suit after due consideration.
5. **MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
   1. **Main Conclusions**
6. The conclusions of the MTE in terms of project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of benefits have been summarized at the end of the respective chapters. In these terms, the project, overall, has done well in relation to the magnitude and complexity of the challenge on which it embarked in 2016. This relates, in particular, to the first half of the project’s theory of change statement, which refers to “localization and nationalization of the SDG agenda with continuous monitoring and evaluation against national targets”.
7. The second half of the theory of change anticipates “increased commitment, resources and accountability for achieving the SDGs in Pakistan.” This reflects a higher level of ambition in view of the challenging context and the project’s reliance on the government in pursuit of these expectations. At the same time, project interventions have abstracted from the political economy of public revenues and expenditures, the requirements for enhancing external accountability and parliamentary engagement, and the mechanisms for implementation through line departments and ministries down to the district level and points of service delivery.
8. Although improvements in approaches are possible (as described below) in view of project experience and the country context, project interventions showed a high degree of relevance to country-level results and priorities. It is evident that project actions led to the implementation of planned interventions at a sustained pace, except in Output 4, which showed limited progress. Effectiveness is satisfactory or moderately satisfactory for nine of the 17 project activities assessed for this purpose.
9. The project maintained a satisfactory level of efficiency in the use of resources, while confronting challenges in the work load and availability of funds. UNDP brought in a significant amount of resources and specialized expertise from UN agencies and non-profit organizations. With considerable effort and collaboration, the project introduced international good practices in the public and private sectors, which might have achieved more with greater government acceptance. In comparison with UNDP guidance and precedents, the project fell short in terms of leave no one behind and a systematic approach to women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations.
10. The project’s focus on capacity development has contributed to operational knowledge and, through that, to institutionalization throughout the country. The institutional impact of knowledge-based interventions for planning and monitoring has been unprecedented in terms of the scale, hugely significant in terms of its depth, and more substantial than that observed for the MDGs. The higher-level effects reflected in human capital and institutionalization have also enhanced the sustainability of project benefits.
11. The countrywide structure created by the project, capacitated by operational knowledge at the federal and provincial levels, has attracted financial contributions and technical expertise from UNFPA, UNICEF and non-profit organizations in addition to government and UNDP resources. The government, UNDP and project staff are aware that there is untapped potential for more such partnerships, and they are engaged in ongoing discussions to facilitate progress in this connection.
    1. **Recommendations**

**Key question 6: What are the possibilities for UNDP and its partners to improve the results of the project?**

***Sub-question 6.1: To what extent is there a need or opportunity to revise project strategy, outputs and interventions in order to enhance impact and sustainability?***

***Sub-question 6.2: What options can be considered for improving the availability and use of resources during the remainder of the project?***

1. It is possible, in the abstract, to conceive of additional resources, partnerships and timelines to realize the project’s theory of change, as it stands. Practical considerations, however, preclude this scenario. Thus, it would be more feasible to ***modify the theory of change in a realistic manner and align the project more closely with UNDP’s and the government’s comparative advantage and resources***. The aim of this exercise would be to enhance project performance and impact by:

* building on the achievements in institutionalization and extending them strategically in directions that are promising and feasible; and,
* modifying what has not worked or is not workable in a realistic assessment of comparative advantage, partnerships and resource availability.

1. If this is accepted, then the starting point would be a modified theory of change, stated as follows, with the proposed changes indicated in brackets:

The project theory of change is that localization [~~and nationalization~~] of the SDG agenda with continuous monitoring and evaluation against national, [provincial and district] targets would lead to increased commitment [~~, resources and accountability~~] for achieving the SDGs in Pakistan [and greater efficiency and equity in the use of public resources].

1. Going forward, the overarching challenge would be to work within the system to ***broaden institutionalization across the line departments and deepen it at the district level with increasing efficiency and greater equity*** (the latter in line with the leave no one behind approach). In this system, planning and resource allocation are well-established top-down processes, implementation takes place at the operational levels in the districts, and progress reporting is bottom-up from the operational levels. ***The four provinces, AJK and GB would need to develop their own specific approaches for these purposes,*** combining available evidence, administrative and political decisions, public consultation and other ingredients, as is the prevailing norm. Suggestions for operationalizing relevant approaches are offered in Annex 13.
2. ***In relation to partnerships, two sets of institutions need to be brought on board*** for different reasons:

* One of them consists of the Ministry of Finance and provincial finance departments. They need to be engaged more effectively not only for budget allocations but also for policies and incentives for inter- and intra-provincial resource allocation, private sector engagement, public-private partnership and efficiency in the development and recurrent budgets. Appropriate mechanisms for more effective engagement may be devised by the government.
* The second one consists of the Ministry of Information and provincial information departments. They are important for ownership as well as large-scale outreach. Following the example of the Sindh P&DD and SDG Unit, the content for awareness raising would be provided to the official information machinery by the MoPD&SI and the provincial P&DDs with the assistance of the respective SDG Units.

1. In addition, as is evident to UNDP and key stakeholders, it should be possible to develop additional partnerships within the UN system and the private and non-profit sectors. The UN Resident Coordinator’s Office is ideally placed to facilitate greater coordination on the SDGs within the UN system. Stronger collaboration with UN agencies could aim to strengthen the planning, monitoring and reporting aspects of the 2030 Agenda. Private sector and non-profit players are of value in specialized niches, as the project has discovered in the partnerships that have materialized so far.
2. Based on project experience and the prevailing context, it is possible to conceive of certain ***improvements in specific interventions***. These are discussed in Annex 13 with reference to approaches for: enhancing general awareness, systematic learning and specific knowledge for accountability and operational purposes; strengthening capacity for effective parliamentary engagement; exploring feasible unconventional data sources in collaboration with interested government organizations and UN Agencies; and, engaging interested academics and students and relevant university-based experts.
3. Helping parliamentarians address their systemic and capacity constraints is likely to require additional government or donor resources. The focus on the two most-lagging districts in each province can be subsumed within the broader approach to departmental engagement across a province, as described in Annex 13. Feasible innovative solutions for acceleration of SDG achievement can be found nationally as well as internationally as part of an expanded focus on systematic learning.
4. A few ***additional implications for project management and resources*** are also indicated:

* AJK and GB need their own PC-Is in support of adequately-resource SDG Units.
* The provinces may wish to review staffing requirements if they decide to broaden and deepen institutionalization as proposed above.
* UNDP and its partners need to consider orienting staff to incorporate gender as a cross-cutting subject in project activities.
* The project could be strengthened by: (a) correcting and updating the results framework with attention to UNDP RBM guidelines and international good practices; (b) developing a standard and comprehensive results-oriented reporting format with guidelines and examples for the benefit of all concerned; and, (c) adding a dedicated and qualified M&E specialist to project staff in the DPU, where this skill set is missing.
* Most importantly, all partners need to ensure adequate and timely availability of funds for the project and commit to the same for the remainder of the decade.

# **Annex 1: Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) Approach**

Source: UNDP Pakistan, SDG Support Units, Annual Progress Report, 2017

**UNDP’s Role in the Implementation of SDGs**

The Sustainable Development Goals came into effect in January 2016, and they will continue to guide UNDP policy and funding for the next 15 years. As the lead UN development agency, UNDP is uniquely placed to help implement the Goals through their work in some 170 countries and territories.

Their strategic plan focuses on key areas including poverty alleviation, democratic governance and peacebuilding, climate change and disaster risk, and economic inequality. UNDP provides support to governments to integrate the SDGs into their national development plans and policies. This work is already underway, as UNDP supports many countries in accelerating progress already achieved under the Millennium Development Goals.

**UN MAPS Approach to SDGs**

* Partnership Development: Channel additional support for national level partnership development activities, including for parliamentarians, NGOs, faith-based groups, private sector and the media
* Accountability: Establishing monitoring and review frameworks to hold decision makers and the UN to account
* Data: Contributing to the data revolution by helping strengthen national capacities to collect and analyze information to monitor progress on the 2030 agenda and the SDGs
* **Support – by making skills and experience** available at a low cost in a timely manner
* **Landing the SDG agenda at the national and local levels:** integration into national and subnational plans for development; and into budgets
* **Focus on priority areas** defined by the respective countries
* Support an **integrated approach,** including synergies and trade-offs across sectors
* **Bottlenecks assessment,** financing and partnerships, and measurements

**POLICY SUPPORT**

UNDP’s support to country implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals is framed by the common approach of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) called MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support). UNDP is supporting the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform (MoPDR), Government of Pakistan, for localizing the SDGs by applying UNDG MAPS approach focusing on following four project outputs:

**MAINSTREAMING**

**ACCELERATION**

1. Mainstreaming SDGs in Plans, Policies and Resource Allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda
2. SDGs monitoring, reporting and evaluation capacities strengthened
3. Financing flows increasingly aligned with 2030 Agenda
4. Innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs

Collectively, all partners can support communication of the new agenda, strengthening partnerships for implementation, and filling in the gaps in available data for monitoring and review.

# 

# **Annex 2: Project Output Indicators and Rating Scales**

Source: Project Document, Section V (Results Framework)

| **Indicator** | **Scale** |
| --- | --- |
| ***Project Output 1: Plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | |
| 1.1. Extent to which SDGs integrated in existing and new institutional structures | 1. Not at all: SDGs not integrated in the mandate of institutional structures |
| 2. Very partially: SDGs very partially integrated in the mandate of institutional structures |
| 3. Partially: SDGs partially integrated in the mandate of institutional structures |
| 4. Fully: SDGs integrated in all new and existing institutional structures |
| 1.2. Extent to which SDGs Frameworks at national/ subnational level are developed and Planning tools are SDGs aligned | 1. Not adequately: No SDG frameworks at national/subnational level are in place |
| 2. Partially: SDG frameworks at national/subnational level established but planning tools are not SDGs aligned |
| 3. Largely: SDG frameworks at national/subnational level established and planning tools are largely substantially SDGs aligned |
| 1.3. Extent to which key stakeholders have enhanced awareness and understanding of SDGs | 1. Not adequate: Understanding of SDGs amongst key stakeholders |
| 2. Partial: Understanding of SDGs amongst key stakeholders |
| 3. Moderate: Understanding of SDGs amongst key stakeholders |
| 4. Significant: Understanding of SDGs amongst key stakeholders |
| 1.4. Extent to which Private Sector is engaged in the Implementation of SDGs | 1. Not adequately: Private sector not adequately engaged in SDG implementation |
| 2. Very partially: Private sector very partially engaged in SDG implementation |
| 3. Partially: Private sector partially engaged in SDG implementation |
| 4. Fully: Private sector fully engaged in SDG implementation |
| 1.5. Extent to which Parliament is engaged in the Implementation of SDGs | 1. Not at all: Parliament not at all engaged in SDG implementation |
| 2. Very partially: Parliament very partially engaged in SDG implementation |
| 3. Partially: Parliament partially engaged in SDG implementation |
| 4. Fully: Parliament fully engaged in SDG implementation |
| ***Project Output 2: SDGs monitoring and reporting strengthened*** | |
| 2.1 Extent to which framework for monitoring and reporting on SDGs is developed and implemented | 1. Not at all: No assessment of data gaps existing for monitoring of SDGs |
| 2. Very partially: A thorough assessment of data gaps for all SDG indicators in consultation with relevant stakeholders |
| 3. Partially: Baselines and targets established for prioritized SDGs indicators |
| 4. Fully: Tools developed to collect data and report progress |
| 2.2 Extent to which technical skills of national and provincial statistical institutions enhanced to effectively monitor progress on SDGs | 1. Not adequately |
| 2. Very partially |
| 3. Partially |
| 4. Fully |
| ***Project Output 3: Financing flows increasingly aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | |
| 3.1 Extent to which performance-based criteria is used for resource allocation at national/ sub-national level | 1. Not at all: Performance based criteria not in place for resource allocation at national/subnational level |
| 2. Partially: Performance based criteria established but not fully used for resource allocation at national/subnational level |
| 3. Fully: Performance based criteria fully implemented for resource allocation at national/subnational level |
| 3.2 Extent to which MIS operational and technical capacity of relevant stakeholders enhanced for effective aid coordination | 1. Not adequately: No framework/MIS capacity exists for effective aid coordination |
| 2. Partially: Frameworks/MIS capacity established for effective aid coordination |
| 3. Fully: Frameworks/MIS capacity fully utilized for effective aid coordination |
| 3.3 Extent to which result-based and inclusive process to inform budget allocation at national and sub-national level | 1. Not adequately: Results-based and inclusive processes do not adequately inform budget allocation at national and subnational level |
| 2. Partially: Results-based and inclusive processes partially inform budget allocation at national and subnational level |
| 3. Fully: Results-based and inclusive processes fully inform budget allocation at national and subnational level |
| ***Project Output 4: Innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs*** | |
| 4.1 Extent to which innovative approaches are applied and implemented to accelerate progress towards SDGs | 1. Not at all: No innovative approach developed for SDGs acceleration |
| 2. Partially: Innovative approaches partially developed for SDGs acceleration |
| 3. Fully: Innovative approaches fully established for SDGs acceleration |

**Annex 3: Country Programme Document Outcome 1 and Output 9.3**

**Outcome 1**

**Outcome 1 (UNSDF**[[74]](#footnote-74) **Outcome 9):** Increased effectiveness and accountability of governance mechanisms.

UNSDF Outcome indicator 9.1 (IRRF[[75]](#footnote-75) outcome indicator 7.3): Extent to which post 2015 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated and adapted into national development plans and budgets.

**Output 9.3**

Output 9.3: Through active citizen engagement, national/provincial governments shape public policy priorities and establish planning, financing and monitoring mechanisms, facilitating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

***Funding partners: Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform; Ministry of Finance; Planning and development department for provinces; federal and provincial bureaux of statistics.***

* CPD output indicator 9.3.1 (IRRF indicator 7.2.2): Extent to which national and provincial systems, strategies and programmes use updated and disaggregated data to monitor progress against the Goals as an integral part of national development goals.
* CPD output indicator 9.3.2 (Goal 17.18.1): Extent to which Goal indicators are produced at the national/provincial level, with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals.
* CPD output indicator 9.3.3 (IRRF indicator 7.7.1): Evidence of UNDP *Human Development Report* and other Goals-related documents contribute to policies, regulations and systems.

# **Annex 4: Terms of Reference (TOR) for** **Mid-Term Evaluation of National Initiative for Sustainable Development Goals Project**

1. **Background and Context**

The National Initiative for SDGs is a joint project of UNDP and the Ministry of Planning and Development and Reform at the Federal level and Planning and Development departments at the provincial level. The main objective of the project is to localize the SDGs agenda and integrate it in the Sub- National Policies, Plans and Budgets.

The National Initiative for SDGs supports the Government of Pakistan (federal and provincial) in localizing the SDGs in Pakistan, at the national and sub-national levels, and in creating an enabling environment for its implementation. The project is based on the UN Development Group’s tool for Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) for SDGs. The project has four interlinked, mutually reinforcing outputs: (1) plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda; (2) SDGs monitoring and reporting strengthened; (3) financing flows increasingly aligned to 2030 Agenda; and (4) innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs. The project includes key activities at federal, provincial and district level involving multiple stakeholders and facilitating vertical and horizontal coordination:

* Following the approval of National SDG framework which by the National Economic Council, provinces are finalizing provincial SDG frameworks. Developed through a consultative process, these frameworks identify SDG priorities, established baselines and set targets to monitor progress for priority SDG indicators at national and provincial levels.
* UNDP continuous support and advocacy resulted in the Government establishing a strong institutional system in the form of cluster groups/thematic committees, comprising of diverse stakeholders including bureaucracy, academia, civil society and think-tanks to monitor progress on SDGs.
* UNDP also facilitated a review of statistical landscape in Pakistan with an aim to strengthen the Government’s capacity to monitor and report on SDGs progress. As a result, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics aligned its various surveys to SDGs and with these revisions Pakistan is now reporting on 26 SDG indicators.
* In order to facilitate the government to leverage the use of technology, an SDG Tech Lab was established as well as the development of an SDG dashboard.
* UNDP facilitated the government in designing and leading SDG localization initiatives at district level, leveraging public-private partnerships, and innovative approaches.

1. **Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Objectives**
2. **Project details**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Project/outcome title | National Initiative for Sustainable Development Goals/An enabling policy and institutional environment exist to facilitate the achievement of SDGs in Pakistan. | |
| Atlas ID | 00093481 | |
| Corporate outcome and output | Increased effectiveness and accountability of governance mechanisms | |
| Country | Pakistan | |
| Region | South Asia | |
| Date project document signed | 17 October 2016 | |
| Project dates | Start: January 2016 | Planned End: August 2021 |
| Project budget | US $ 7,580,551.00 | |
| Project expenditure at the time of evaluation | US $ 5,657,952.00 | |
| Funding source | Government of Pakistan | |
| Implementing Party | UNDP in collaboration with Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms and Provincial Planning and Development Departments. | |

1. **Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives.**

The Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) will review the National Initiative for Sustainable Development Goals project since its inception in 2016. The MTE will assess progress towards the achievement of the project outputs and contribution towards the UNSDF/CPD outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTE will also review the project’s strategy with regards to its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of major interventions. Overall, the MTE should specify what the project has achieved so far, along with the value addition; assess the progress made against planned results, as well as assess challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt. It should recommend ways in which UNDP may increase its effectiveness of project.

The MTE will focus on evaluating the progress made through the four project outputs, therefore, contributing to the progress made towards the SDGs integration and localization at federal and provincial levels. In addition, the progress on results will also be assessed on the successful utilization of Leaving No One Behind approach, while also focusing to identify contributions made towards women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and towards other vulnerable populations.

The major audience of this evaluation will be UN in general and UNDP Pakistan in particular, and Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms along with the provincial Planning and Development departments. The evaluation recommendations will help UNDP as well as government counterparts in making timely course correction.

1. **Evaluation criteria and key questions.**

The MTE will evaluate effectiveness of the National Initiative for Sustainable Development Goals project in achieving the UNSDF/CPD outcome and four project outputs laid down in the project document. More specifically, the MTE will address the following questions (the questions do not present an exhaustive list and more may be added while finalizing the Inception Report).

**Relevance:**

1. What is the value of intervention in relation to the localization of SDGs in national policies and priorities?
2. Are the project outputs realistic in consideration of localization of the broader goals of SDGs for Pakistan?

**Efficiency:**

1. What is the project status with respect to targeted outputs in terms of quality and timelines?
2. What is the potential that the project will successfully achieve the desired Outputs?
3. If there were any delays in the project targets achievement for the performance indicators, what were the causes of the delay, and what was the effectiveness of corrective measures undertaken?
4. To what extent were adequate resources (financial and human) secured prior to project implementation? Were the requested government tranches received on time?
5. Is there any appropriate mechanism for monitoring the progress of the project? If yes, is there adequate usage of results/data for programming and decision making?
6. What are the potential challenges/risks that may prevent the project from producing the intended results?

**Effectiveness:**

1. Are the project’s outputs clearly articulated, feasible, realistic?
2. To what extent the project logic, concept and approach is appropriated and relevant to achieving the project targets and objectives?
3. Are the underlying assumptions on which project interventions has been based, valid? Is there a clear and relevant Theory of Change?
4. To what extent has the project managed to implement activities across the project target locations (provinces and federal)?
5. To what extent the project implementation modalities been appropriate to achieve the overall desired results?
6. What factors have contributed in achieving the desired results?
7. To what extent do external factors, such as government ownership, security constraints, have impacts on project implementation?
8. How effective the project proved to be in the areas of mainstreaming gender within the overall SDGs implementation strategies, financing, reporting etc.?

**Impact:**

1. Is the project communications strategy effective in positively promoting the project to a wider audience?
2. Has the intended wider audience of the project been engaged in the project activities?

**Sustainability:**

1. What are national partner’s resources, motivation and ability to continue implementing project till end?
2. To what extent is there constructive cooperation among the project partners? What are the levels of satisfaction of government counterparts, etc.
3. What is the likelihood that project results will be sustainable in terms of systems institutions financing and anticipated impact?
4. **Methodology.**

This evaluation relies on mostly qualitative research tools (In-depth interviews) to assess the extent to which the strategies and activities undertaken have achieved their objectives; positive achievements of the interventions; challenges faced during implementation and steps taken to address them; lessons learned; and possible recommendations to guide the project in future. In order to get a holistic appraisal of the above mentioned, the mid-term evaluation will engage multiple stakeholders representing the Government (including implementing partners and other departments associated/relevant with the project, civil society, development partners, private sector etc. through interviews and FGDs. It is expected that the consultant should conduct at least 5 Interviews in each Province with the relevant stakeholders including government counterparts, private sector entities and civil societies. In addition to consultations and interviews, the evaluator will undertake thorough desk review of literature available on implementation of SDGs in Pakistan, including internal documents like project documents, its project publications and other material regarding the implementation of SDGs.

1. **Evaluation products (key deliverables)**

At the outset, the evaluation team will produce an evaluation inception report based on a review of all relevant documents and initial consultations with relevant stakeholders and present it to UNDP’s Development Policy Unit (DPU), the Management Support Unit (MSU), to explain the objectives and detailed methodology for the Mid-term Evaluation.

The consultant will produce an initial presentation on key findings of evaluation, followed by a draft evaluation report for feedback and approval from UNDP. Final evaluation report, including all originally-filled data collection tools e.g. questionnaires, interview notes, etc. will be presented as a final deliverable. (See Section 9 for payment break-up against the deliverables).

1. **Evaluation team composition and required competencies.**

[OMITTED]

1. **Evaluation ethics.**

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The evaluators must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

The mid-term evaluation will follow UNDP guidelines on the ethical participation of beneficiaries and women. In addition, all participants in the study will be fully informed about the nature and purpose of the evaluation and their requested involvement. Only participants who have given their written and verbal consent (documented) will be included in the evaluation. Specific mechanisms for generating feedback from stakeholders against the results of evaluation will be included in the elaborated methodology. All the documents including data collection, entry and analysis tools and all the data developed or collected for the evaluation will be the intellectual property of UNDP.

1. **Management and implementation arrangements.**

The principal responsibility for managing this review resides with Management Support Unit (MSU), UNDP. The consultant will work under the overall guidance of MSU and in collaboration with Development Policy Unit. The Project team will be responsible for information sharing, setting up meetings, arranging field visits and overall coordination of the assignment.

1. **Time frame for the evaluation process.**

| **Indicative Timeframe** | **Activity** | **Weightage** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Within one week after the signing of the contract | * Inception report, based on consultation with UNDP and government counterparts, explaining the methodology, approach, list of stakeholders for consultation etc. | 20% |
| Within 6 weeks after submission of inception report. | * Document gathering and review. * Telephonic and in person meetings/interviews with key project stakeholders, project managers, UNDP Country Office * Schedule and conduct meetings and interviews with project stakeholders including government and project personnel * Initial findings presentation presented to Country Office UNDP and relevant stakeholders | 30% |
| 2 weeks after submission of last deliverable | * Submit draft Mid Term Evaluation Report to UNDP for review and feedback | 30% |
| Within 2 weeks of receiving the feedback and comments from UNDP | * Incorporating feedback received from UNDP and finalize final Mid Term Evaluation Report. | 20% |

**Duty Station:** Duty station for this assignment is Islamabad. The project works in four Provinces and at Federal level in Islamabad. The main counterpart for this project is Ministry of Planning Development and Reforms and Provincial Planning and Development Departments. Therefore, field travel to the four provinces and to AJK and GB will be required to cover the geographical scope of the project. This will be discussed and finalized as part of the inception phase with UNDP. The cost of travel should be borne by the consultant and hence needs to be included in the financial proposal.

1. **Submission process and basis for selection.**

[SELECTION CRITERIA OMITTED]

The evaluation team will carry out desk review of the following documents:

* Project document (signed)
* Annual Work Plans
* Annual Progress Reports
* Meeting Minutes of important meetings held with various stakeholders, including project board and technical group meeting minutes
* Monitoring plans and indicators.
* Partnership arrangements (e.g., agreements of cooperation with Governments or partners).
* UNDP evaluation policy, UNEG norms and standards and other policy documents
* Correspondence with government counterparts
* Any other material that evaluation team considers useful for the evidence-based review.

1. **Evaluation matrix template.**

The Consultant will create matrix as a map and reference planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool to summarize and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussion with stakeholders. This will complement the project’s M&E Plan for each indicator. A sample evaluation matrix is provided below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Relevant evaluation criteria | Key Questions | Specific sub questions-probing questions | Data source | Data collection methodology | Indicators/ success standard | Methods for data analysis |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Outline of the evaluation report.**

Suggested template for the mid-term evaluation report:

1. Title and opening pages with details of the project/programme/outcome and of the evaluation team.
2. Project and evaluation Information details: Project title, Atlas number, budgets and project dates and other key information.
3. Table of contents.
4. List of acronyms and abbreviations.
5. Executive summary: a stand-alone section of maximum four pages including the quality standards and assurance ratings.
6. Introduction and overview. What is being evaluated and why?
7. Description of the intervention being evaluated. Provides the basis for report users to understand the logic and evaluability analysis result, assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results.
8. Evaluation scope and objectives. The report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation’s scope, primary objectives and main questions.
9. Evaluation approach and methods. The evaluation report should describe in detail the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis.
10. Data analysis. The report should describe the procedures used to analyse the data collected to answer the evaluation questions.
11. Findings. Evaluation findings should be based on an analysis of the data. They should be structures around the evaluation questions. Variances between planned and actual results should be explained, as well as factors affecting the achievement of intended results.
12. Conclusions. Conclusions should highlight the strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of the intervention. They should be well substantiated by the evidence and logically connected to evaluation findings.
13. Recommendations. The report should provide a reasonable number of practical, feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make.
14. Lessons learned. As appropriate and as requested in the TOR, the report should include discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation of the intervention.
15. Report’s Annexes.
16. **TOR Annexes.**

These provide links to supporting background documents and more detailed guidelines on evaluation in UNDP:

* Intervention results framework and theory of change.
* Key stakeholders and partners.
* Code of conduct forms.
* Documents to be reviewed and consulted

# **Annex 5: Evaluation Matrix**

| **Evaluation Criteria and Key Questions** | **Sub-questions** | **Sources of Information** | **Data Collection Methods** | **Methods of Data Analysis** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Relevance.*** Key question 1: To what extent are project outputs consistent with UNDP’s country-level results, national policies and the priorities and needs of the partners and target groups? [[76]](#footnote-76) | Sub-question 1.1: How relevant is localization of SDGs, as conceived in project outputs and interventions[[77]](#footnote-77), to country-level results and the country context? | CPD, project document, PC-Is, national and provincial policy statements on SDGs | Document review | Qualitative content analysis |
| Policy makers and other representatives of UNDP and partner institutions | Individual interviews (policy makers) and group meetings (others) | Qualitative analysis of responses |
| Sub-question 1.2: To what extent are the project’s institutional mechanisms relevant to the partners and target groups? | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| Sub-question 1.3: To what extent has project design incorporated the Leave No One Behind[[78]](#footnote-78) approach and focused on women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations? | As in sub-question 1.1, plus relevant UNDP documents on the Leave No One Behind approach | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| ***Effectiveness.*** Key question 2: To what extent, and in what ways, have the project’s outputs, cross-cutting and communication objectives, and country-level results been achieved or are expected to be achieved? | Sub-question 2.1: To what extent does project design, including its strategy and theory of change, ensure effectiveness? | As in sub-questions 1.1 and 1.2, plus project communication strategy | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| Sub-question 2.2: To what extent has the project achieved or is expected to achieve its outputs and cross-cutting and communication objectives and contribute to country-level results, and what factors have facilitated or constrained this achievement? | Annual reports, minutes of meetings, project reports, output-wise tables of achievements prepared by SDGs units | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| UNDP staff, SDGs units and sample of partner representatives |
| Sub-question 2.3: In what ways has the project utilized the Leave No One Behind approach and focused on women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations? | As in sub-question 2.2 | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| ***Efficiency.*** Key question 3: How adequately and efficiently is the project resourced to produce its SDG-related and communication outputs? | Sub-question 3.1: What are the project’s financing arrangements, budget priorities and expenditure patterns and how have they evolved over time? | Project document, PC-Is and quantitative data provided by UNDP | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1, plus quantitative analysis |
| UNDP staff and SDGs units |
| Sub-question 3.2: In what ways have financial and other considerations influenced the project’s implementation and its direction during the remainder of the project period? | UNDP staff and SDGs units | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| Sub-question 3.3: How adequately is the monitoring and evaluation function designed and implemented across the project? | Project document, PC-Is, annual reports, minutes of meetings | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| UNDP staff and SDGs units |
| ***Impact.*** Key question 4: To what extent, and in what ways, has the project generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? | Sub-question 4.1: What is the evidence that the project has enhanced the awareness of SDGs and related technical skills among its target groups? | Annual reports, minutes of meetings, output-wise tables of achievements prepared by SDGs units, sample of communication tools | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| UNDP staff, SDGs units and sample of partner representatives |
| Sub-question 4.2: What is the evidence that the project has contributed to institutionalizing the 2030 Agenda in target institutions? | As in sub-question 4.1, plus project reports | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| Sub-question 4.3: To what extent are project-induced changes in awareness and institutional policies and practices likely to influence progress towards the SDGs? | As in sub-question 4.2 | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| ***Sustainability.*** Key question 5: To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to continue, and how resilient are they to risk? | Sub-question 5.1: What is the likelihood that the higher-level effects of the project will be sustained and enhanced in the years to come? | Findings from key question 4 | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| UNDP staff, SDGs units and sample of partner representatives |
| Sub-question 5.2: To what extent are the target institutions willing and able to resource the project until its completion? | Policy makers, UNDP staff, SDGs units | As in sub-question 1.1 | As in sub-question 1.1 |
| ***Recommendations.*** Key question 6: What are the possibilities for UNDP and its partners to improve the results of the project? | Sub-question 6.1: To what extent is there a need or opportunity to revise project strategy, outputs and interventions in order to enhance impact and sustainability? | Recommendations will be based on findings and conclusions from the above-mentioned, plus suggestions received in stakeholder meetings and relevant (documented) good practices brought up during the MTE. | | |
| Sub-question 6.2: What options can be considered for improving the availability and use of resources during the remainder of the project? |

**Annex 6:** **Questions for Focusing Primary Data Collection during Field Work**

**For SDG Units and Implementing Partners**

***Relevance***

* How is your work plan and budget prepared and reviewed during the year and at the end of it?
* What factors are considered in setting priorities? [Attention to Leave No One Behind approach, women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations?]
* In what ways are development partners, members of Parliament and the provinces involved in the process?

***Efficiency***

* How do you engage your counterparts as part of your activities?
* How do you identify, engage and supervise institutions and individuals as service providers? To what extent is the work completed on time and what influences this?
* How do you interpret the rating scales for assessing progress against indicators?
* How could the efficiency of the unit be improved?

***Effectiveness***

* To what extent have your achievements contributed to each of the 4 project outputs and cross-cutting issues [Leave No One Behind, women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations]? What has influenced this?
* In what ways do you provide and receive technical assistance? How adequate has this been?
* What steps have you taken for the communication and dissemination of your work? To what extent do you think this has influenced the intended audience?
* What could be done differently to enhance the value of your work to each of the 4 outputs?

***Impact***

* In what ways and to what extent have you observed the impact of your work? [Awareness, institutionalization, progress towards SDGs.]
* What kind of feedback have stakeholders given on your work?

***Sustainability***

* To what extent is the unit and its impact likely to be sustained and enhanced in the years to come?
* To what extent has the political and administrative leadership shown an interest in continuing the unit’s work beyond the project?

**For Service Providers**

* What is the nature of the work you have done or are doing for the project? Mention the reports, notes and other documents you have prepared in the process.
* How does it fit into the national or provincial context? Identify the social, institutional, financial and other factors you consider relevant.
* What has been your experience of working with UNDP and its partner institutions? Consider the entire process from contracting to completion.

**For Policy Makers/Senior Officials**

***Relevance***

* How relevant is this localization initiative and its institutional arrangements?
* How relevant is the UNDP’s Leave No One Behind and the need to focus on women empowerment, gender mainstreaming, youth and other vulnerable populations?

***Effectiveness***

* To what extent does the project design (in the project document and the PC-I) ensure effectiveness?
* To what extent has the project achieved its objectives or is likely to achieve them? [Plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda; SDGs monitoring and reporting strengthened; Financing flows increasingly aligned to 2030 Agenda; Innovative approaches to accelerate progress on priority SDGs.]

***Impact***

* In what ways and to what extent have you observed the impact of the project? [Awareness, institutionalization, progress towards SDGs.]

***Sustainability***

* To what extent is project impact likely to be sustained and enhanced in the years to come?
* To what extent are you willing and able to resource the project until its completion?

**Annex 7:** **List of Meetings**

|  | **Name** | **Designation** | **Organization** | **Modality** | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Group Meeting*** | | ***Individual Meeting*** |
| ***In Person*** | ***Skype*** |
| **Islamabad – Inception Phase Meetings** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Mr Aadil Mansoor | Former Assistant Resident Representative, Development Policy Unit (DPU) | UNDP | ✔ |  |  |
| Mr Umer Malik | Policy Analyst and Officer-in-Charge, DPU | UNDP |
| Mr Azam Khan | Programme Associate, DPU | UNDP |
| Ms Wajiha Khan | Project Officer, DPU | UNDP |
| 2 | Mr Syed Sabeeh Zaidi | Results Based Management Analyst/Head of Management Support Unit | UNDP |  |  | ✔ |
| 3 | Ms Aliona Niculita | Deputy Resident Representative | UNDP |  |  | ✔ |
| 4 | Mr Shahid Naeem | Chief, SDG Section | Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI), Government of Pakistan (GoP) |  |  | ✔ |
| **Islamabad – Meetings with United Nations (UN) Agencies** | | | | | | |
| 5 | Mr Luis Gorgon | Chief, Social Policy | United Nations Children’s Fund |  |  | ✔ |
| 6 | Mr Muqaddar Shah | Programme Analyst | United Nations Population Fund |  |  | ✔ |
| 7 | Mr Shah Nasir Khan | Head | United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office (UNRCO) | ✔ |  |  |
| Mr Naeemullah | Assistant Development Coordination Officer (Data and Reporting) | UNRCO |
| **Islamabad – Meetings with Consultants/Contracted Organizations** | | | | | | |
| 8 | Dr Sajid Amin Javed | Research Fellow | Sustainable Development Policy Institute (consultants for Balochistan and Punjab Units) | ✔ |  |  |
| Dr Syed Sajidin Hussain | Consultant | Associates in Development (consultants for KP and Sindh Units) |
| **Islamabad – Meetings with Federal Unit Stakeholders** | | | | | | |
| 9 | Dr Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan | Deputy Chairman | Planning Commission, GoP |  |  | ✔ |
| 10 | Mr Shahid Naeem | Chief, SDG Section | MoPD&SI, GoP |  |  | ✔ |
| 11 | Ms Rabia Awan | Director and National Focal Person for SDGs | Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, GoP |  |  | ✔ |
| 12 | Federal SDG Unit (6 team members) |  | Federal SDG Unit, UNDP and GoP | ✔ |  |  |
| 13 | Mr Riaz Fatyana | Member of National Assembly and Convener, Parliamentary Task Force (PTF) | National Assembly of Pakistan |  |  | ✔ |
| 14 | Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) SDG Unit (2 team members) |  | AJK SDG Unit, UNDP and GoP |  | ✔ |  |
| Mr Ahmad Waseem Qureshi | Chief, Rural Development | Planning and Development Department (P&DD), Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (GoAJK) |
| 15 | Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) SDG Unit (2 team members) |  | GB SDG Unit, UNDP and GoP |  | ✔ |  |
| 2 focal persons from the government |  | Government of Gilgit-Baltistan |
| Mr Akhtar Ali | Manager, Institutional Development and Policy, and Focal Person, SDGs | Aga Khan Rural Support Programme |
| **Meetings with Balochistan Stakeholders** | | | | | | |
| 16 | Balochistan SDG Unit (5 team members) |  | Balochistan SDG Unit, UNDP and GoB |  |  |  |
| 17 | 1 focal person from the government |  | GoB |  | ✔ |  |
| 18 | 4 civil society representatives |  |  |  | ✔ |  |
| **Meetings with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Stakeholders** | | | | | | |
| 19 | Ms Ayesha Bano | MPA and Member, PTF | Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | ✔ |  |  |
| Dr (Ms) Asiya Asad | MPA and Member, PTF | Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa |
| 20 |  | Secretary | P&DD, Government of KP (GoKP) |  |  | ✔ |
| 21 | Mr Ali Raza Khan | Director General, Sustainable Development Goals Unit | P&DD, GoKP |  |  | ✔ |
| 22 | KP SDG Unit (6 team members) |  | KP SDG Unit, UNDP and GoKP | ✔ |  |  |
| 23 | 5 consultants, academics and civil society representatives |  |  | ✔ |  |  |
| 24 | 8 focal persons from the government |  | GoKP | ✔ |  |  |
| **Meetings with Punjab Stakeholders** | | | | | | |
| 25 | Dr Aman Ullah | Joint Chief Economist | P&DD, Government of Punjab (GoPb) | ✔ |  |  |
| Mr Shoeb Iqbal Syed | Programme Director, Punjab Reforms Management Programme | P&DD, GoPb |
| 26 | Punjab SDG Unit (3 team members) |  | KP SDG Unit, UNDP and GoPb | ✔ |  |  |
| 27 | Mr Sajid Rasul | Director General | Punjab Bureau of Statistics, GoPb |  |  | ✔ |
| 28 | Dr Saeed Shafqat | Director, Centre for Public Policy and Governance | Forman Christian College University, Lahore |  |  | ✔ |
| 29 | Dr Izza Aftab and 5 researchers | SDG Technology Lab | Information Technology University | ✔ |  |  |
| 30 | Ms Ambreen Waheed | Founder and Adviser | Responsible Business Initiative |  |  | ✔ |
| **Meetings with Sindh Stakeholders** | | | | | | |
| 31 | Mr Rafique Mustafa Shaikh | Chief, Social Protection and Poverty Reduction and Project Coordinator, SDGs | P&DD, Government of Sindh (GoS) |  |  | ✔ |
| 32 | Sindh SDG Unit (5 team members) |  | Sindh SDG Unit, UNDP and GoS | ✔ |  |  |
| 33 | Dr (Ms) Fouzia Khan | Chief Adviser, Curriculum Wing | School Education and Literacy Department, GoS |  |  | ✔ |
| 34 | Mr Khurram Arslan | Deputy Programme Director | Local Government Department, GoS |  |  | ✔ |
| 35 | Dr (Ms) Ghazala Rafique | Director, Human Development Programme | Aga Khan University | ✔ |  |  |
| Mr Naval Vaswani | Manager | Thar Foundation |
| Ms Nazish Shekha | Senior Research Associate | Centre for Excellence in Responsible Business (CERB) |

Excluding multiple meetings with the DPU and some others, the MTE mission held 17 group meetings and as many individual meetings with a total of 88 persons, including:

* one Member of the National Assembly and 2 Members of the KP Provincial Assembly;
* 23 senior government officials—3 from the Federal Government, one from Balochistan, 10 from KP, 3 each from Punjab and Sindh, one from AJK and 2 from GB;
* 10 representatives of UN agencies, including the UNRCO, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA;
* 29 team members of SDG Support Units; and,
* 23 academics, consultants and civil society representatives, 15 of whom had been engaged by the project as service providers through individual or institutional contracts.

**Annex 8: Short History and Political Economy of Local Government**

Source: Consortium for Development Policy Research (CDPR), “Pakistan’s Public Expenditure: Insights and Reflections” (pp. 40-47); Lahore, CDPR, August 2015 (<https://cdpr.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Raftar-Public-Expenditure-policy-report-27Aug2015.pdf>).

Pakistan’s politics is dominated by Punjab, which has more than 50 percent of the national population and, therefore, dominates the civil administration and the military. Partly for this reason, and partly because military governments have ruled the country for about as many years as have civilian governments, there have been strong centrist tendencies in Pakistan’s federal system.

While the Constitution recognises local governments (LGs) as an important component of the state, it does not grant them the status of a separate tier of government. Constitutionally, therefore, LGs are merely an extended arm of a provincial government. Local and provincial politicians vie for the same political space, creating strong and unwarranted frictions between the two levels, with constitutional ambiguity about their status putting local politicians at a considerable disadvantage. As such, local governments have thrived solely under military governments, which have sought to strengthen this tier largely to achieve political legitimacy. Under democratic governments, local governments have either ceased to exist or had their powers and functions greatly curtailed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Composition of Expenditure (percentage)** | | |
|  | **Province** | **District** |
| Wages | 22 | 73 |
| Other current | 52 | 11 |
| Development | 26 | 16 |

The strongest move towards devolution came in 2001 when the then military government devolved a large number of provincial functions, including school education and health, to the local governments, along with the customary municipal functions (i.e. water supply, sanitation, sewerage disposal, intra-city and local roads, etc.). However, as the devolution plan failed to provide a mechanism for integrating provincial and local governments, the provincial governments tried to obstruct the functioning of local government at every step of the way. The most glaring example of that was that government staff functioning in departments which were devolved to district governments continued to remain employees of the provincial government, thus giving no opportunity to improve service delivery through better human resource management. Similarly, in blatant disregard to the principles set by the devolution plan for providing fiscal resources to LGs as a single-line transfer, the actual transfers to the districts were compartmentalised into recurrent and development components, with LGs having no authority to re-appropriate funds from one component to the other. Moreover, the share of districts in development budget was much smaller than in the recurrent budget (see table). Moreover, the recurrent transfers were barely enough to pay for the wages of government employees, with negligible funds provided for operational expenditures. In short, partly due to the above mentioned (and other) hurdles, and partly because of weak governance and managerial capacity, the district governments could not achieve the results expected of them.

With the return to power of elected governments, the 2001 devolution was largely reversed as the democratically elected governments showed no inclination to continue with the constitutional cover provided to local governments, which lapsed in December 2009. Till recently there was no attempt made by any province to hold fresh local government elections, thus giving officers of provincial government control over local functions. In addition, through new LGOs [Local Government Ordinances], all four provincial governments have moved to limit the legislative, administrative and financial powers of local governments by assigning them mainly the municipal functions.

[The] 18th Amendment failed to address two important aspects of devolved governance, which can have strong impact on the life and functioning of LGs. These are: (i) defining the roles and responsibilities for LGs, which was left for the provincial governments to decide on the basis of their own conditions and circumstances; and, (ii) providing protection to LGs from political victimisation by provincial governments.

**Annex 9: What Does it Mean to Leave No One Behind?**

Source: UNDP, “What does it mean to leave no one behind? A framework for implementation”. This is a brochure adapted from the executive summary of the UNDP Discussion Paper *What Does it Mean to Leave No One Behind: A UNDP Discussion Paper and Framework for Implementation*, July 2018 (<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/what-does-it-mean-to-leave-no-one-behind-.html>).

The framework proposes five intersecting factors as essential to understand who is being left behind and why. All disadvantages and deprivations that leave people behind should be considered across five factors:

***Discrimination:*** Exclusion, bias or mistreatment based on some aspect of a person’s identity (ascribed or assumed) including, but not limited to gender, ethnicity, age, class, disability, sexual orientation, religion, nationality and indigenous or migratory status;

***Geography:*** Physical isolation, vulnerability, deprivation or inequity based on a person’s area of residence;

***Governance:*** Global, national and/or sub-national institutions that are ineffective, unjust, exclusive, corrupt, unaccountable and/or unresponsive; and/or laws, policies and budgets that are inequitable, discriminatory or regressive (including taxes and expenditures);

***Socio-economic status:*** Disadvantages in terms of income, wealth, life expectancy, educational attainment or chances to stay healthy, be well-nourished, be educated; and access to energy, clean water and sanitation, social protection, financial services, vocational training etc.; and

***Shocks and fragility:*** Vulnerability and exposure to the effects of climate change, natural hazards, violence, conflict, displacement, health emergencies, economic downturns and other types of shocks.

To implement the pledge to leave no one behind, countries should consider an integrated framework consisting of three mutually reinforcing ‘levers’: examine, empower and enact.

***Examine:*** Monitoring SDG progress of all relevant groups and people by collecting, analyzing and making available disaggregated and people-driven data and information on who is left behind and why. Track the progress of those furthest left behind relative to everyone else.

***Empower:*** Enable people that are being left behind to be equal agents in sustainable development, ensuring their full and meaningful participation in decision-making by providing safe and inclusive mechanisms for civic engagement.

***Enact:*** Develop integrated equity-focused SDG policies, interventions and budgets to support rights-holders and duty-bearers to address the intersecting disadvantages and deprivations that leave people behind.

**Annex 10: Reporting on Actions in the Annual Progress Report 2018**

Introductory Note: The output-level sections in the 2018 APR start with a summary of achievements under the four outputs and 11 output indicators of Section V of the project document. Each set of indicators is followed by the sentence “Description of output level results in 2018”. The sentence is followed by headings such as Action 1.1.1, Action 1.2.1 and so on, up to Action 4.1.1. A narrative is provided under each action number, describing the relevant activities, reports, processes, decisions, publicity material, reactions of dignitaries and audiences at various events, and other assorted information for each of the SDG Units.[[79]](#footnote-79)

| **11 Activities in Project Document Section VII** | **9 Actions included in APR from Project Document Section III**  **And 1 from Sec. VII** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Parentheses with activities/actions match Columns A and B* | |
| *Column A* | *Column B* |
| ***Project Output 1: Plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | |
| 1.1. Institutional structure created within the government for effective policy coherence and coordination on SDGs (a) | 1.1.1. Establishing institutional and organizational mechanisms for SDG integration (a) | * APR p. 11: includes National PTF and its activities, which belong under Action 1.4.1, according to the description of Activity 1.4 in project document Sec. III. |
| 1.2. National and provincial SDG frameworks formulated including establishing baselines, setting local targets and identifying priorities (b) | 1.2.1. Developing national and provincial SDG frameworks for localization of the 2030 Agenda (b) |  |
| 1.4. SDG awareness and advocacy enhanced for multiple stakeholders, including government, UN agencies, academia, research and statistical institutions (c) | 1.3.1. Creating awareness and advocacy for SDGs (c) | * APR p. 13: includes discussion of PC-I, which belongs under Action 1.2.1. * APR p. 16: says Sindh SDG Unit commissioned a study on the cost of “climate in action in Sindh”, which belongs under Action 1.2.1. |
| * Included in Sec. VII but not in APR: Activity 1.3. Technical and institutional mechanisms strengthened for SDG planning and implementation. |
| 1.5. Private sector engagement on SDGs enhanced (d)  1.6. Parliamentary mechanisms strengthened for greater engagement of parliamentarians to discuss and address SDG-related issues (d) | 1.4.1. Engaging non-government stakeholders for SDGs (d) | * The description in project document Sec. III includes the private sector, the parliament and civil society (CSOs, think tanks, academia, rights groups and the media). |
| ***Project Output 2: SDGs monitoring and reporting strengthened*** | | |
| 2.1. Data gaps for SDG indicators analyzed and recommendations to address gaps proposed (e) | 2.1.1. Alignment of national surveys (e) | * Included in Sec. VII but not in APR: Activity 2.3. Capacity of statistical institutions for data collection, reporting and analysis enhanced. |
| 2.2. Baseline established and development of online dashboard initiated to report and track progress towards the SDGs (f) | 2.1.2. Establishing data reporting tools (f) | * Included in Sec. III but not in APR: Activity 2.3. Exploring unconventional data sources for SDGs. |
| ***Project Output 3: Financing flows increasingly aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | |
| 3.1. Linkages between budgetary and planning frameworks strengthened for effective SDG mainstreaming (g) | 3.1.1. Aligning public finance resources to SDGs (g) |  |
| 3.2. Online MIS system operationalized to monitor development assistance (h) | 3.2.2. Tracking resource allocation to SDGs (h) | * APR p. 27: talks about international financial flows, whereas the description of Activity 3.2 in project document Sec. III also includes corporate philanthropy and “others at district level”. |
|  | 3.3.3. Exploring alternative sources of financing | * APR p. 27: talks about SDG-related allocations in national and provincial budgets, whereas the description of Activity 3.3 in project document Sec. III also includes a variety of alternative sources of financing. |
| * Included in Sec. VII but not in APR: Activity 3.3. Evidence-based and inclusive processes to inform budget allocation institutionalized for SDGs. |
| ***Project Output 4: Innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs*** | | |
| 4.1. SDG plans for 3 pilot districts to mainstream SDGs in planning tools and implementation frameworks | 4.1.1. SDG plans for pilot districts to mainstream SDGs in planning tools and implementation frameworks | * This is the only action in the APR that is not found in Sec. III of the project document but taken from Sec. VII. |
| * Included in Sec. VII but not in APR: Activity 4.2. Innovative solutions for acceleration to achieve SDGs adopted. |

**Annex 11: UNDP Guidance on SMART Outputs, Outcomes and Indicators**

Source: UNDP *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results* (p. 58 and p. 63).

**SMART outcomes and impacts**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S** | **Specific:** Impacts and outcomes and outputs must use change language—they must describe a specific future condition |
| **M** | **Measurable:** Results, whether quantitative or qualitative, must have measurable indicators, making it possible to assess whether they were achieved or not |
| **A** | **Achievable:** Results must be within the capacity of the partners to achieve |
| **R** | **Relevant:** Results must make a contribution to selected priorities of the national development framework |
| **T** | **Time-bound:** Results are never open-ended—there is an expected date of accomplishment |

**SMART indicators**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S** | **Specific:** Is the indicator specific enough to measure progress towards the results? |
| **M** | **Measurable:** Is the indicator a reliable and clear measure of results? |
| **A** | **Attainable:** Are the results in which the indicator seeks to chart progress realistic? |
| **R** | **Relevant:** Is the indicator relevant to the intended outputs and outcomes? |
| **T** | **Time-bound:** Are data available at reasonable cost and effort? |

**Annex 12: Output indicators and Activities Listed in Three Sections of the Project Document**

While 17 activities needed to be assessed in the MTE (Table 2), there are only 11 output indicators in the project document. Moreover, not all the activities can be matched with the indicators. The result is that guesswork is required in going from activities to output indicators, and even that does not always suffice. Specifically:

* “SDGs integrated in existing and new institutional structures” (Output Indicator 1.1) is not the same thing as “Institutional structure created within the government” (Activity 1.1).
* “Planning tools” included in Output Indicator 1.2 are not mentioned in any of the activities under Output 1.
* “Extent to which framework for monitoring and reporting on SDGs is developed and implemented” (Output Indicator 2.1) is a much bigger task than the corresponding activities mentioned in the project document (2.1 Alignment of national surveys and 2.2 Establishing data reporting tools).
* Under Output 3, the two activities described in the project document Section III (3.1 Aligning public finance resources to SDGs and 3.2 Tracking resource allocation to SDGs) leave a substantial gap *vis-à-vis* Output Indicators 3.1 and 3.3.
* There are no specific activities in project document Section III for Output Indicator 4.1.
* The following activities are not reflected in any of the output indicators:
* development of online dashboard (Output 2);
* exploring unconventional data sources for SDGs (Output 2);
* tracking resource allocation to SDGs (Output 3); and,
* exploring alternative sources of financing (Output 3).

Project reports, including those shared by the SDG Units with the MTE evaluator, list progress under output indicators. That was the basis for constructing Table 3 of this report. However, with so many activities missing from or not aligned or misaligned with output indicators, ***reliance on indicators introduces errors and omissions such as the following***:

* Some activities may not be pursued or, if pursued, may not be reported. This is consistent with no activities being reported in Table 3 for Output Indicators 2.2 and 3.3.
* As described in Section 4.2, different units and the APR could report the same kind of actions under different output indicators.

Considering the limitations of output indicators, it was best for the MTE to work with activities rather than the indicators for assessing effectiveness, which led to the assessment of effectiveness summarized in Table 4. As indicated in the table below with reference to the UNDP Handbook, all but three of these activities are phrased in the way outcomes are phrased, and may be considered as component outcomes. This means that they measure changes in development conditions that depend on outputs produced by the project as well as the contribution of various partners and non-partners.[[80]](#footnote-80)

1. Projects are accountable for outputs, which are within their remit, but this project, as illustrated in Table 5, does not have outputs, the way outputs are generally described at the project level (as in the UNDP Handbook and the RBM Glossary), as products, goods and services delivered. This means that what the project has actually delivered with the resources it was provided cannot be reported systematically. That is why the project and its APRs cannot begin to develop a results orientation—outputs are the most immediate results of the project that lead to the next level of results, the component outcomes. ***Without properly defined outputs, and with outcomes in the guise of activities, the project does not have a results chain, and it is bound to be presented and assessed inadequately in progress reports and evaluations.***

**Output indicators and activities listed in three sections of the project document**

| **Guide to Annotation** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| For matching and merging activities >>> | | Superscripts in parentheses indicate matching activities | | (\*) identifies merged or original activity assessed in MTE | |
| For distinguishing outcomes from outputs >>> | | The superscript **OC** identifies outcome-type statements | | The superscript **OP** identifies output-type statements | |
| **Output Indicators (Section V—Results Framework)** | **Activities Listed in Section VII—Multi-Year Work Plan** | | **Activities Listed in Section III—Results and Partnerships** | | **Description in Section III** |
| ***Column A*** | | ***Column B*** | |
| ***Project Output 1: Plans, policies and resource allocation aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | | | | |
| 1.1. Extent to which SDGs integrated in existing and new institutional structures  1.2. Extent to which SDG frameworks at national/ subnational level are developed and planning tools are SDG-aligned  1.3. Extent to which key stakeholders have enhanced awareness and understanding of SDGs  1.4. Extent to which private sector is engaged in the implementation of SDGs  1.5. Extent to which parliament is engaged in the implementation of SDGs | 1.1. Institutional structure created within the government for effective policy coherence and coordination on SDGs (a)\* **OC** | | 1.1. Establishing institutional and organizational mechanisms for SDG integration (a) | | For Column B |
| 1.2. National and provincial SDG frameworks formulated including establishing baselines, setting local targets and identifying priorities (b)\* **OC** | | 1.2. Developing national and provincial SDG frameworks for localization of the 2030 Agenda (b) | | For Column B |
| 1.3. Technical and institutional mechanisms strengthened for SDG planning and implementation(b)\* **OC** | | *Not included in Section III* | | *No description* |
| 1.4. SDG awareness and advocacy enhanced for multiple stakeholders, including government, UN agencies, academia, research and statistical institutions (c)\* **OC** | | 1.3. Creating awareness and advocacy for SDGs (c) | | For Column B |
| *Not included in Section VII* | | 1.4. Engaging non-government stakeholders for SDGs (d) | | For Column B |
| 1.5. Private sector engagement on SDGs enhanced (d)\* **OC** | | *Not included in Section III* | | For Column A |
| 1.6. Parliamentary mechanisms strengthened for greater engagement of parliamentarians to discuss and address SDG-related issues (d)\* **OC** | | *Not included in Section III* | | For Column A |
| ***Project Output 2: SDGs monitoring and reporting strengthened*** | | | | | |
| 2.1. Extent to which framework for monitoring and reporting on SDGs is developed and implemented  2.2. Extent to which technical skills of national and provincial statistical institutions enhanced to effectively monitor progress on SDGs | 2.1. Data gaps for SDG indicators analyzed and recommendations to address gaps proposed (e)\* **OT** | | *Not included in Section III* | | *No description* |
| *Not included in Section VII* | | 2.1. Alignment of national surveys (e) | | For Column B |
| 2.2. Baseline established and development of online dashboard initiated to report and track progress towards the SDGs (f)\* **OC** | | *Not included in Section III* | | *No description* |
| *Not included in Section VII* | | 2.2. Establishing data reporting tools (f) | | For Column B |
| 2.3. Capacity of statistical institutions for data collection, reporting and analysis enhanced\* **OC** | |  | | *No description* |
| *Not included in Section VII* | | 2.3. Exploring unconventional data sources for SDGs\* **OC** | | For Column B |
| ***Project Output 3: Financing flows increasingly aligned to 2030 Agenda*** | | | | | |
| 3.1. Extent to which performance-based criteria are used for resource allocation at national/ sub-national level  3.2. Extent to which MIS operational and technical capacity of relevant stakeholders enhanced for effective aid coordination  3.3. Extent to which results-based and inclusive processes inform budget allocation at national and sub-national level | 3.1. Linkages between budgetary and planning frameworks strengthened for effective SDG mainstreaming (g)\* **OC** | | *Not included in Section III* | |  |
| *Not included in Section VII* | | 3.1. Aligning public finance resources to SDGs (g) | | For Column B |
| 3.2. Online MIS system operationalized to monitor development assistance (h)\* **OT** | | *Not included in Section III* | | *No description* |
| *Not included in Section VII* | | 3.2. Tracking resource allocation to SDGs (h)\* **OT** | | For Column B |
| 3.3. Evidence-based and inclusive processes to inform budget allocation institutionalized for SDGs\* **OC** | | *Not included in Section III* | | *No description* |
| *Not included in Section VII* | | 3.3. Exploring alternative sources of financing\* **OC** | | For Column B |
| ***Project Output 4: Innovative approaches applied to accelerate progress on priority SDGs*** | | | | | |
| 4.1. Extent to which innovative approaches are applied and implemented to accelerate progress towards SDGs | 4.1. SDG plans for 3 pilot districts to mainstream SDGs in planning tools and implementation frameworks\* **OC** | | *Not included in Section III* | | For Column A |
| 4.2. Innovative solutions for acceleration to achieve SDGs adopted\* **OC** | | *Not included in Section III* | | For Column A |

**Annex 13: Possibilities for Improvement**

**Part 1: Emphasizing Efficiency Instead of Increased Resources**

The important ***issue of financing the SDGs in the prevailing public finance environment also needs to be approached in a different way***. There is, first of all, a need to avoid and discourage the general tendency at the sector level to demonstrate that the sector is suffering from neglect and, therefore, needs a large amount of additional resources.[[81]](#footnote-81) Considering the facts of the matter, it is clearly not feasible that priority sectors will get anything close to the resources that have been estimated in this manner over the years. If they do, at some stage, it would be for political reasons rather than criteria-based recommendations from sector specialists.

A more feasible approach for the project and its partners is ***to identify and promote the cost-effective approaches for implementing SDG-related targets that are available*** across the country. They can be seen in some of the public-private partnerships facilitated by the provincial governments and sector-specific models developed by specialized CSOs. These are signposts to the future, even though they may need to be adapted between one location and another. As in the past, such approaches may be resisted by the line departments, and the project would need to engage with decision-makers in planning, finance and the political set-up to move in this direction. It would be prudent to consider this as a process of incremental change, acknowledging that incremental change on a large scale is likely to have a large and sustainable impact.

**Part 2: Broadening and Deepening Institutionalization with Greater Equity**

This refers to broadening institutionalization across the line departments and deepening it at the district level. The instruments available for this purpose are the annual work plans of the departments, supported by commensurate budgets. Elements that could be considered in the process include the following:

The provinces[[82]](#footnote-82) (through the P&DDs and the project) would analyze available datasets in terms of SDG-related indicators to identify those several of the districts that are lagging in the priority sectors.[[83]](#footnote-83) With secondary data, it should be possible, at this stage, to systematically reflect at least three of the five factors—geography, socio-economic status, and shocks and fragility—that UNDP guidance (as in Annex 9) considers essential to understand who is being left behind.

The provinces would decide on the leave no one behind priority districts and, within each district, the priority SDG targets, and establish the sequence in which observed inequalities would be addressed over a given period of time. The end result of this process would be in the shape of district-level departmental work plans and budgets. This would address the governance factor that UNDP guidance associates with the leave no one behind approach.

Once line departments have been given targets and commensurate resources, they often reach out for help from CSOs and communities when they need community cooperation for achieving their targets, particularly in populations and areas that are not covered by existing services.[[84]](#footnote-84) The government may wish to institutionalize this practice in an appropriate manner for selected departmental activities.

Beyond that, cooperation between CSOs/communities and line departments is best treated as a local matter, in which communities have to be free to decide that what is being offered has a visible and immediate benefit for them. Once this is assured, cooperating CSOs/communities can be asked to identify those who have been left behind in the communities on account of discrimination,[[85]](#footnote-85) so that they can be included in the services on offer. This attends to the fifth factor identified in the leave no one behind guidance.

Coordination mechanisms such as District SDG Committees would be needed, and this is already recognized across the provinces. Progress reporting would take place through normal departmental channels, augmented by the surveys and reports that are completed from time to time by the statistics bureaux.

**Part 3: Possible Intervention-specific Improvements**

There is a need to strengthen the contribution of awareness to external accountability by focusing increasingly on: (a) national, provincial and district targets compared with achievements over time; (b) the extent to which priority targets are reflected in financial allocations and utilization; (c) the need for equity across districts and neglected populations; and, (d) international and national approaches for more efficient use of public resources. The last item here overlaps with another direction to be pursued, namely, systematic learning for operational purposes (conveyed as technical assistance) from project and non-project experiences in the country, particularly for more efficient and equitable use of resources.

Effective parliamentary engagement for oversight and legislation can be improved through various means, some of which have been observed in the experience of PIPS, PILDAT and donor-assisted projects. These focus on training, technical assistance and handbooks for parliamentarians and drafters. The project could also consider ways and means of preparing user-friendly products for the parliamentarians and facilitating their participation in the budget-making and review process in cooperation with relevant departments. Helping parliamentarians address their systemic and capacity constraints in these ways is likely to require additional government or donor resources.

Exploring unconventional data sources is an activity the project is advised to pursue in close collaboration with the intended users of this activity among government ministries and departments. This exercise can be initiated by identifying feasible methods of data collection in other countries in collaboration with interested UN Agencies, who may continue to partner with the project and the government for testing and implementing any good practices that are considered useful and feasible by the partners.

The long and uncertain process of SDG-related curriculum development at universities can be abandoned. Instead, the project can collaborate with interested academics to promote awareness among faculty and students and assist those who are interested in research by providing specific information. Academics who can contribute concretely to the project’s work are available in all sectors of interest to the project and known to UNDP and relevant government officials. The project needs to use this expertise for specific actionable purposes, rather than engaging academic departments and centres as a whole.

The focus on the two most-lagging districts in each province can be subsumed within a broader approach to departmental engagement across a province, as discussed above in Part 2. Feasible innovative solutions for acceleration of SDG achievement can be found nationally as well as internationally as outlined in the first bullet.

1. The abbreviation “SDG” (rather than “SDGs”) is used in this report whenever it appears as an adjective, as in “SDG localization”, “SDG agenda”, “SDG framework”, “SDG Unit” and so on. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Unless otherwise specified, the term “provinces” includes AJK and GB for the sake of brevity. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This was previously known as the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Federal component of the project (which includes federally-administered areas) is referred to as the National Initiative for SDGs and the provincial ones (one each for Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh) as MAPS. The Federal component includes three SDG Units, one each for the Federal Government, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. These are derived from a total of 24 activities listed in the project document, as explained in Section 5.3 (on M&E). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The word “interventions” is used in this report to describe the actions the project is expected to take during implementation. This is broadly consistent with the way it is used in the project document. The word “actions” is not used for this purpose because it is being used in the project for activities included in the annual work plans and progress reports. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Activities that are not mentioned in Section III of the project document are identified by (\*). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This has been elaborated in the project document as:

   * South-South and Triangular Cooperation: (i) organize exposure visits of government counterparts to regional countries to share best practices, lessons learned and new approaches being piloted; and, (ii) engage with UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific for exchange of ideas and practices; and,
   * Knowledge: establish partnerships with UN/UNDP institutions (such as the Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development and Global Centre for Public Service Excellence) to support SDG Units in developing new initiatives and improving practices.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Provincial bureaux of statistics are included in Indicator 2.2 but not in the activity description of the project document under Output 2, where collaboration and technical support for the PBS are mentioned. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Sukuk* (Arabic word) are an alternative to conventional bonds that pay profit instead of interest and are accepted to be compliant with the *sharia* (Islamic law). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. A two-person hub for the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas was established in October 2018 and later merged with the KP Unit when these areas were merged with KP as a result of a constitutional amendment. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Sightsavers is an international non-governmental organization based in the United Kingdom that works in 30 countries, including Pakistan. Its focus is on treating eye conditions and making sure that people with disabilities are included in education and work (<https://www.sightsavers.org/where-we-work/pakistan/>). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *UNDP Evaluation Guidelines* (<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*; Paris: OECD, 1991 (<https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/2755284.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. “All evaluations … have an evaluation manager who is responsible for the oversight of the … evaluation process. Ideally, the evaluation manager should not be the programme/project manager to avoid all conflicts of interest.” “The evaluation commissioner is defined as the agency or entity that calls for the evaluation to be conducted, in the present case UNDP, and within UNDP, the senior manager that ‘owns’ the evaluation plan according to which a decentralized evaluation is being carried out. The evaluation commissioner … appoints an evaluation manager” (*UNDP Evaluation Guidelines*, Section 4, p. 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. *UNDP Evaluation Guidelines*, Section 4, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf>. This is the reference recommended in the *UNDP Evaluation Guidelines* (<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Project outputs and interventions are listed in Table 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Refer to *What Does It Mean To Leave No One Behind? A UNDP discussion paper and framework for implementation*, July 2018 (<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/what-does-it-mean-to-leave-no-one-behind-.html>). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For logistical reasons, stakeholders in AJK, Balochistan and GB were engaged through electronic means, including live calls and email communication. Participants expressed their views as freely and with as much detail as in meetings that entailed the physical presence of the evaluator and the stakeholders. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Target groups are defined as the “specific individuals or organiza­tions for whose benefit the development intervention is undertaken”, while beneficiaries are the “individuals, groups, or organiza­tions, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the develop­ment intervention” (OECD DAC, “Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management” ([http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf)))). The beneficiaries include the people who will benefit from the achievement of SDGs and corresponding targets as a result of project contributions. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. This excludes multiple meetings with the DPU and some others. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The evaluator could not meet most of the parliamentarians and key P&DD officials despite advance planning and continuous follow-up by the respective SDG Units. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The SDG Units of AJK, Balochistan, GB, Punjab and Sindh had confirmed the evaluator’s meetings with relevant parliamentarians, who regretted at the last moment that they could not participate due to their pressing commitments. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Country-level results are CPD Outcome 1 and Output 9.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Project outputs and interventions are listed in Table 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The term “design document” is used in this report to refer to the UNDP project document and the PC-Is. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Planning Commission of Pakistan website (<https://www.pc.gov.pk/web/sdg/sdgpak>). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The NEC is an inter-provincial and inter-ministerial body and the highest economic decision-making forum of the country. It is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes all the provincial Chief Ministers and key members of the federal and provincial cabinets and administrations. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. An additional reference is Shehryar Warraich, “Pakistan’s troubled local governance,” *The News* (daily), 20 October 2019 (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/568736-pakistans-troubled-local-governance>). This article can be read as an update on trends captured in the (2015) short history and political economy of local government reproduced in Annex 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Rafiullah Kakar, SDG Localization Plans for Districts Killa Abdullah and Nushki, December 2019, commissioned by the SDG Unit, Balochistan. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. This observation also has a bearing on district plans, as discussed below. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Farrukh Moriani, “Compact for Impact: Strategic Framework for Private Sector Engagement for the SDGs,” prepared for the SDG project, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. “The Pakistan Business Council was established in 2005 by fourteen of the country’s leading corporates and business groups as an advocacy forum to improve the general business environment of the country” (<https://www.pbc.org.pk/>). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. <https://www.tundrafonder.se/en/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ambreen Waheed, “National Responsibility Framework for Sustainable Development: Responsible Business Framework integrating SDGs,” MoPD&SI and Responsible Business Initiative, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Consortium for Development Policy Research (CDPR), “Pakistan’s Public Expenditure: Insights and Reflections” (pp. 15-31); Lahore, CDPR, August 2015 (<https://cdpr.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Raftar-Public-Expenditure-policy-report-27Aug2015.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. The 2013 MDG Report prepared with UNDP support observed that “since the 1990s the failure to reform the taxation system and raise domestic resources has hampered successive governments from providing resources to transform the social sectors. Consequently, the officially announced commitment … to achieve the MDGs has fallen victim to subsequent weak resource mobilization efforts” (Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms, “Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2013” (p. 7)

    (<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/pakistan/docs/MDGs/MDG2013Report/UNDP-Report13.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The implications for project effectiveness and impact are discussed later in the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. This adds to the rigidity of the development budget by virtue of the “throw-forward”, a term used in the government to define the claim of the present portfolio of projects on future fiscal resources. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. For example, CDPR, *op. cit.* (p. 21), with a focus on public-private partnerships. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. *Sukuk* (Arabic word) are an alternative to conventional bonds that pay profit instead of interest and are accepted to be compliant with the *sharia* (Islamic law). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. The Parliament of Pakistan is the bicameral legislative body of the federation, which includes the Senate and the National Assembly. The legislatures of the provinces, AJK and GB are referred to as assemblies. However, for the sake of consistency with the project document, the MTE uses the word “parliament” for the national and provincial assemblies and “parliamentarians” for the legislators. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Shahzad Paracha, “Rs 2,526 million released under PM’s SDG programme,” *Pakistan Today*, 25 October 2017 (<https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/10/25/rs2526-million-released-under-pms-sdg-program/>). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Tariq Butt, “Rs 24 bn allocation for MPs’ uplift schemes ‘illegal’,” *The News* (daily), 8 March 2019 (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/440992-rs24-bn-allocation-for-mps-uplift-schemes-illegal>). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance, “Budget Preparation Process” (<http://www.finance.gov.pk/process.html>) and Dawood Ahmad and Aizaz Asif, “A Guide to Understanding the Budget in Pakistan,” Parliament of Pakistan, 2007 (<https://pips.gov.pk/sites/default/files/003.A%20Guide%20to%20Understanding%20the%20Budget%20in%20Pakistan%20%28English%29.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, “Flawed budget process,” *Dawn* (daily), 17 June 2019 (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1488659>). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. “While legislators were busy debating the budget, the law was passed along with the Finance Act, 2019” (Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, “Parliamentary scrutiny?” *Dawn* (daily), 7 June 2020 (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1561895>). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Sheikh Sarfraz Ahmed, “Legislative Drafting Manual: A Handbook for Legislative Drafters,” Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, January 2019 (<http://www.calc.ngo/sites/default/files/Pakistan%20--%20Legislative-Drafting-Manual-2019.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Former Senator Babar cautions, “It is a grave folly for any legislator to assume that since he has a brilliant idea about a needed piece of legislation he is also competent enough to draft the appropriate legislation itself. A legislator must disabuse himself or herself of this erroneous notion.” [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Studies, *Parliamentary Research Digest*, October 2019, Volume 6, Issue 10, p. 1 (<https://www.pips.gov.pk/sites/default/files/10_PIPS_Parliamentary_Research_Digest_Oct_2019.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. A UNICEF representative informed the evaluator that UNICEF has helped the National Assembly by engaging consultants to work with relevant sub-committees to review 150 laws and frameworks related to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In a different approach, the Max Planck Foundation implemented its Strengthening Legislative Drafting in Pakistan project to “equip Pakistani legislative drafters, from both the Federal and Provincial legislatures, and Members of Parliament with state-of-the-art legislative drafting techniques”, particularly in view of “new opportunities for provincial law-making and increased fragmentation in the law as different legislative authorities enacted different laws for their jurisdictions” after the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment (<https://www.mpfpr.de/projects/pakistan/strengthening_legislative_drafting/>). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. <http://subaiassemblies.pk/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. <https://www.pips.gov.pk/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. The DPU maintains that interaction through national-level meetings and occasional inter-provincial exchange visits promotes learning within the project. This may be true but there is no evidence from documents or MTE meetings on the learning attributed to such events and how it was used. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The menu extends to advocacy, consultations, seminars, workshops, knowledge sharing (including international perspectives and innovative approaches for implementing the SDGs), action research on the public sector, and SDG frameworks. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. It is more common to find outstanding individuals from the academia contributing concretely to planners, managers and implementers. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Refer to *What Does It Mean To Leave No One Behind? A UNDP discussion paper and framework for implementation*, July 2018 (<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/what-does-it-mean-to-leave-no-one-behind-.html>). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *Multidimensional Poverty in Pakistan, 2015*; Planning Commission of Pakistan, UNDP and Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative

    (<http://www.pk.undp.org/content/dam/pakistan/docs/MPI/Multidimensional%20Poverty%20in%20Pakistan.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. These factors may be seen as an elaboration of the terms “deprivations and geography” used in the Preface by Dr Naeem uz Zafar in the MPI report (p. iii). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Except for work on gender-specific targets, only one government official interviewed during the MTE—a representative of the Women Development Department of Balochistan—mentioned a systematic gender assessment of a report produced by the project (in this case, a report on the mining and minerals industry). Systematic attention to gender is also evident in one report from AJK and two from GB. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. This output is fully explained in Section III of the project document in the following words:

    The fourth output of the project is a cross-cutting component that inter-links all other focus areas of the project by promoting innovative approaches and ideas that can accelerate progress on SDGs. Key focus of the output is to eliminate inequalities and ensure that *no one is left behind* in the efforts to accelerate sustainable development in Pakistan. In this context, innovative ideas will be supported using tools such as contests, design thinking workshops, hackathons, innovation labs and others to promote idea development and prototype testing for chronic development issues that are targeting some of the most lagging areas of Pakistan.

    With the aim of reducing inequalities, main focus of the project will be on geographical regions that are most deprived or multi-dimensionally poor. Supporting these efforts through consultations, evidence-based research and literature review, innovative approaches will be developed and applied for the districts lagging behind the most. Amongst other areas, the project will develop district-specific SDG plans for selected poorest districts in each province to explore how targeted planning and intervention can accelerate progress on SDGs by reducing inequalities. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Sightsavers (<https://www.sightsavers.org/where-we-work/pakistan/>) aims to make sure that people with disabilities are included in education and work. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Additional information is available at <https://www.tharfoundation.org/who-we-are/>. This initiative is part of is part of a partnership between the Government of Sindh, UNDP and Thar Foundation for making the Islamkot Taluka (population 250,000) in Tharparkar District a “model SDG taluka”. The SDG Unit has also assisted the government in aligning the development master plan of Islamkot Taluka with priority SDGs and SDG 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Activities that are not mentioned in Section III of the project document are identified by (\*). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Refer to the footnote for Table 3 for a complete description of what the project document envisaged under Output 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. However, the GB SDG Unit reports that its office lacks the same kind of safety measures that have been provided to other units. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. UNDP *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results*

    (<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/documents/english/pme-handbook.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. OECD DAC “Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management”

    (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf>). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. As explained in the UNDP Handbook (p. 60), “carrying out or completing a … project activity does not constitute a development result”. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. This system has been used in the CPD and may be appropriate when, as is generally the case: (a) indicators rely on multiple country-level data sources; and, (b) a small and well-coordinated team is responsible for assessing progress with reference to these data sources. The situation at the project level is different and does not warrant the use of this system. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. This is explained in Robert Trevethan, “Deconstructing and Assessing Knowledge and Awareness in Public Health Research,” *Frontiers of Public Health* 2017; 5: 194 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5545880/>). The author explains that this is based on the dictionary meanings of knowledge that indicate “that knowledge comprises information that is acquired from authoritative external sources and that can therefore, presumably, be regarded as factual in nature. [This] knowledge refers solely to specific information that is factual in nature.” [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. The evaluator was engaged by the then UN Inter-Agency Support Unit to prepare Pakistan’s first MDG report in 2003-2004 (<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Pakistan/Pakistan%20MDG%20Report%202004.pdf>) in collaboration with the Chief Economist, Planning Commission, and with the participation of line ministries and UN Heads of Agency, and remained updated on the progress of the MDGs over the years. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. United Nations Sustainable Development Framework for Pakistan. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Integrated results and resources framework. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Country-level results are CPD Outcome 1 and Output 9.3, cited above in Section 1.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Project outputs and interventions are listed in Table 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Refer to *What Does It Mean To Leave No One Behind? A UNDP discussion paper and framework for implementation*, July 2018 (<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/what-does-it-mean-to-leave-no-one-behind-.html>). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. As explained in the UNDP Handbook (p. 60), “carrying out or completing a … project activity does not constitute a development result”. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. UNDP Handbook (p. 55). [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. A similar tendency has been observed in some parts of the project. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. In the remainder of this section, the term “provinces” includes AJK and GB for the sake of brevity. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. This is included as an activity in the Sindh PC-I with reference to the MPI but additional data sources are also available in each province. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. This has been observed in all regions of the country. Examples include school enrolment, tree plantation, voter registration, immunisation, livestock vaccination and similar campaigns and initiatives. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. In Annex 9, this is associated with exclusion, bias or mistreatment based on some aspect of a person’s identity. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)