

Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) - UNEP Inputs

Questionnaire on scope and methodology of a global sustainable development report

Scope

1. The GSDR should be a consultative, participatory process that also builds capacity for conducting integrated global sustainable development assessments and reporting on progress towards sustainable development (SD). It should inform a wide range of stakeholders and strengthen the interaction between science and policy. It should provide a comprehensive integrated assessment using where appropriate national level data for indicators on sustainable development to effectively track progress at the global, regional and national scales, it could also develop a baseline for new indicators that are relevant to monitoring SD.

The GSDR should not only focus on the themes included in the forthcoming sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the Post 2015 agenda but also include other areas of importance, including those agreed at Rio+20 and in other important internationally agreed goals and commitments. It should address the major drivers influencing the achievement of SD including, but not limited to; demographic dynamics, macro-economics, environmental change and governance.

It could provide trend information based on time series data since Rio 1992 and projections at intervals to 2050 (this may also be influenced by any agreed interim targets to 2030 as part of the SDGs). It should also provide information on data gaps and how these gaps can be addressed.

In terms of geographic focus, the GSDR should provide information at the global, regional and sub-regional levels building from national level reporting and data. It could also report using other groupings such as; high, middle, low income economies; emerging economies; and LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS etc. If reporting on individual country progress towards SDGs an index could be developed to simplify complex information. It should build on national level sustainability reporting mechanisms and reports and should not duplicate these efforts.

It should provide 'solutions' to key stakeholders such as policy makers and the private sector including selected examples and case studies of good practices and where co-benefits have been achieved across all three dimensions of SD, including highlighting successful integrated policies. It should report on 'means of implementation', including SD financing, meeting ODA targets, trade, capacity building, environmentally sound technologies, international development cooperation, and progress in developing (and the effectiveness) of partnerships and multi-stakeholder initiatives.

2. The GSDR should be relevant to the themes, topics, issues raised in the extensive consultations on the Post 2015 agenda, which represent a comprehensive stakeholder group. Furthermore,

the process of the GSDR should include global/ regional multi-stakeholder consultations to set priorities for the assessment. The assessment report should not take a siloed approach to themes or sectors but should focus on the interlinkages between the three dimensions on sustainable development (social, environmental and economic) as well as governance and means of implementation. It should show clearly the interrelationship between economic activities, social indicators, environmental quality and the depletion of resources at the national, regional and global scale. In the scope, special emphasis may be given to policy coherence across themes and sectors. An attempt must be made to highlight the need for vertical and horizontal integration of policy across scale and time.

3. The GSDR should highlight new and emerging issues (positive or negative) – including around policies, technologies, partnership and initiatives - that are pertinent to the achievement of SD. Identification of emerging issues could be solicited through on-going web based consultations allowing a wide engagement including from the public, but their selection for inclusion in the report should be based on consensus from the scientific community and validated by policy makers – this could be facilitated by global/ regional consultations.
4. The GSDR should report on past and future trends and provide an outlook for SD at appropriate intervals. The report should show case best practice and innovative examples of SD policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and technologies from around the world as these can serve as good examples that policymakers and stakeholders can adapt in order to accelerate SD. The report must identify enabling conditions for the success of the policy.
5. The GSDR would provide a good opportunity – perhaps even in a central role - for reporting on progress towards achieving SDGs and Post-2015 agenda and in this regard it would need to draw from many different sources including governments, UN system, private sector, academia etc
6. An indicator report could be provided yearly with a synthesis report every 2 years to inform the HLPF.

Methodology

7. The report should be coordinated by relevant UN agencies, perhaps with an inter-agency secretariat and involve a multi-stakeholder process. Experts should be nominated and selected in a transparent manner. The report should undergo a rigorous peer review process both by scientists, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders in order to ensure scientific credibility, legitimacy and policy relevance. Focus areas of each edition should be agreed through an intergovernmental/ multi-stakeholder process at either regional or global scale.
8. To begin with it is suggested that the report should be an assessment type report taking relevant approaches and methodologies from existing assessment reports such as UNEP's GEO reports, the UNDP's Human Development Report, the World Bank's World Development Report,

the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the IPCC Assessment Reports. In time methods can be developed or a mix of methods applied to suit the context of the assessment.

9. The GSDR should draw from the large range of on-going global and regional assessments as well as thematic assessments. It should also draw from national level sustainable development reporting where it exists. Where they do not exist, modalities can be put in place to help countries move toward developing SD reporting. National and regional contributions could be coordinated through focal points via regular consultations. Using web based toolkits for reporting will be a requirement to process such large quantities of data and information.
10. Scientists should be involved as authors and reviewers of the report. Constituting a scientific advisory group can be effective with clear roles and responsibilities and modalities to ensure adequate contributions from the group. The SG's Scientific Advisory Panel may be able to support the work of the GSDR.

Governments should be requested to nominate their best scientists. However, eminent scientists not in the government roster should be encouraged to participate. National and Regional Science Academy, professional societies, knowledge exchange platforms, R and D institutions in private and public domain, civil society and opinion makers should be taken on board by creating a shared vision around the GSDR.

11. All countries should institute a national sustainable development reporting process as '*we can't manage what we can't measure*'. Such a reporting process may need to engage a multi-ministerial committee with a common goal.
12. The report must influence the political agenda, economic priority setting and equity issues at local, national and global scale.