



**PARTNERSHIP
ACCELERATOR**
2030 AGENDA
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2020

HIGHLIGHTS



PARTNERSHIP ACCELERATOR 2030 AGENDA

FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Copyright © United Nations, 2020
All rights reserved

Division for Sustainable Development Goals
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Prepared by:
Ms. Lineke Wang Schrijver, Mr. Nelson Pereira, Mr. Pedro Scudeller, Mr. Ola Goransson

December 2020

The **2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator** is a collaborative initiative by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and The Partnering Initiative (TPI), in collaboration with United Nations Office for Partnerships, UN Global Compact, and the UN Development Coordination Office, aimed at accelerating and scaling up effective partnerships in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The objectives of the Partnership Accelerator include:

Support effective country driven partnership platforms for the SDGs: Research and direct support of effective multi-stakeholder partnership platforms and mechanisms for engaging business and other stakeholders, and catalyzing partnerships for the SDGs at the national and global level; drawing out best practices and guidance; assisting in optimizing emerging platforms; supporting a new generation of UN Resident Coordinators and country teams.

Building partnership skills and competencies: Build capacity of relevant stakeholders to develop and implement partnerships for the SDGs, and to support organizations to develop their policy and strategy, systems and processes, legal agreements and culture to support collaboration.

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has underscored the importance of enhancing global collaboration and effective partnerships among all sectors and stakeholders, while building back better, together. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is an important mechanism to tackle the challenges from COVID-19 and will be essential in order to ‘build back better’ as societies begin to recover and look to build more sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies.

The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken in 2020 as part of the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator.



OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT & RESEARCH

SDG PARTNERSHIP GUIDEBOOK

PARTNERSHIP PLATFORMS FOR THE SDGS: LEARNING FROM PRACTICE

WEBSITE

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP TRAINING WORKSHOPS

MALDIVES

SAMOA

MEXICO

SRI LANKA

OUTREACH/LEARNING EVENTS

SIDE EVENTS DURING 2020 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

2030 AGENDA PARTNERSHIP ACCELERATOR WEBINAR SERIES:

WEBINAR 1: IS YOUR ORGANIZATION EQUIPPED TO PARTNER EFFECTIVELY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS? (10 DECEMBER 2020)

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT & RESEARCH

SDG PARTNERSHIP GUIDEBOOK

The SDG Partnership Guidebook was launched in July 2020 and serves as a practical guide to building high impact multi-stakeholder partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The aim of this Guidebook is to convey the magic of how multi-stakeholder partnerships at the country level can deliver extraordinary results towards the Sustainable Development Goals and provide clear guidance on how to build the most robust, effective collaborations. The Guidebook is designed to be valuable to individuals and organisations with varying degrees of familiarity with working in partnership, and in a wide range of contexts. However, one can approach the material in different ways depending on the specific circumstances.

The Guidebook sets out the **key Building Blocks of successful partnerships** and the underlying processes – from initial stakeholder engagement to partnership review – necessary to develop and keep those Building Blocks in place and to maximize partnership impact. Along with frameworks to help organizations understand, identify and select the most appropriate forms of collaboration, the Guidebook includes a series of tools that support organizations through each step of partnership development and management. It also provides guidance on the more in-depth, trickier, but essential, partnering aspects – including trust, power imbalances, and the frustrations and challenges of working across different organisational cultures.

From experience, the more knowledge relevant individuals from all partners have of the **process of partnering** (including the inevitable roadblocks and challenges that will come up), the faster a partnership can be developed, and the more likely it is to overcome difficult times. By 'process' we mean the ways of developing and managing partnerships, with a constant eye on engagement, on inclusivity, on relationship and trust building, and on co-creation.

The guidebook brings together the best of experiences of The Partnering Initiative and its partners from more than seventeen years of working in multiple regions and contexts, with all societal stakeholders, and with all kinds of partnership: from small-scale, one-of-a-kind community partnerships to global partnerships operating across over a third of the world's countries.



PARTNERSHIP PLATFORMS FOR THE SDGS: LEARNING FROM PRACTICE

A research report on partnership platforms best practices was launched in July 2020. The report draws on a number of effective country-based partnership platforms.

National multi-stakeholder 'partnership platforms' are being developed around the world and appear to have great potential to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. However, the term is used in a wide variety of ways to reflect a range of forms, structures and mechanisms. Despite the large overall number of such entities, there is a relatively small number of platforms that have been operating over a sufficient period of time, with sufficient evidence of impact, to be able to draw out lessons about what makes them effective. This makes it hard to learn from the hard-won experience of those few pioneers that have achieved breakthrough impacts.

This report attempts to respond to these challenges in the following ways:

- Presenting a basic partnership platform **typology**, to help provide a shared basis for knowledge and experience exchange.
- Providing a **brief review** of experience of different types of platforms using existing public evaluations, toolkits and reviews; also drawing on TPI's own direct experience of supporting the development of these platforms.
- Presenting a set of **characteristics** of a transformative partnership platform, based on examples drawn from existing practice.

The report was produced for decision-makers and their advisors within governments and the UN system who are looking to more systematically drive partnerships for the SDGs, potentially through national-level, multi-stakeholder partnership platforms for the SDGs. Secretariats of global multi-stakeholder partnerships which have an aspiration of country-level action and engagement may also find the report useful in thinking through what is needed to support in-country platforms. The report may also be of interest to those who are leading, coordinating and managing these platforms.

WEBSITE

The website of the Accelerator includes all relevant information on the national workshops, the guidebook, the research report, as well as short interviews from participants, available at:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/PartnershipAccelerator>

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP TRAINING WORKSHOPS

A key focus of the Partnership Accelerator is to bolster effective country driven partnerships and partnership platforms in support of SDG implementation, including through national partnership workshops. Organized in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinators in select countries and informed by in-depth needs analysis used to define their scope and content, these workshops offer training on the development of effective partnerships, and enhanced understanding of relationships across participants from different sectors, in order to launch new partnerships for supporting SDG implementation.

MALDIVES

On 2 November 2020, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), UN Resident Coordinators' Office Maldives and The Partnering Initiative (TPI), in collaboration with the Development Planning & SDG Coordination Section of the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Republic of Maldives, organized a webinar as part of the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator support to advance partnerships in Maldives. The webinar served as a starting point to get people involved and excited about the "One Maldives" - whose purpose is to catalyze a new era of collaboration to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Maldives. The online partnership dialogue was the start of a bigger conversation on how to build strong partnerships in the Maldives and eventually build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The meeting was attended by around 60 participants, which included representatives from the President's Office, government ministry SDG focal points, UN agencies, as well as a number of representatives from independent institutions, CSOs, academia, private sector.



His Excellency Mohamed Aslam, Minister of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure of the Republic of Maldives, welcomed the participants to the workshop, and stressed the importance of engaging all stakeholders in a productive and efficient way to achieve the SDGs. His Excellency further highlighted the important role all sectors have played during the COVID-19 pandemic and expressed hope that this cooperation will continue in supporting the advancement of the SDGs in Maldives. Ms. Catherine Haswell, United Nations Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Maldives, encouraged all stakeholders to “*think different, act different and have a joined vision for moving Maldives towards a sustainable future*”. Ms. Haswell further emphasized that the social and economic impact of COVID-19 should make us think of new ambitious forms of partnership, for which this meeting could be very useful.

PARTNERSHIPS IN MALDIVES

Through consultations with Government SDG focal points, CSOs and UN agencies, Ms. Ibrahim Athifa, a consultant for UN DESA, conducted a partnership landscape assessment. The Partnership Assessment was divided into thematic areas of People (SDGs 3, 4, 5 and 10), Planet (SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15), Prosperity (SDGs 1, 2, 8 and 9) and Peace (SDG 16).

In sum, the Assessment suggested some potential areas for partnership in mental health and psychosocial support (people), safe water (planet), occupational health and safety (prosperity) and anti-corruption (peace). Although there have been some very effective partnerships in the Maldives, the Assessment concluded that the government support was limited due to low capacity and the shortage of a formal mechanism. Moreover, there are limited partnerships where most stakeholders are represented and very few partnerships with the private sector, academia and media. There is a lack of understanding of SDGs and the value of partnerships to make progress on the SDGs. This is a missed opportunity.

In order to create partnership acceleration for the SDGs, a mechanism and support for durable partnerships is needed. Good communication, creative collaborations and champions from Government, CSOs, private sector, academia and media as accelerators for partnerships are key. The more is known about the development of partnerships; the more effective partnerships will happen.

Moving forward: How do we move towards One Maldives - to build back better and deliver a prosperous economy, a thriving society and a flourishing environment?

The online partnership dialogue itself served as a key ingredient for nurturing understanding and building awareness on the importance and the need for developing inclusive and effective partnerships in Maldives, a sentiment that was echoed by many participants. This webinar served as a first step on the journey towards **One Maldives**. The COVID-19 pandemic provides a unique situation that provides impetus for new and innovative partnerships, where all sectors have stepped up in order to contribute to the development of the country. This should be similarly done for the achievement of the SDGs in the Maldives. At the webinar, a first draft of a national Maldives Partnership Landscape was introduced. Next steps include organizing thematic focused partnership webinars, and eventually a national Maldives Partnership Forum.

SAMOA

The UN Resident Coordinator of Samoa has requested that the Partnership Accelerator should focus its support to the country in the design of a new partnership to tackle the country's recent challenges with measles. The new partnership – titled *Partnership Platform for Immunization (P4I)* – will follow the approach of the Kenya SDG Partnership Platform and respond to the Government of Samoa's National Response and Recovery Appeal² that was launched on 6 December 2019.

The Partnership Accelerator programme will provide support to the Resident Coordinator in Samoa in the initial design phase of the platform, which will include convening relevant stakeholders for a partnership multi-stakeholder workshop.

The purpose of the workshop will be to raise involved stakeholder's partnering skills and competencies, including widening thinking around business-as-unusual partnerships, inject the latest good practice in effective partnering and effective platforms for catalyzing partnership developed by the Partnership Accelerator, and to discuss and bottom-out the key opportunities, issues, challenges and constraints for the platform. The workshop will produce a set of initial reflections and recommendations around the platform's various elements, including, its governance, management and operational structure.

PARTNERSHIPS IN SAMOA

A partnership landscape assessment was conducted for Samoa and found that while good partnerships are happening, sustainability of funding and efforts remain a challenge. It highlighted that in all situations, strong, decisive, sustained and committed leadership is instrumental in ensuring strong coordination, engagement and support by multiple actors. Donors respond well to strong, decisive and coordinated national leadership that is structured but also flexible. Having former Samoan public servants working for the development partners offices in Samoa adds value to the development partners understanding of the cultural and social context for national partnerships.

Samoa's 2nd VNR report noted that Samoa has extensive national and sector plans in place and while there has been good progress, there are challenges in implementation and in maintaining significant results. The report noted the increasing levels of hardship and inequality and the importance of promoting an increased focus on improving capacities to deliver more targeted support to those being left behind. In this context, potential multi-stakeholder partnerships suggested aim to improve the effectiveness of delivery of existing programs and initiatives. These are: i) Leaving no one behind multi-stakeholder partnership; ii) Measles and COVID-19 Recovery partnership; iii) Strengthen the relationship and engagement between government and nonstate actors; and iv) Improve the availability of and use of data/information for national planning and monitoring.



MEXICO



The United Nations in Mexico in collaboration with the government has recently launched its third United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which covers the period 2020-2025 and is fully aligned to the SDGs. The Framework, which was the result of an extensive consultation process with the government, NGOs, the private sector and academia, identifies several strategic areas for joint action to drive implementation of the SDGs in Mexico: equality and inclusion, prosperity and innovation, green economy and climate change, and peace, justice and the rule of law.

Furthermore, México's Socioeconomic Response Plan to COVID-19 (2020), identifies five programmatic areas: i) Health first: protect health systems and services during the crisis; ii) Protect people: social protection and basic services; iii) Response and Economic recovery: protect employment, small and medium enterprises and informal sector workers; iv) Macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration; iv) Social cohesion and Communitarian resilience.


In support of these efforts, the UN Resident Coordinators Office in Mexico, in collaboration with the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator, will be engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including the government, the UN country team, academia, private sector, and civil society, to spur implementation of the SDGs and building back better by enhancing cohesion among sectors and stakeholders, and inspiring new actions and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

A national consultant is currently developing a Partnership Landscape assessment through interviews, desk research and self-organized meetings. This assessment includes:

- Thematic areas and issues where there is strong potential for new partnerships across sectors in Mexico, and with regional and global institutions and donors
- Existing mechanisms for engaging stakeholders and sectors towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Mexico
- Understanding of the level of support from government towards partnership (evidenced by policies, high-level statements etc.)
- Overview of the landscape of development actors engaged in partnerships: government ministries, UN entities, business actors, and other stakeholders.
- Overview of existing key partnerships and actions that are taking place

The Mexico Partnership Forum (date tbc) will provide a starting point for ensuring greater coherence across all stakeholders and sectors while building back better from COVID-19, leading to more transformational whole-of-society approach to partnerships for advancing SDGs in Mexico.

SRI LANKA



The President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa, has firmly placed the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Sri Lanka as a key priority, as enshrined in the policy document, "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour"³. The document, termed as Sri Lanka government's national development framework, encompasses ideas emerging from a broad national stakeholder engagement process in the country, including with inhabitants from 25,000 villages and the general public.

The UN in Sri Lanka is working with the Government and partners to help alleviate the health and socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In support of these efforts, the UN Resident Coordinators Office in Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator, will be engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including the government, the UN country team, academia, private sector, and civil society, to spur implementation of the SDGs and building back better by enhancing cohesion among sectors and stakeholders, and inspire new actions and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

A national consultant is currently developing a Partnership Landscape assessment through interviews, desk research and self-organized meetings. This Assessment includes:

- Thematic areas and issues where there is strong potential for new partnerships across sectors in Sri Lanka, and with regional and global institutions and donors
- Existing mechanisms for engaging stakeholders and sectors towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Sri Lanka
- Understanding of the level of support from government towards partnership (evidenced by policies, high-level statements etc.)
- Overview of the landscape of development actors engaged in partnerships: government ministries, UN entities, business actors, and other stakeholders.
- Overview of existing key partnerships and actions that are taking place

The Sri Lanka Partnership Forum (date and venue tbc) will provide a starting point for ensuring greater coherence across all stakeholders and sectors while building back better from COVID-19, leading to more transformational whole-of-society approach to partnerships for advancing SDGs in Sri Lanka.

The three-day Forum will include a high-level partnership dialogue to set the stage and outline the need for driving effective multi-stakeholder partnerships, held in the morning of the first day, followed by a two-and-a-half-day working level multi-stakeholder workshop.

OUTREACH & LEARNING EVENTS

SIDE EVENTS DURING 2020 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

The meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2020 was held from Tuesday, 7 July, to Thursday, 16 July 2020, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The theme was called “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST COVID-19 - BUILDING BACK BETTER TOGETHER TO ADVANCE THE 2030 AGENDA, 7 JULY 2020

To advise the work of the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator and ensure that it can be impactful in the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the side event explored how partnerships can help assist in particular developing countries to address the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath and promote synergies between key sectors, including the scientific and technological community and the private sector.

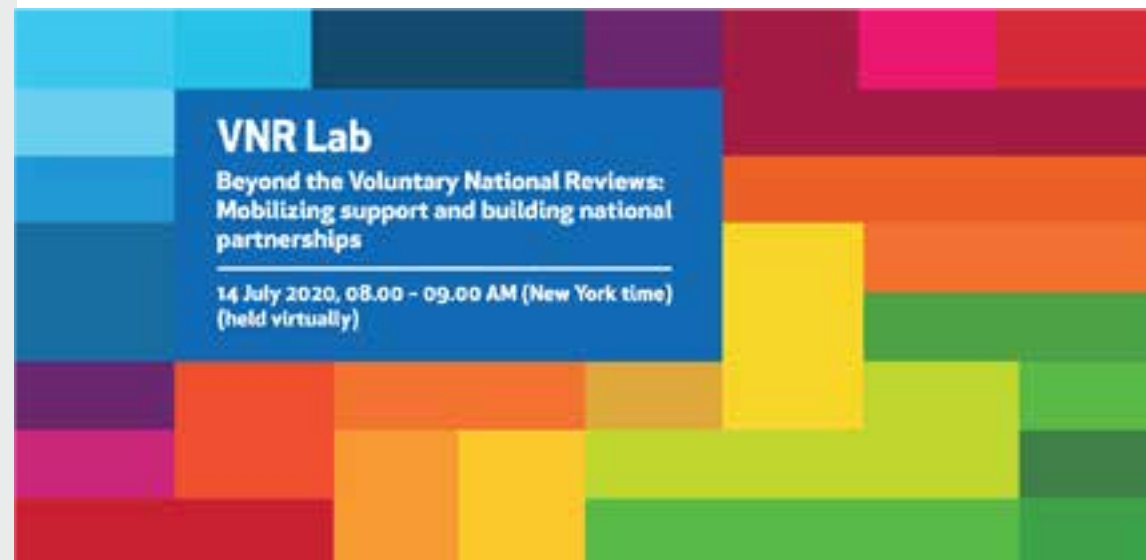


DEVELOPING TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS TO CATALYZE SDGS IMPLEMENTATION, 7 JULY 2020

This event was organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN Office for Sustainable Development), UN Office on Drugs and Crime, World Economic Forum and The Partnering Initiative.

The interconnected nature of the 2030 Agenda requires an acknowledgement of the interconnections between the SDGs and the need for holistic, system transformation approaches that engage with, and cut across, issues. The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report, prepared by an independent group of scientists, presents an objective assessment of where the world is falling short and what needs to be done. The Report highlights six central entry points for transformation across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, that offer the most promise for achieving the desired transformations at the necessary scale and speed and normative considerations, such as leaving no one behind - a central promise of the 2030 Agenda.

The objective of this event was to provide an introduction to how multi-stakeholder partnerships can facilitate system transformation through the use of a specific example. It specifically looked at transformation of the Rule of Law (SDG 16) as essential to achieving the SDGs overall, how this exists with a complex system requiring multi-stakeholder partnerships (SDG 17) to address it and education (SDG 4) as a fundamental aspect of this transformation. The training focused on the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) levers of Governance and Individual and Collective Action to achieve human well-being and capabilities as an entry point to transformation – by introducing an innovative approach to system mapping and identifying specific action pathways required to transform the system.



VNR LAB - BEYOND THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS: MOBILIZING SUPPORT AND BUILDING NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, 14 JULY 2020

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member States to conduct regular and inclusive Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of progress at the national and sub-national levels. The VNRs facilitate the sharing of experiences, strengthening policies and institutions of governments, mobilizing multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In 2020, 51 countries conducted their VNRs at the High-level Political Forum.

The VNR Labs provide an informal platform to share best practices and to reflect on the experience thus far with the VNRs, focusing on cross-cutting themes and country experiences. It is widely recognized that the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires a transformation in our societies that can only be achieved through engaging and leveraging the unique roles and resources of all sectors and stakeholders of society.

The VNR Lab on “Beyond the VNRs: mobilizing support and building national partnerships” explored and showcased practices on how countries can systematically catalyze national multi-stakeholder partnerships for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support implementation of the SDGs, including through their VNR process. The Lab also explored how countries can help create an enabling environment that may encourage and foster collaboration across stakeholders.



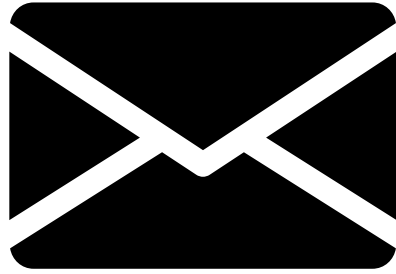
WEBINAR 1: IS YOUR ORGANIZATION EQUIPPED TO PARTNER EFFECTIVELY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS? (10 DECEMBER 2020)

On 10 December 2020, the first webinar of the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator series explored the challenges - and successes - in being institutionally fit for purpose to partner effectively to implement the SDGs, from the perspective of diverse stakeholders and sectors (governments, UN entities, civil society and business). This webinar was organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), The Partnering Initiative and World Vision.

The webinar included a panel of experts sharing their successes as well as obstacles and challenges during their partnering efforts.

H.E. María del Pilar Garrido Gonzalo, Minister of Planning and Economic Policy, Republic of Costa Rica, stressed that the only way to achieve the SDGs is if we do it together, in the form of partnerships. For successful partnerships, it is crucial to invest in the process, while being patient and inclusive. An ecosystem of institutions that are committed to a shared vision on the PPPs, mutual collaboration and co-creating value together on the 2030 Agenda is the way forward.

This webinar was a successful start of the webinar series of the Partnership Accelerator. Participants were able to learn about key aspects for organizations to be equipped for developing partnerships and build recognition of and appreciation of the institutional capacities required for effective collaboration.



Stay connected

Sign up to receive updates on developments and announcements.

sustainabledevelopment.un.org/PartnershipAccelerator