



**PARTNERSHIP
ACCELERATOR
2030 AGENDA**
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Concept note

Introduction

The present document, prepared by the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), in collaboration with United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP), and The Partnering Initiative, proposes a multi-year project with related activities, herewith known as the *2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator*, that together would significantly help accelerate and scale up effective partnerships in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The objectives of the activities include:

- **Support effective country driven partnership platforms for 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 national and global level, drawing out best practices and guidance, to assist optimizing emerging platforms, and supporting new generation of UN country teams.

Direct training support will be offered to member States, UN entities/country teams and other stakeholders wishing to develop new partnership platforms and partnership engagements.

- **Building partnering 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.

Activities and approach

Activities of the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator will include national level training workshops, mixed with globally accessible online training courses.

The outputs from the activities of the Partnership Accelerator will form the *2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator Resource Library* - an online, openly accessible, library of learning modules, case studies

on partnerships and platforms, curated case studies, and best practices of design and implementation of partnerships for the SDGs.

Area	Year 1	Year 2+
Country driven partnership platforms for the SDGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake research into the different currently operational partnerships platforms, the models, challenges and effective practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build an action network of platforms for the exchange of learning and material; and development of best practice guidance; Provision of direct support and capacity building to UN and countries to build platforms for the SDGs; Creation of map of qualified and experienced organizations and individuals able to provide direct support to partnerships, made accessible through the online partnership resource centre.
Building partnering skills and competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a Partnering for SDG Manual; Development of a complete training course package and delivery in five countries and one regional centre; Key partnership resources made available online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of trainers to build up a faculty of partnership trainers (from the UN, INGOs, training organisations) and a low-cost model able to deliver in-country training at considerable scale; Development of online training courses and further modules (including specialized SDG-specific training) for complete partnership professional development, including certification. Extensive online partnership resource centre.
Institutional Fitness for Partnering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The basics of building fit for partnering organizations included in the guidebook and training above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build cohorts of three or four organizations to collectively go through a process of analysis of their organizations and develop roadmap plans of action to build their institutional capability; Develop best practice guidance and training for building fitness for partnering to disseminate and cascade out widely

Background

The scope and complexity of the transformations required for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) that are at its core are unprecedented. As a result, no government or stakeholder will be able to address the multi-sectoral, cross-pillar global challenges of today alone, instead, the 2030 Agenda can only be achieved if different sectors and actors work together in an integrated manner by pooling financial resources, knowledge and expertise.

SDG 17 on “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”, through its targets 17.16 and 17.17, recognizes the critical importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share the finance, knowledge, expertise and

technology to support the achievement of SDGs in all countries. The targets also highlight the need to promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships.

Over the recent years, the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in supporting the implementation of sustainable development has also been increasingly recognized by member States and different stakeholders, including leading institutions in international development and the private sector. This is evident in the many UN Conferences that have resulted in the launch of new multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments.

At the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS Conference) in 2014, 300 multi-stakeholder partnerships devoted to the sustainable development of SIDS were announced, covering areas such as oceans and seas, climate change, biodiversity, resilience-building, sustainable economic growth, renewable energy and disaster risk reduction. In 2017, at the UN Ocean Conference, over 1,400 voluntary commitments for concrete action to advance implementation of SDG 14 targets were made by all stakeholders, including governments, the United Nations system, civil society organizations, academia, the scientific community, and the private sector. Collectively, these partnerships and commitments make considerable contributions to supporting the implementation of the SDGs.

Despite the strong rhetoric for the engagement of multi-stakeholder partnerships for supporting implementation of the SDGs – the reality is that we are still only scratching the surface in terms of the number, and quality, of partnerships required to deliver the SDGs. The 2018 Partnership Exchange, held in the margins of the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) explored and identified, among other issues, a key building blocks to *build an enabling environment for partnering* to systemically scale up collaboration among a range of stakeholders for driving the implementation of the SDGs, and to run effective partnership action platforms which convene societal sectors around SDG priorities, and catalyze implementation of innovative initiatives. These included:

1. Developing the competencies of actors from all societal sectors need to effectively partner, including building an understanding of other sectors, relationship and partnership-building skills, and a technical knowledge of the building blocks of value-creating partnerships;
2. Institutions and organizations need to be set up to be fit for partnering: i.e. to have in place the strategies, systems and processes, staff capacities and support, and culture that are optimized to incentivize and support working collaboratively with others;
3. Setting up mechanisms or platforms that can physically convene government, business, UN, donors and civil society around SDG priorities to catalyze and support partnership development.

Within many countries, there has been considerable progress made with respect to country driven partnership platforms for dialogue and consultation on development priorities. Dialogue alone, however, is not sufficient to catalyze the necessary collaborative action. There exists a modest but growing number of partnership platforms which are designed to convene stakeholders and development actors around the SDGs, and then help to build the innovative partnerships needed to deliver on the SDGs. There is however currently very limited research or guidance around effective models for such SDG platforms.

With respect to institutional partnership-readiness, some UN entities, international NGOs and donors have made an analysis of the degree to which they are fit for partnering and begun the process of reducing obstacles to partnering, increasing incentives and improving their systems and capacities. They are, however, among the exception and most organizations are far from partnership-optimized.

Partners and governance

The project will be carried out in collaboration with *The Partnering Initiative (TPI)*, a not-for-profit UK based organization which focuses on building capacity through training, tools and publications around partnering for sustainable development.

The Accelerator will operate initially as an informal collaboration between UNDESA, UNOP, UNOSD and The Partnering Initiative.