

SDGs Plus Programme 2023-2028

B0424 - Pakistan - Islamabad

REPORTING PERIOD 2023- 2028

Narrative

REPORT DATE: 25-05-2026

1. Executive Summary

2. Background

3. Key Results Achieved

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Public and private financing for development structured, identifying and channeling resources to reduce development financing gap focus

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender equality and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.3 Public and private financing and investment mechanisms mobilized for climate solutions and achievement of the SDGs

Progress Note:

Under the Financing for Development Facility, UNDP made significant strides in advancing Pakistan's SDG agenda and aligning it with the UNSDCF/CPD outcomes and the moonshot targets of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Key achievements include facilitating a workshop on the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) with senior government officials and ensuring alignment of public finances with SDGs. UNDP also developed an SDG Investment Pitchbook for post-flood rehabilitation in Sindh, attracting social impact investors. The Innovation Challenge Cup mobilized blended finance for 4 enterprises across Pakistan, driving inclusive growth. In partnership with Fatima Fertilizer, UNDP launched a sustainability framework and awareness campaign and

organized Green Investor Forums and SDG-aligned project workshops in collaboration with UNDESA. Additionally, UNDP designed feasibility studies with E&Y for presentation at the SDG Investment Fair in New York and partnered with OICCI to assess SDG impact in business, focusing on gender inclusion and sustainability frameworks. These efforts directly contributed to advancing Pakistan's SDG targets and enhancing the country's development trajectory. The SDG Plus Programme enabled the UNDP-supported SDG units to host multiple capacity-building and consultative sessions on SDGs Investment and Climate Financing and Mehr Hydro Power Project with UNDESA, UNDP mission members, senior provincial government officials, development and private sector experts, and civil society actors. The sessions focused on high-impact SDGs aligned Climate Financing opportunities and private sector investments and featured discussion on the technical and financial parameters of the Mehr Hydropower Project to mobilize international financing at the SDGs Investment Fair. The sessions also provided a platform to engage multi-sector experts and stakeholders in aligning the provinces' investment strategies with the SDGs, especially in climate resilience and green growth. In addition, the sessions highlighted key opportunities for leveraging private sector involvement in SDG-related projects, particularly in areas vulnerable to climate change impacts. In Sindh, the SDGs Support Unit played a key role in a partnership with Indigo Textiles and Thar Education Alliance to distribute bicycles to school-going girls and establish a STEM lab at the Government High School Malhanore Veena in Tharparkar, Sindh, a region known for its remote rural areas and challenges to access education. These initiatives aimed to enhance educational opportunities for girls, promote gender equality, encourage higher school attendance by eliminating transportation barriers, and promote science education by providing students access to hands-on learning resources, modern equipment, and an enhanced understanding of STEM subjects. In Punjab, the SDGs Unit finalized the Punjab Public Expenditure Review, a flagship study, that provides a comprehensive overview of the development landscape in Punjab and evaluates the impact of public expenditures on specific development outcomes. PER is a flagship research study developed to support the Government of Punjab in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocations and expenditure management systems and provide an independent assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of sector-specific spending in Punjab.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Improved governance for SDGs aligned equitable and inclusive development planning, budgeting, expenditure tracking, monitoring, and reporting, with a special focus on underdeveloped / marginalized districts to achieve regional equalization

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender equality

and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.1 Open, agile, accountable and future-ready governance institutions and systems in place to co-create and deliver solutions to accelerate transparent and equitable service delivery and SDG achievement

Progress Note:

UNDP made significant progress in strengthening governance institutions and systems thus advancing Pakistan's SDG agenda at the national and sub-national levels. Key achievements include facilitating a workshop on the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) with senior government officials and ensuring the alignment of public finances with SDGs. Additionally, UNDP organized a series of consultative workshops across Pakistan to gather insights from multi-sectoral stakeholders to ascertain the diverse perspectives on the emerging needs for the future, unforeseen challenges from the past, and potential enablers and stakeholders that will drive progress toward the SDGs. The findings will directly inform and shape the UNDP Strategic Plan 2026-2029. In terms of strengthening governance institutions and systems, UNDP made significant progress at the provincial level. UNDP's SDG units continued facilitating provincial governments in SDG-aligned policymaking, integrating SDGs into existing and new government structures, and ensuring sustained coordination for the effective implementation and localization of SDGs. In KPK, Punjab and Sindh, the SDGs Plus Project (2024-2026) signing marked a milestone, supported by a PC-1 approval, Steering Committee meetings, and a funding release, ensuring alignment with the development priorities of Punjab and KP governments. Launch of the Development Plan for the Poorest Districts and the Socioeconomic Baseline Profile of South Punjab offered policymakers strategic roadmaps for inclusive development. The Punjab Unit developed the first sub-national-level Integrated Financing Strategy. The strategy provides a roadmap to mobilize provincial financing for Punjab's development needs, proposing innovative models and pathways to finance the SDGs and climate change adaptation, thereby fostering resilient and sustainable economic growth across the province. In Sindh, under the SDGs Programme, the digitization of SDG checklists through automated PC-1 software facilitated district development plans under the 20 Poorest Districts Initiative. Partnerships with UNDESA improved the bankability of climate investment projects, while collaborations with NCSW, Sindh HEC, and private sector entities like Indigo Textiles advanced inclusive development and women's empowerment. These successes demonstrate the effective use of partnerships, strategic planning, and knowledge products as Development Enablers, creating scalable and sustainable development impacts. In KPK, UNDP provided technical expertise and capacity-building support to the Local Government and Rural Development Department of GoKP. This included developing actionable frameworks to ensure these plans are grounded in SDG principles to inform tehsil-level development efforts and encourage community participation in achieving localized SDG outcomes. Collaborative

consultations were held with GIZ Pakistan to formulate Medium-Term Tehsil Development Plans, aligning them with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Balochistan SDGs Support Unit, developed an SDGs Acceleration Implementation Plan (AIP) targeting SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 8, and SDG 9. The AIP identifies key bottlenecks, accelerators, and strategic interventions to fast-track progress on these critical goals across the province and provides a guiding framework for aligning provincial resources and policy measures with SDGs. The Balochistan SDGs Support Unit conducted a comprehensive gap analysis to evaluate the legislative, policy, and institutional frameworks supporting SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and developed the Review of Administrative Data Sets and Survey for Computation/Estimation of SDG Indicators. These initiatives identified critical gaps in governance, data scarcity challenges, resource management, and institutional capacity and offered actionable recommendations to support evidence-based policymaking and improve development outcomes in the province.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Gender equality, inclusion, innovation and digital transformation mainstreamed in SDGs to achieve Leave No One Behind

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 4 By 2027, more women and girls at greatest risk of being left behind are able to benefit from and contribute to an environment in which they are empowered to exercise their fundamental rights, agency and decision-making power over all aspects, towards lives free from all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful practices.

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_4.1 Empowerment of women, girls, transgender persons and vulnerable and institutional leadership is promoted through gender responsive policies, programmes, strategies and instruments through the provision of public and private financing and institutional development and strengthening.

Progress Note:

Under the SDGs Plus Programme, the SDGs Units made notable contributions to advancing gender equality, women's empowerment, digital transformation, and innovation. In Sindh, in collaboration with the Sindh Bureau of Statistics, the Gender Portal for SDGs was upgraded to include more detailed, accessible, and user-friendly data. This upgrade was part of the efforts to track progress on gender equality and efficient monitoring and reporting of gender-specific indicators. The portal now provides enhanced functionality for the integration of gender data into development planning, policymaking,

and monitoring processes at the provincial level. The Sindh SDGs Unit also co-hosted a policymaking session with WaterAid Pakistan in around Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM). This session aimed to raise awareness and build capacity for MHM among policymakers, healthcare professionals, and key stakeholders. By bringing together experts and government representatives, the session focused on integrating MHM into national and provincial policies, ensuring that menstrual health is recognized as a critical issue for women's well-being and empowerment. The Sindh Unit facilitated this dialogue, helping to identify key challenges, policy gaps, and solutions to improve access to menstrual hygiene products, safe sanitation facilities, and education in Sindh. The Sindh SDGs Unit facilitated a collaborative job fair organized by the Planning & Development (P&D) Department and the Hindu Council at the Karachi Expo Center. The job fair was designed to connect employers with skilled job seekers, providing them with valuable employment opportunities and promoting inclusion in the workforce. To strengthen Punjab's data ecosystem through digital transformation and help monitor and track SDG progress across the province, the Punjab SDGs Unit developed the first SDGs Data Dashboard. This was followed by validation from the Punjab Bureau of Statistics and approval from and handing over to the Punjab Planning and Development Board. The dashboard will now be integrated with the Smart Monitoring of Development Projects (SMDP) Portal of Punjab to gauge the performance and impact of the provincial government's development initiatives. Under the '16 Days of Activism' campaign, the Sindh and Punjab SDG Units, in collaboration with provincial partners successfully engaged the policymakers, gender experts, and representatives from civil society, academia, community, youth, and media through policy dialogues, panel discussions, and awareness walks sessions to create a safe, inclusive, and equitable future for all women. The sessions underscored the need to combat GBV through digital literacy, robust policies, enhanced cyber-security, legal frameworks, effective reporting mechanisms, community action, and digitization. These efforts contribute to advancing gender equality in alignment with SDG 5 and building institutional capacities for addressing gender-based issues

- **Level of Reporting:**

Project level results

Contributing Outcomes:

Contributing Outputs:

Progress Note:

Output 1.1: Accountable, inclusive, and future-ready governance institutions UNDP strengthened partnerships with Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by signing Financing Agreements under the 2nd Generation SDGs Plus Project. Building on the first cycle, the project enhances evidence-based policymaking, institutional resilience, climate adaptation, and inclusive planning to drive SDG progress. Under the Prosperity for Pakistan initiative, UNDP launched the National Economic Recovery Plan (NERP) after the February 2024 elections. Developed with a High-Level Advisory Committee of

economists and practitioners, NERP outlines five pillars for inclusive macroeconomic reform and promotes ownership through targeted advocacy. UNDP also signed an MoU with the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry to assess SDG integration in business practices, focusing on gender inclusion and sustainability frameworks. To address regional disparities, UNDP worked with the Ministry of Planning to map Pakistan's 20 poorest districts and partnered with the South Punjab Secretariat to create a Socioeconomic Baseline Profile and Development Plan for least-developed districts, promoting area-based development. In Punjab, UNDP supported the creation of the first SDG Data Dashboard to strengthen data governance and enable real-time SDG tracking. UNDP also helped develop Punjab's first Integrated Financing Strategy to mobilize innovative and climate-aligned financing for sustainable growth. In Sindh, UNDP digitized the SDG checklist in the Planning Commission's Forms Management System, ensuring Annual Development Programmes align with the SDGs at provincial and district levels. UNDP also conducted nationwide consultations to shape the 2025–2029 Global Strategic Plan, ensuring local development priorities inform global programming. Output 1.3: Financing for climate solutions and SDG achievement UNDP developed an SDG Investment Pitchbook in Sindh to attract impact investors for post-flood recovery and long-term resilience. A workshop on Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF), held with DPU, engaged senior officials on sustainable budgeting and financing strategies. The SDG Innovative Financing Challenge Cup, launched with IBA-CED and JS Bank, piloted blended finance for women- and youth-led SMEs. It mobilized \$0.27 million, supporting four businesses in sustainable transport, circular economy, digital access, and waste valorization. UNDP also helped Fatima Fertilizer adopt an SDG-aligned Sustainability Framework—Pakistan's first among private firms—highlighted through a joint awareness video, "Spirit of SDGs." In collaboration with UNDESA, UNDP organized workshops in Punjab and Sindh to help officials design project pipelines with strong SDG impacts and bankable financials. In partnership with FCDO, UNDP pitched climate-smart projects at the UK's Green Investment Forum, engaging global investors. Three project feasibility studies were also prepared for presentation at the SDG Investment Fair in Spain. Output 4.1: Gender-responsive empowerment and institutional leadership UNDP advanced gender equality through knowledge, financing, and institutional strengthening. The NHDR 2023/24 and Development Advocate Pakistan emphasized digital inclusion, energy poverty's impact on women, and women's data leadership. Policy briefs spotlighted workforce gaps, challenges for home-based workers, and the need for better social protection. Partnerships with KSBL and Fatima Fertilizer supported women's skill development in agriculture and digital tech, fostering economic empowerment. UNDP promoted access to finance through the SDG Innovative Financing Challenge, backing women-led startups advancing social change. It also supported NCSW's provincial consultations on gender financing and institutional planning, in collaboration with UNICEF, UN Women, and UNFPA. These efforts embedded gender priorities in governance frameworks.

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4. Key Challenges Encountered

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5. Project Risks and Issues

The project has adopted a proactive and forward-looking approach to managing risks identified in the risk register, encompassing programmatic, social, environmental, partner, and construction-related risks. This section outlines mitigation measures implemented in 2024 and those planned for 2025 to address the potential risks that could impact the achievement of project outputs. Escalated risks have been prioritized, and enhanced actions are designed for seamless execution in the coming year.

Political Risks The political transition following Pakistan's 2023 general elections has shaped development priorities in 2024, emphasizing economic stabilization, regional equalization, and sustainable development. These shifts are expected to continue influencing the policy environment in 2025. The project has mitigated political risks in 2024 through active engagement with government stakeholders, ensuring alignment with evolving national priorities, including the Regional Equalization Program. In 2025, efforts will focus on sustaining this alignment through policy dialogues, adaptive planning, and a continued emphasis on the SDGs as a unifying framework for development.

Financial Risks Challenges in mobilizing financial resources, particularly delays in government tranche releases, persisted in 2024. These delays impacted project timelines, necessitating no-cost extensions and creating potential cost overruns. In 2024, the project strengthened resource mobilization by exploring public-private partnerships and leveraging international platforms such as the SDG Investments Fair to secure diversified funding.

Strategic Risks Given the potential for political and administrative changes, the project's reliance on government ownership and multi-stakeholder engagement remained a significant risk in 2024. To address this, the project prioritized inclusive planning and reinforced communication strategies to align with government narratives. Looking ahead to 2025, the project will deepen engagement through joint action plans, capacity-building initiatives for key stakeholders, and expanded outreach to non-governmental actors, ensuring broader buy-in and enhanced delivery of project outputs.

Social and Environmental Risks Inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women, girls, transgender individuals, and vulnerable regions, was a key focus in 2024. The project implemented gender-responsive programming and targeted outreach to ensure no one was left behind. For 2025, these efforts will be scaled up, with specific initiatives to expand STEM education for girls, increase vocational training for underserved communities, and integrate climate resilience measures into project activities. Enhanced monitoring tools will also be deployed to track interventions' social and environmental impact.

6. Lessons Learned

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7. Conclusions and Way Forward

The lessons from 2024 have laid a strong foundation for strategic advancements in 2025. The strategic priorities for 2025 focus on overcoming constraints, consolidating achievements, and leveraging partnerships to accelerate progress on Pakistan's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda. These actions will align with national priorities, the Paris Agreement, and stakeholder consultations for the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2026-2029. Risk management strategies will be enhanced, while women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming will remain integral through implementing the Gender Action Plan. These efforts ensure inclusive growth, resilience, and sustainable development, addressing Pakistan's emerging challenges and opportunities.

1. Upgrading and Strengthening the Data Ecosystem

- Integrated Data Systems: Develop platforms to streamline periodic and real-time bottom-up progress monitoring and reporting for evidence-based policymaking.
- Innovation in Data Governance: Facilitate the national and provincial governments in adopting integrated systems for data governance analytics and leveraging innovations for actionable policies.
- Capacity Building: Strengthen the technical skills of data stakeholders at national and sub-national levels to enhance data collection, reporting, and research on emerging technologies.
- Knowledge Exchange: Establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms among provinces to align progress tracking and foster transparency in monitoring SDG indicators and targets.

2. Systematic Adaptation of SDGs in Provincial Planning

- Integration in ADP: Facilitate the adaptation of SDGs into the Annual Development Plan (ADP) processes and de-departmental strategies to align provincial initiatives with SDG targets.
- Performance Assessment: Provide technical support to evaluate the effectiveness of ADP schemes in addressing SDG indicators, ensuring accountability and efficiency.

3. Mobilizing and Leveraging Financing for Development

- Public-Private Partnerships: Foster collaborations to mobilize financing for SDGs and climate resilience using innovative tools such as blended finance models and scalable public-private initiatives.
- Resource Mobilization: Strengthen partnerships with private sector entities to unlock investments and develop instruments aligned with Pakistan's sustained and inclusive economic growth goals.

4. Advancing Digital Transformation

- Building on the Digital Strategy: Leverage the UNDP Global Digital Strategy 2020-2025 and insights from the National Human Development Report 2024 on Digital Transformation.
- E-Governance Solutions: Develop policy research and practical solutions to enhance e-governance capacities and expand digital access for e-service delivery.
- Capacity Building: Train government stakeholders to effectively integrate digital tools into service delivery frameworks, improving citizen access and transparency.

5. Strengthening Partnerships and Coordination

- Inclusive Engagement: Expand collaboration with federal and provincial ministries, line departments, parliamentary institutions, development partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, media, and the private sector.

- SDG Integration Platforms: Strengthen existing partnership platforms to ensure coherence and coordination among stakeholders working across various SDG-related initiatives.
- Innovative Collaborations: Foster cross-sectoral alliances to amplify impact, focusing on climate resilience, gender equality, and digital innovation.

8. Other Reporting Requirements

- **Reporting Requirements**

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT & GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Under the SDGs Plus Project, these efforts significantly contributed to advancing gender equality in alignment with SDG, ensuring they are fully equipped and empowered to thrive economically. The Sindh SDGs Unit also co-hosted a policymaking session with WaterAid Pakistan in around Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM). This session aimed to raise awareness and build capacity for MHM among policymakers, healthcare professionals, and key stakeholders. By bringing together experts and government representatives, the session focused on integrating MHM into national and provincial policies, ensuring that menstrual health is recognized as a critical issue for women's well-being and empowerment. The Sindh Unit facilitated this dialogue, helping to identify key challenges, policy gaps, and solutions to improve access to menstrual hygiene products, safe sanitation facilities, and education in Sindh. The Sindh SDGs Unit facilitated a collaborative job fair organized by the Planning & Development (P&D) Department and the Hindu Council at the Karachi Expo Center. The job fair was designed to connect employers with skilled job seekers, providing them with valuable employment opportunities and promoting inclusion in the workforce. Under the '16 Days of Activism' campaign, the Sindh and Punjab SDG Units, in collaboration with provincial partners successfully engaged the policymakers, gender experts, and representatives from civil society, academia, community, youth, and media through policy dialogues, panel discussions, and awareness walks sessions to create a safe, inclusive, and equitable future for all women. The sessions underscored the need to combat GBV through digital literacy, robust policies, enhanced cyber-security, legal frameworks, effective reporting mechanisms, community action, and digitization. These efforts contribute to advancing gender equality in alignment with SDG 5 and building institutional capacities for addressing gender-based issues.

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