

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:

- The Development Policy Unit supported UN DESA in organizing a preparatory workshop for the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, clarifying UNDP–UN DESA’s facilitation role in connecting governments with GISD, investors, and project networks through tools such as STAIRS, Talk2Transact, and matchmaking platforms, with a focus on PPPs, blended finance, and investment-ready project preparation. [E8]
- The Development Policy Unit conducted a one-day national training on Financing for Development and blended finance in Islamabad, equipping senior officials from the Ministries of Finance, Planning, and Climate Change with PPP-focused tools to support preparations for the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville.

[E8] • Through the SDGs Plus Programme and with UN DESA support, the Development Policy Unit facilitated the Ministries of Finance and Climate Change in developing a USD 2 billion SDG-aligned project portfolio for the 4th Financing for Development Conference, covering over ten private sector and PPP projects across renewable energy, infrastructure, agriculture, and waste management. [E9] • To mobilize domestic and international financing, the Development Policy Unit initiated identification of PPP-ready public sector projects, development of provincial pitchbooks for Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, and planning for a National SDG Investment Fair inspired by global best practices. [E13] Punjab • The SDGs Unit in Punjab strengthened institutional planning and financing by operationalizing the Punjab Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) through a consultative process to advance two priority financial instruments identified under the INFF. [E10] Sindh • In Sindh, the SDGs Unit conducted a two-day Financing for Development training for over 50 departmental focal persons, enabling development of SDG- and climate-aligned projects under public and public–private partnership modalities using standardized tools and formats. [E11] Khyber Pakhtunkhwa • In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the SDGs Unit initiated a Human and Institutional Capacity Assessment (HICA) to assess provincial departments’ readiness for SDG-aligned and climate financing. [E12]

- **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:

- The Development Policy Unit convened a national high-level “Pakistan SDGs Policy Dialogue for Action” to align national and provincial planning, budgeting, financing, and data systems with the SDGs, strengthening evidence-based policymaking and institutional coordination for accelerated Agenda 2030 implementation. [E1] • Through the SDGs Plus Programme, the SDGs Units in Sindh and Punjab strengthened institutional SDG policy frameworks by initiating SDG reprioritization under the nationally developed SDGs Framework (2019). [E2] • Through the SDGs Plus Programme, the SDGs Units in Punjab and Sindh advanced data-driven development planning by integrating SDG data into the SMDP Portal and MIS Support System respectively. [E7] • The Development Policy Unit piloted localization of SDG data at the constituency level through participatory consultations and data validation, empowering parliamentarians and local institutions with evidence-based insights while strengthening transparency, accountability, and citizen inclusion. [E14] Punjab • In Punjab, six sectoral policy briefs informed the Planning and Development Board on health, education, governance, IT, urban development, economic growth, and climate action, advancing results-based financing, digital transformation, green financing, and resilient service delivery. [E3] • For effective SDG planning, the SDGs Unit in Punjab led thematic trainings on data governance, SDG budgeting, and financing, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa delivered targeted capacity-building for officers across career levels at NIPA, CSA, and NSPP. [E5] • In Punjab, the SDGs Unit supported the Provincial Task Force on SDGs and the Punjab Parliamentary Unit by developing an annual work plan to strengthen parliamentarians’ capacity for inclusive, accountable, and evidence-driven SDG governance. [E15] Sindh • The SDGs Unit in Sindh strengthened SDG implementation by conducting multi-thematic workshops on SDG prioritization, planning, financing, and gender mainstreaming for over 50 government departmental focal persons. [E4] • To strengthen the linkage between planning and monitoring, the SDGs Unit in Sindh developed an SDG integration checklist for the Planning Commission (PC) Forms Management System. [E6] • In Sindh, the SDGs Unit provided technical assistance for establishing the Provincial Task Force Secretariat on SDGs, including development of terms of reference to enhance transparency, accountability, and clarity of institutional roles. [E16] • In Sindh, systematic SDG–departmental mapping and SDG-aligned KPI development, supported by the Sindh Bureau of Statistics, strengthened institutional clarity, performance accountability, and evidence-based monitoring for informed decision-making. [E17] Khyber Pakhtunkhwa • The SDGs Unit in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa strengthened SDG implementation by conducting multi-thematic workshops on SDG prioritization, planning, financing, and gender mainstreaming for over 50 government departmental focal persons. [E4] • For effective SDG planning, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa delivered targeted capacity-building for officers across career levels at NIPA, CSA, and NSPP. [E5]

- **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:

- Through the Development Policy Unit, UNDP partnered with the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry to roll out the Gender Equality Seal for the Private Sector, strengthening corporate leadership, accountability, and gender-responsive workplace policies through targeted capacity-building. [E20]
- The Unit collaborated with Lahore College for Women University, GIZ Pakistan, HomeNet Pakistan, and the Awaz II Programme to advance gender-responsive research, social protection dialogue, and policy reform for inclusive employment and workplace equity. [E22]
- Punjab • Under the SDGs Plus Programme, the Punjab SDGs Unit advanced gender equality by developing the Gender Advocacy Plan 2025 and convening provincial consultations to promote women's economic, financial, and digital inclusion through multi-stakeholder collaboration. [E21]
- During the '16 Days of Activism' campaign, the Punjab SDGs Unit, in collaboration with Sindh, convened policymakers, civil society, academia, youth, and media through dialogues and awareness activities to promote a safe and inclusive future for women. [E23]
- Sindh • In Sindh, the Unit promoted gender-responsive planning by integrating gender indicators into SDG frameworks and provincial planning and reporting mechanisms, strengthening accountability for gender equality outcomes. [E6]
- In Sindh, the SDGs Unit conducted a two-day gender mainstreaming workshop for departmental focal points and P&D chiefs to integrate gender considerations into provincial planning and budgeting. [E25]
- During the '16 Days of Activism' campaign, the Sindh SDGs Unit, in collaboration with Punjab, convened policymakers, civil society, academia, youth, and media through dialogues and awareness activities to promote a safe and inclusive future for women. [E23]
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa • In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the SDGs Unit conducted a situational analysis on women's representation in leadership, using FGDs, KIIs, and surveys to inform gender-responsive governance and economic reforms. [E24].

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4. Key Challenges Encountered

- **Level of Reporting:**

Project level results

Contributing Outcomes:

Contributing Outputs:

Progress Note:

3. Strengthening Data Ecosystems Building robust national and provincial data systems remained a central challenge in 2025 as well. While progress was made in addressing data gaps, persistent issues with interdepartmental coordination and resource limitations underscored the need for sustained investments. In 2026 through the support of PIP, efforts will focus on establishing a more resilient data infrastructure for evidence-based decision-making, ensuring data accuracy, and fostering transparency in monitoring SDG progress.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Project level results

Contributing Outcomes:

Contributing Outputs:

Progress Note:

1. Localized SDG Planning and Implementation Progress in 2025 underscored the need for decentralized approaches to achieve SDGs effectively. Empowering local governments through district-level planning was pivotal in addressing region-specific needs. Initiatives to develop provincial and district-level SDG indicators. However, gaps in institutional capacity and resource allocation at the district level hindered optimal outcomes, necessitating targeted support in 2025 to accelerate regional equalization efforts.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Project level results

Contributing Outcomes:

Contributing Outputs:

Progress Note:

2. Stakeholder Sensitization and Engagement Collaboration with Planning and Development Departments (P&DDs) as well as the Provincial SDGs Task Forces in Punjab KP and Sindh proved instrumental in aligning the SDGs Plus Pro-gramme with national priorities on climate resilience and digital transformation. Advocacy and sensitization efforts in 2025 through the National Dialogue laid the groundwork for more profound stakeholder commitment. As these areas remain critical, the focus in 2026 will shift toward en-suring sustained buy-in and institutional integration amidst political and policy transitions.

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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 2026. The project has mitigated political risks in 2025 through active engagement with government stakeholders, ensuring alignment with evolving national priorities, including the Regional Equalization Program. In 2026, 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 2025, 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 2025. To address this, the project prioritized inclusive planning and reinforced communication strategies to align with government narratives. Looking ahead to 2026, 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 2025. The project implemented gender-responsive programming and targeted outreach to ensure no one was left behind. For 2026, 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

- 1. Expanding Localization of SDGs Focus on accelerating district-level SDG localization plans with improved capacity-building initiatives and targeted resource allocation.
- 2. Sustained Stakeholder Engagement Institutionalize structured engagement mechanisms to maintain and enhance partnerships with diverse stakeholders such as Private Sector, Government Regulatory Bodies and Parliamentarians. 3.
- 3. Advancing Data Ecosystems Develop resilient data infrastructures and address persistent data-related challenges to improve real-time monitoring and evaluation.
- 4. Institutionalizing Unified Governance Deepen the Whole-of-Government Approach to ensure cohesive implementation, emphasizing legislative support and resource alignment.
- 5. Scaling Gender Empowerment Efforts Broaden the scope of gender-focused initiatives, ensuring no group is left behind while addressing systemic barriers.
- 6. Innovative Financing Strategies Expand financial resilience programs by leveraging partnerships, developing bespoke insurance solutions, and advocating for inclusive economic policies.
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7. Conclusions and Way Forward

The lessons from 2025 have laid a strong foundation for strategic advancements in 2026. The strategic priorities for 2026 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 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

In 2025, under the SDGs Plus Programme, UNDP, through its SDGs Units and the Development Policy Unit, made substantive progress in advancing gender equality and

strengthening gender-responsive governance across federal and provincial levels. In Sindh, the SDGs Unit promoted gender-responsive planning by integrating gender indicators into SDG frameworks and provincial planning and reporting mechanisms, strengthening accountability for gender equality outcomes. This was complemented by a two-day Gender Mainstreaming Workshop for departmental focal points and Planning & Development Chiefs, aimed at bridging gender gaps in provincial planning and budgeting processes and institutionalizing gender-responsive approaches within government systems. At the national level, UNDP, through its Development Policy Unit, partnered with the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) to roll out the Gender Equality Seal for the Private Sector. Through targeted capacity-building, including a dedicated workshop at OICCI, the initiative strengthened institutional commitment within the private sector by embedding gender-responsive policies across corporate operations, enhancing accountability mechanisms, and promoting women's participation in leadership and decision-making. This engagement contributed to building private sector capacity to integrate gender considerations into business strategies, supporting more inclusive, resilient, and equitable economic growth. In Punjab, the SDGs Unit advanced gender equality through a comprehensive advocacy and engagement approach under the SDGs Plus Programme. The development of the Gender Advocacy Plan 2025 fostered collaboration among government departments, academia, the private sector, and civil society to address systemic barriers to women's economic and digital empowerment. The Unit convened key provincial consultations, including "Closing Pakistan's Gender Gap" and "Empowering Futures through Digital and Financial Inclusion," to promote women's access to finance, entrepreneurship opportunities, and digital transformation. To further strengthen the evidence base and policy dialogue on gender equality, the Unit collaborated with Lahore College for Women University, GIZ Pakistan, HomeNet Pakistan, and the Awaz II Programme to advance gender-responsive research and social protection dialogues, promoting inclusive employment, workplace equity, and gender-integrated policy reform. Across Sindh and Punjab, the SDGs Units leveraged the '16 Days of Activism' campaign as a strategic platform to convene policymakers, gender experts, civil society, academia, youth, and media through policy dialogues, panel discussions, and awareness walks. These engagements highlighted grassroots challenges, addressed root causes of violence against women, and promoted inclusive, rights-based approaches to building a safer future for women. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the SDGs Unit strengthened the foundation for gender-responsive reforms by conducting a situational analysis on women's representation in leadership roles. Using a mix of focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and surveys, the assessment identified structural barriers and opportunities for women's participation in decision-making, informing evidence-based governance and economic reforms. Collectively, these interventions contributed to strengthening institutional leadership, policy frameworks, and stakeholder engagement for gender equality, ensuring that women and girls are better positioned to participate meaningfully in economic, digital, and governance systems in line with the SDGs and UNDP's CPD priorities.

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