



2017 PROGRESS REPORT

UNDP/GEF project 'Integrating Rio Conventions* Provisions into Ukraine's National Policy Framework'

*Rio Conventions – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; UN Convention to Combat Desertification; UN Convention on Biological Diversity

Basic facts about the project

Project duration: 2014 - 2017. **Donor:** GEF

Key project outcomes: Government of Ukraine adopts policy frameworks and mechanisms to ensure reversal of environmental degradation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, prevention and response to natural and man-made disasters. Knowledge of the concept of sustainable development is promoted among decision makers and the general public.

Macroeconomic stability, economic growth and prosperity can only be sustainable if the society recognizes the need to preserve the natural systems that provide us with food, fiber, materials, and a stable climate.

Against this background, UNDP is implementing a GEF-supported project 'Integrating Rio Conventions Provisions into Ukraine's National Policy'. The variety of project activities are aiming to advance transformational change towards sustainable development by improving policies and strengthening capacity of national stakeholders to achieve impacts on a broader scale.

Major activities in 2017

COMPONENT 1. INTEGRATION OF PRINCIPLES AND OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE RIO CONVENTIONS INTO SECTORAL POLICIES



An important part of the project's results in 2017 was a large amount of work done around the SDGs. Following the inclusive consultations in 2016, the Government finalized the review of targets and indicators and in September 2017 released the **National Report 'SDGs for Ukraine'** for which the project engaged experts and organized **official launch** with participation of the First Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine Stepan Kubiv.



This document established a baseline and benchmarks for Ukraine to achieve the 17 SDGs in its own way and also informed the elaboration of the new "Five-year Government of Ukraine - the UN Partnership Framework for 2018-2022". This baseline consists of a system of 86 national development targets and 172 related indicators, providing a solid quantitative basis for further planning and monitoring of Ukraine's progress on the achievement of SDGs.



Another analytical product prepared within the project was the [Rapid Integrated Assessment \(RIA\)](#)¹ of SDGs. The project conducted RIA to determine SDGs' relevance to the country context, both at the national and subnational level, and interlinkages across targets. The assessment reviewed the national, sectoral and regional development plans, strategies and programmes and provided an indicative overview of the level of their alignment with SDG targets. It also identified the potential need for multi-sectoral coordination around the achievement of specific SDG targets and proposed recommendations about policies that needed to be improved and target indicators that needed to be revised.

The RIA report was launched in October 2017 at a [round table](#) at the news agency Ukrinform, Kyiv. It gathered more than 80 top-notch experts in public administration, economic development and forecasting, but also a number of representatives of the ministries and MPs. Discussions were around the way forward, on a roadmap to implementation of SDGs, on the substance of targets, challenges and solutions.



The project further produced an analytical review of statistical data available in Ukraine with the aim of enabling the monitoring of progress on the achievement of SDGs. National statistics lacked a range of measurable indicators relevant for this purpose, thus the project identified these gaps and proposed alternative solutions. The mapping of statistical data available in Ukraine supports the monitoring of progress on SDGs achievement. The [report](#) provides detailed information on metadata for SDGs indicators identified in the National Report 'SDGs: Ukraine' and outlines data gaps – indicators which are not available in the current statistical system or which require revision of the methodology. The report also suggests further steps: development of the monitoring and reporting platform, elaborate and approve the mechanisms and responsible institutions, set minimum requirements to the new data which has to be introduced. There is a list of alternative data sources which can be considered where the national statistics is not available.



Based on SDGs targets which were selected for implementation in Ukraine the working group engaged by the project produced a draft [Sustainable Development Strategy for Ukraine until 2030](#) which aims to embed the whole set of SDGs priorities into the strategic documents governing the country's development. Another strength of the SD Strategy is its correlation with Ukraine's international commitments and with the requirements of the [EU-Ukraine Association Agreement](#). The development of the SD Strategy was informed by [SWOT and Gap analyses of national and sectoral policies](#) against the requirements of the Rio Conventions which were done with support from the project in 2015. In 2016-2017 the working group conducted a wide range of consultations with stakeholders at the national and regional level. The project has submitted this document to the Presidential Administration with a suggestion to consider them as the basis for the revision of the existing national sustainable development strategy which expires in 2020. The likelihood of the adoption of the NSDS-2030 in 2018 is low and may rather happen in 2019.



¹ This is a customized tool developed by UNDP to aid countries to assess their readiness to implement the SDGs. The tool has been applied in over 25 countries. More information can be found here: https://undg.org/sdg_toolkit/rapid-integrated-assessment-ria-tool/

In April 2017 the project convened national conference ‘Regional aspects of sustainable development’ which was attended by representatives of municipalities and local communities. A number of presentations was dedicated to practical implementation of specific SDGs and experience which is considered as successful – as such issues as energy efficiency, waste management, organic agriculture, water management are those which are being resolved at a local level. The participants appreciated an extended presentation from the Ministry of Regional Development of Ukraine on the opportunities and peculiarity of applying for special public funds which can be used for local development.



COMPONENT 3. AWARENESS RAISING AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC ABOUT THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE PRINCIPLES OF THE RIO CONVENTIONS AND SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The last project year was very rich in terms of awareness raising activities. Some of them related to the activities outline earlier in this report. Others were designed for various target groups and their formats and substance were unique each time. Below is more information on major events.

In September 2017 the project organized a discussion panel ‘SDGs: new opportunities for and expectations from private sector’. It was a kick-off panel at the start of the two day forum in Kyiv ‘East Expo’. The forum was organized by UNDP for small and medium enterprises from the East of Ukraine. A range of activities geared for business owners from all over Ukraine, as well as representatives of business support agencies, international organizations, foreign embassies, state authorities and Kyiv residents and visitors. The event aimed to develop entrepreneurship in the Donbas through presenting regional producers’ goods and services to the general public, to expand and strengthen their business connections with Donbas and other regions of Ukraine.



A conference on the role of universities in implementing the Agenda 2030 was organized by the project at the national university Kyiv Mohyla Academy in December 2017. The proceedings were divided into three panels: the role of universities as research and resource hubs; universities as platform to accelerate implementation of SDGs through high standards in education; SDGs as a basis for building new partnerships for strategic shifts in economic development.



Traditionally, the annual national conference ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ was organized in April. More than 150 school teachers from all oblasts of Ukraine participated in a two day conference and exchange their experiences in teaching the basics of sustainable development to school pupils and information materials they produce.



The thematic lecture for professionals who teach Corporate Social Responsibility was organized in October 2017. Around 60 participants got engaged in the discussion of how SDGs should become a part of the corporate strategies in business companies. They analyzed practices from big companies in other countries who already set ambitious targets of getting greater economic benefits but also providing some effective social programmes and environmental projects.



The national [awareness raising campaign](#) which had started in 2016 was continued in 2017. Its main element in 2017 was citylights placed in all cities of Ukraine in August and September, to increase public knowledge about the urgency of preventing climate change, saving biodiversity, and combatting land degradation. In 2017 this campaign was enhanced via social media messaging, storytelling and interactive projects including contest on Facebook. The five types of images on posters did catch attention of the general public.



In 2017 the project undertook the [exit analysis](#) of public awareness which was organized as a representative broadbased sociological survey with 1,200 respondents. The questionnaire included some questions from the initial broad-based survey which was carried out by the project in September 2014, but also included new questions – to clarify not only understanding of the link between environment and development, but also awareness on SDGs and their relevance for Ukraine, contribution of all of us into their achievement.

Both reports inform on how Ukrainian citizens prioritize global and local issues, including environment protection; what they know about climate change, loss of biodiversity and land degradation; how they assess their own environmental footprint and, most importantly, their readiness to change their usual practices - towards saving natural resources, minimizing waste and consumption, etc. Across almost all of these items there is a positive increase in public knowledge and support.



The project released two op-eds which provide comprehensive overview of the SDGs adaptation process in Ukraine and details about how the process on drafting Sustainable Development Strategy was organized. The authors are members of the working group who led preparation of the draft Strategy: the articles by the experienced economist [Anatolii Maksiuta](#) and by the group of [environmental experts](#) are posted at UNDP website and in the national newspaper ‘Day’.

With special creativity the project organized two trainings for journalists (September and October). Regional mass media expressed greater interest to the event than their colleagues from Kyiv. Each training gathered 30 journalists. The agenda was not the same: the first training attracted participants due to the fact that speakers included representatives of the key national ministries; the second training had an intensive agenda which looked into each SDG individually, with concrete examples of what they mean in Ukrainian context. Both trainings were organized with engagement of other UN agencies.



Among the last project events was a hackathon for youth ‘Hack4SDGs’. Its aim was to engage with students in talks about SDGs, but also to get their ideas on what could mainstream them into policies and practices of business sector in Ukraine. The organizers were excited to hear many good ideas and practical advice on how UNDP can support this process and how the youth may play its role.

Lastly, the project’s final conference was held on 4 December 2017. It was attended by the government representatives, experts, NGOs, who took part in project activities over the period of its implementation, but also attracted new partners: the conference was supposed to meet two targets – to present all project results, and to discuss project sustainability and the role of project partners in continuing efforts initiated or undertaken by the project. The project has demonstrated a lot of good results – both related to analytical work, and to awareness raising. The adoption of SDGs was critical for the project – it allowed to elevate the debates on Ukraine’s transition to sustainable development due to the fact that there is a national ownership of SDGs implementation, under the leadership of the First Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In 2017 the project has adjusted (updated) its M&E framework. A set of target indicators and mechanism of their tracking has been calibrated.

Quality assurance was done in line with UNDP's standards and timeframes. Regular monitoring of progress was supported via annual meetings of the Project Board (March 2017) and bi-weekly meetings of the programme (UNDP Environmental Cluster) where project results are discussed and solutions to issues are sought.

The project's terminal evaluation was done in November-December 2017 – it included semi-structured interviews with project partners and stakeholders, as well as desk research. The evaluator's overall assessment for the project is satisfactory, with all planned results achieved.

The major risk for this project had been initially identified as possible low political support to project interventions (with regard to preparation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for Ukraine). But this risk was addressed by linking the SD Strategy with SDGs and the commitment of the Government to implement SDGs in Ukraine. This activity thus was postponed until the adoption of the SDGs and the launch of SDGs adaptation process led by the Government of Ukraine. Thus, due to national ownership over SDGs implementation in Ukraine the project results can be considered as sustainable. The environmental team of UNDP in Ukraine will do post-project monitoring of the level of integration of SDGs and provisions of Rio Conventions into the national policies.

The Sustainable Development Strategy developed with support from the project is in line with multilateral environmental agreements and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. At the same time it was built from the bottom-up through a steady process of local and regional stakeholder consultation process.

All other policy advisory, knowledge building and awareness raising activities also have a high degree of sustainability: the project has launched a number of innovative ideas which inspire partners for replication or further implementation. These include regional mainstreaming exercises (micro-projects on land recultivation, educational centers functioning with local communities support, competitions for educators and mass media, contests for private sector on sustainable business solutions etc.)

The Government obviously requires further support with monitoring the implementation of SDGs, advice on optimization of the existing policy framework to better balance the economic, social and environmental components and especially with identifying statistical indicators to track progress. For some newly gathered indicators methodology needs to be developed, as well as a system of data collection needs enhancement.

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