

**STRENGTHENING THE  
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER  
DIMENSION OF NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING  
AND SDG MAINSTREAMING  
IN UZBEKISTAN:**

**OVERVIEW OF CURRENT  
PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**FINAL REPORT**



DEPARTMENT OF  
ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL AFFAIRS



UNITED NATIONS  
UZBEKISTAN

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## **The UN in Uzbekistan**

Uzbekistan joined the United Nations on 2 March 1992 as a new sovereign and independent state. The United Nations Office opened in Tashkent the following year. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Uzbekistan comprises 24 UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes working together to advance national development priorities in line with the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **Acknowledgment**

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## **Key Reference Documents**

### [VNRs](#)

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, Guidance, Sixth Edition, 25 April, 2019

Common Minimum Standards for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement in UN Development Assistance Framework, UNSDG, 2020

[Strengthening civil society engagement with the United Nations Perspectives from across civil society highlighting areas for action](#) by the UN Secretary-General

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Final Report



Tashkent, 2021

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# KEY FINDING

- UN Country Team (UNCT)
- Stakeholders - CSOs, Business, Media, Youth and Academia

## KEY FINDINGS

### UN Country Team (UNCT)

- Multi-stakeholder participation is central to UNCT programming in Uzbekistan, and the UNCT currently engages with a wide diversity of stakeholders across a range of programmes, using varied methodology.
- Existing successful partnerships could be enhanced by greater transparency on UN programme progress, and updates to stakeholders would ensure more engagement, facilitate planning and prevent overlaps.
- Currently, UNCT only minimally implements the Common Minimum Standards for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement (CMSME). Doing so would allow greater and more systematic engagement with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and geographic areas.
- The UNCT currently has a paucity of engagement with the private sector and business and can do more to promote the ways in which business can work towards Agenda 2030, including engaging with the events that business organises and creating more opportunities for regular dialogue.
- The wider public in Uzbekistan seem to have limited awareness about the SDGs in the country, as well as a low level of awareness about the nature of the UN and UNCT activities in the country. Outreach activities and greater communication of the SDGs, particularly in the regions, could rectify this.

While all UNCT agencies maintain lists and databases of stakeholders, stakeholder mapping is not currently fully fledged. Stakeholder mapping should include not only a list/contacts of stakeholders, but also state their projects with UN agencies, show connections to UN agencies, show overlapping projects, possible synergies etc. Stakeholder mapping should be visualised in the form of mind maps, flowcharts, tree diagrams and other interactive visualisation tools. A platform could be created in a crowdsourcing format, in which stakeholders and agencies can add

information, which should be moderated by a responsible focal point.

- Despite some progress, there is still insufficient data and research on some of the marginalised and discriminated groups in the country and this hinders reaching them.

### Stakeholders - CSOs, Business, Media, Youth and Academia

- There are no limitations on the ways that stakeholders can approach UN agencies. After checking the mandate and targets of a specific UN agency, stakeholders can approach through a number of channels, not limited to phone, email or a face-to-face meeting.
- Representatives from NGOs, business and the media would like the UN to convene groups of experts who can support education and engagement with the SDGs.
- The concept of corporate social responsibility is not yet central to the thinking of business and the private sector. Business leaders should take a leadership position on the SDGs both inside and outside their organisation, actively incorporating the Goals into the core of their business strategy, demanding clear feedback on how its results are helping to meet those targets.
- The NGO sector in Uzbekistan with about 9,000 organizations registered is in differing stages and focuses on very limited issues. This means that civil society capacity to address critical or sensitive issues (e.g. sexual minorities, former prisoners, human rights violations) remains limited. As such, for the NGO sector to be real partner in sustainable development in Uzbekistan, further steps are necessary to liberalise the legislation on non-government non-profit organisations. Current laws governing NGO registration, financing, travel and events are excessively restrictive and are not in compliance with international standards.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Global guidelines
- Current UNCT practices in stakeholder engagement in Uzbekistan
- Challenges and Recommendations
- Summary of recommendations

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an overview of current UNCT stakeholder engagement practices in Uzbekistan. It was created using the suggested methodology in the Common Minimum Standards for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement (CMSME) for supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at country level. It used a combination of desk review of documents to capture best practices, including those in the Voluntary National Review (VNR), in addition to interviews with key informants. Questionnaires (Annex II) were used to conduct interviews with representatives from the following UNCT organisations and agencies: RC Office, UNODC, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNDRR, ILO, UNOPS, UN-Habitat, UNDP, OHCHR, and IOM. Further interviews were conducted with individuals from civil society organisations (CSOs), youth, academia, journalists, bloggers, and business.

Assessing UNCT's practices, sharing good practices and proposing concrete actions that are aligned with the ways that UNCT implements the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework will contribute to strengthening the multi-stakeholder dimension of national development planning and mainstreaming the SDGs in Uzbekistan. Acknowledging and addressing the needs and demands of all stakeholders, including the most vulnerable, can promote inclusivity and enhanced engagement with the 2030 Agenda.

### Global guidelines

The Common Minimum Standards serve as the minimum-level steps that UN Country Teams (UNCTs) should take to forge stakeholder engagement. According to these standards, UNCTs should aim to develop and maintain a database of relevant stakeholders that reflects the principles of inclusive participation intended in the SDG agenda. Stakeholder mapping should consider national realities while seeking to be as inclusive as possible. The stakeholder list should include civil organisations (CSOs) – including human rights defenders (as called for in SDG 16.10); Local governments; Parliamentarians; Workers' organisations; Business and employers' membership organisations; Research organisations and academia; Other groups according to national contexts.

UNCTs that have developed databases should create a step-by-step plan for stakeholder engagement which includes possible barriers to participation and how to overcome them. They should tell their respective stakeholders about the database and share their stakeholder lists. UNCTs should reach out to all stakeholders in the database at the very beginning of the programme stage and tell them about the process, their opportunities for participation, and formally ask for their inputs.

## Current UNCT practices in stakeholder engagement in Uzbekistan

The report details the proactive steps that UNCT takes to reach out to a wide range of stakeholders, who include parliamentarians and Government representatives, media and bloggers, CSOs, youth, women, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older people, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced people, migrants and other vulnerable groups. Analysis of existing methodology to ensure accountability, transparency to stakeholders and feedback loops shows that UNCT uses a variety of tools, including TV and radio; social media channels; evaluation; consultation meetings; mid-term reviews with government partners; focus groups; needs assessments; e-mail distribution systems and the celebration of special days.

The report details UNCT programmes, partnerships and events that exemplify successful multi-stakeholder engagements, including:

- The **Virtual National Review (VNR)** preparation between September 2019-May 2020, in which a cycle of 28 consultations was organised in partnership with the UN, covering 1,348 people in five regions of Uzbekistan, including NGOs, youth, people with disabilities, media and bloggers. This was followed in May 2020 by virtual public discussions over Zoom on the draft Voluntary National Review of Uzbekistan's achievements relating to the SDGs and brought together over 400 representatives from ministries and departments, 22 NGOs and other civil society institutions, international organisations and 30 members of Parliament.
- The **Youth Advisory Board** – this UNCT (interagency) initiative consists of young people who were selected on a competitive basis and who represent youth of different

ages and from different backgrounds (e.g., vulnerable groups, including children without parental care and young people with disabilities).

- The **Covid-19 Donors and Grants Matrix** – a mailing list of more than three hundred partners to whom the RCO disseminates regular COVID-19 situation analysis reports.
- **#UN75**. In partnership with the Government and civil society, the United Nations system in Uzbekistan held 48 dialogues with more than 5,500 participants across Uzbekistan, including with vulnerable groups. More than 34,000 people in Uzbekistan took the global #UN75 survey.
- UN's partnership with the government-supported think-tank **Yuksalish**, which is a key stakeholder in various UN initiatives in Uzbekistan.
- The development of the **Common Country Analysis and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2021-2025**, in which extensive multi-stakeholder consultations were conducted in six regions and in the capital of Uzbekistan on the most critical development challenges, their effects and causes, as well as asking about beneficial solutions in which the UN could play a useful role.
- Promotion of the **UN Global Compact**, a voluntary initiative based on private sector companies' commitment to implementing sustainability principles, and **UNICEF and UNESCO's partnerships with the private sector**, including UCELL, Korzinka, Beeline and Huawei.

## Challenges and Recommendations

Interviews with key UNCT informants suggest that:

- although UNCT currently has extensive engagement across a range of stakeholders, it is noted that at present, the common minimum standards are only minimally implemented. For example, current standards of mapping do not constitute a full-fledged stakeholder mapping as is described in the Common Minimum Standards document guidelines. The standards also require that the stakeholder mapping database should be easily accessible to everyone, to every UN agency in the country in Uzbekistan and also to non-resident agencies. All UNCT agencies should move towards implementing the standards.
- currently there is a lack of engagement with the private sector and business. Stakeholder engagement could be enhanced by developing more geographic range to consultations, greater participation from marginalized groups, CSOs and non-governmental stakeholders.
- there have been improvements in working relationships between the government and the UNCT in recent year. However, there remain some bureaucratic challenges, including a slow response time to requests and feedback (which is predominantly letter-based) and the high turnover of staff within ministries resulting in delayed decision-making ability among counterparts.
- since a strong and independent NGO sector is not yet well developed in Uzbekistan, there are too few NGOs at the grassroots level to work with on specific thematic areas relevant to UN organisations and agencies. Difficulties were noted in keeping up-to-date databases of all CSOs in the country, particularly those in the regions. It was also noted that accessing target populations who are not organised into groups or formally registered was sometimes challenging.
- awareness within the business sector about corporate social responsibility is limited, and efforts are needed to encourage awareness about the ways that business can engage with the realisation of Agenda 30 in Uzbekistan. Efforts should be made to engage with organisations of all sizes, although, recognising return on investment, this may entail supporting coalitions of smaller enterprises.
- to strengthen engagement with the academic and research sector, closer cooperation with UN agencies through, for example, lectures, webinars, and public talks, is needed.
- there is currently insufficient data and research on marginalised and discriminated groups which would allow them to be reached. Women and girls in the regions are part of this marginalised and discriminated group, particularly women with disabilities and women with disabled children and young adults.

#### Interviews with key non-UN informants:

- Responses from 26 individuals across different groups showed that knowledge about both the SDGs and the activities of UNCT in Uzbekistan is limited. Respondents believe that on-site regional seminars, cooperation with local government agencies (khokimiyats), the local media, business forums, NGOs, schools and universities should be used to raise awareness about the SDGs. It was also commonly requested that videos should be placed on social networks, on various regional Internet platforms, including regional Telegram channels. Informants believe that regional activists should be involved, and printed handout materials (posters, brochures, books, etc.) should be distributed widely. The UN could take part in events organised by stakeholders.
- Eight of the NGOs, Media, students and University respondents believed that the UN could do more to engage youth and the population outside of Tashkent.
- Yuksalish commented that the multi-stakeholder consultations that Yuksalish conducted in partnership with the United Nations in Uzbekistan were very useful and should be conducted regularly. Yuksalish's 'Jamoatchilik' online platform, which is the first discussion platform created by a non-governmental non-profit organisation may offer a useful tool for conveying people's feedback to UN agencies.
- All respondents would like the UN to provide expert support and research on various topics (ecology, human trafficking, gender equality, corporate social responsibility etc.). Accordingly, local authorities and stakeholders need to understand the practices of other countries and relevant research. A pool of experts on various topics could also provide analytics and comments on issues related to environment, human rights, and women empowerment amongst others.
- Journalists and academics believe that UN work on media literacy among youth and capacity building of journalists should continue, and so should the promotion of education and vocational training programmes in the regions before the benefit of young people.
- Responses from the business community showed that there was little awareness that cooperation with the UN may be possible.

## Summary of recommendations

Stakeholder Engagement and the 2030 Agenda provides a useful framework for categorising a range of approaches for engaging stakeholder groups in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. All UN agencies should review their work on stakeholder engagement practices according to the following four levels.

**Inform:** It is important to inform all relevant stakeholder about the programming process and opportunities for participation, which should not be limited to outreach activities to high-level government partners. Extra efforts may be needed to reach vulnerable and marginalised groups, and people in the regions can be reached via offline communication and face-to face meetings. Regularly updating websites and social media accounts, channels and groups is needed, for those who can receive information online (especially using Telegram, which is one the most used social media platform in the regions and throughout Uzbekistan). There is a need to promptly inform other UN agencies through newsletters or other internal communication tools.

**Consult:** It is imperative to conduct follow-up with the commitment of UN agencies and Government to share with stakeholders 2030 Agenda implementation, follow-up and review processes, as well as listening to and acknowledging concerns, and providing feedback on how stakeholders' inputs influenced the outcome. To some extent, UN organisations and agencies in Uzbekistan are already implementing consultation processes with regional and vulnerable groups, with grassroots CSOs and local governments. However, the challenge is that local governments still have low capacity and require preliminary capacity building in order to carry out effective consultations.

**Involve:** Proper stakeholder mapping and the creation of an online database of stakeholders can help enhance the involvement of stakeholders as the database can help provide opportunities for cooperation. Database should be regularly updated and shared with all agencies. As per the suggested guidelines, stakeholders including those from the private and business sectors that are willing to contribute should have an opportunity to be included in the database and provide their proposals following a due diligence check. Transparent feedback options via a website / Telegram should be implemented. Furthermore, for the private sector, the introduction of the UN Global Compact may increase involvement. The tools particularly recommended for this stage include deliberative polling, solicitation of recommendations and proposals, workshop, forums, data provision, webinars, and social media chats among others.

**Collaborate:** It would be useful for UN organisations and agencies to showcase examples and best practices and raise the awareness of government partners on collaboration practices. Some of the tools to enhance collaboration that the stakeholder may use include: guiding or advisory bodies, working groups on joint planning and shared projects, standing or ad-hoc committees, facilitated consensus building and decision-making forums, and training and capacity building to support joint action.

# **BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the UN's plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It was the result of an inclusive and participatory process and calls for the meaningful and active participation of people and stakeholders at all stages, from Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) integration into national strategies, to implementation, and national monitoring and review. It highlights the importance of participatory approaches for sustainable development. It also places the most vulnerable and voiceless people as central to leaving no one behind.

The manner and level to which stakeholders engage in support of SDG implementation and follow up varies between countries, ranging from stakeholder consultations in decision-making processes, to establishing multi-stakeholder partnerships to advance certain goals and targets, to involving stakeholders in monitoring and reporting. The UN Country Teams (UNCTs) have a key role to play in supporting Member States to implement the commitment of inclusive and transparent stakeholder participation in the 2030 Agenda; they also need to facilitate inclusive, safe and enabling environments in which stakeholders can contribute. The UN Secretary General noted that, in moving towards a new generation of UNCTs, at the country level, Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) must be empowered to serve as a one-stop shop for partnerships with external partners.

*Mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals* means incorporating them into Government policy and strategies at the national level so that they are considered at all stages of thinking.

A *stakeholder* is someone who has a vested interest in the outcome of a particular event/project/programme/policy and can affect or be affected by it.

*Agenda 2030* is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. The Agenda recognises that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets demonstrate the scale and ambition of this universal Agenda. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what these did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

In light of the role that the UNCT play in stakeholder engagement, this report presents an overview of current UNCT stakeholder engagement practices in Uzbekistan. Assessing these practices, sharing good practices and proposing concrete actions that are aligned with the ways that UNCT implements the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework will contribute to strengthening the multi-stakeholder dimension of national development planning and mainstreaming the SDGs in Uzbekistan.

# METHODOLOGY

This report used the suggested methodology in the [Common Minimum Standards for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement \(CMSME\)](#) for supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at country level.

The CMSME recognise the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) as the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of United Nations development activities in each country, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Common Minimum Standards build on good practices shared by UNCTs. They serve as the minimum-level steps that UN Country Teams (UNCTs) should take to forge stakeholder engagement while recognising that country contexts are different, and that implementation will differ based on national considerations. The UNSDCF Guidance and the Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) Guide complement the CMSME.

#### The key steps employed in developing this report include:

- Desk review of documents to capture best practices including those in the Voluntary National Review (VNR)
- Key informant interviews with key stakeholders
- Descriptive and information analysis
- Report development

Recognising that UNCTs have been pursuing engagement with stakeholders in different ways and to differing degrees, the Common Minimum Standards build on the ongoing work of the UNCT. They are an enabling tool for UNCTs to strengthen programming at the country level under the principle of national ownership, and a tool to help build trust between the UN and diverse stakeholders. UNCTs should foster stakeholder engagement in the Cooperation Framework process.

#### Guiding principles

The overarching principle of the Common Minimum Standards for Multi-stakeholder Engagement is that the voice of stakeholders at country level should inform all stages of the Cooperation Framework process. Below are the guiding principles of engagement that can promote inclusivity and enhanced engagement for the 2030 Agenda:

1. Civic space, inclusivity, diversity and representation
2. Transparency and accountability
3. Accessibility and safety
4. Respect for human rights, democracy and sustainability

These Common Minimum Standards apply to UNCTs across all stages of the Cooperation Framework process: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This also includes the Common Country Analysis (CCA). The Common Minimum Standards provide a roadmap for meaningful, inclusive, and diverse multi-stakeholder engagement, with the goal of fostering enhanced partnerships for the 2030 Agenda. UNCTs are encouraged to build on existing mechanisms to meet the Common Minimum Standards.

Building on the existing mechanisms for stakeholder consultation, and drawing on other UN reform processes that are underway – including the development of the new Cooperation Framework and LNOB guidelines – UNCTs should aim to develop and maintain a database of relevant stakeholders that reflects the principles of inclusive participation intended in the SDG agenda. The stakeholder mapping should consider national realities while seeking to be as inclusive as possible. The stakeholder list should include at least the groups outlined below (see additional details in Annex II):

- Civil organisations (CSOs) – including human rights defenders (as called for in SDG 16.10)
- Local governments
- Parliamentarians
- Workers' organisations
- Business and employers' membership organisations
- Research organisations and academia
- Other groups according to national contexts

UNCTs that have developed databases should create a step-by-step plan for stakeholder engagement which includes possible barriers to participation and how to overcome them. UNCT members should collaborate with each other to develop the database, tell their respective stakeholders about the database and share their stakeholder lists. Stakeholders should be informed that information about them is being included in the dynamic/living database, and utmost care and consideration should be taken when collecting and protecting stakeholder data.

UNCTs should ensure that the stakeholders engaged respect the UN Charter and the principles of the 2030 Agenda before adding them to the database. UNCTs should update and diversify the database regularly and consult with and seek advice from relevant stakeholders in order to guide

the process of updating the database. Organisations included in the database can request for their data to be included or removed from the database at any time. The inclusion criteria for stakeholders should be transparent, equitable and gender sensitive.

The UNCT should reach out to all stakeholders in the database at the very beginning of the programme stage and tell them about the process, their opportunities for participation, and formally ask for their inputs. Online data collection, the use of innovative techniques to ensure qualitative and inclusive inputs should be ensured by the UNCT. All consultative meetings should be announced online. Arrangements should be made to allow for online inputs. Additional methods, such as inputs via SMS, email, mail, phone, or in-person consultations are also acceptable, to the extent that budget and safety allows.

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In countries where the development of a database is not possible, UNCTs should develop basic mapping of stakeholders and progressively move to a formal database, as and when the context allows

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## Stakeholder Engagement and the Voluntary National Review

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Uzbekistan presented its first “Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Uzbekistan on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals” in July 2020. According to the Main Messages of the VNR, the bicameral Parliamentary Commission on SDGs, civil society, youth and leading national NGOs were actively involved in SDGs promotion and were consulted with during the preparation of the first VNR.

The UN in Uzbekistan supported the Government both with the preparation of the VNR and in on how to involve stakeholders. As part of this support, as early as in September-October 2019, UNESCAP and RCO conducted a training on multi-stakeholder engagement for government participants involved in VNR preparation. The methodology section of the VNR report provides the following details on engagement with stakeholders:

**The Uzbek parliaments consists of Oliy Majlis (lower chamber) and the Senate (upper chamber). The Parliamentary Commission on SDGs consists of members from both chambers.**

- In September 2019-May 2020 a cycle of **28 consultations** were organised in partnership with the UN, covering **1,348 people in five regions** of Uzbekistan, including NGOs, youth, people with disabilities, media and bloggers.
- In May 2020, virtual public discussions over Zoom on the draft Voluntary National Review of Uzbekistan’s achievements relating to the SDGs took place. The three-day discussions brought together over **400 representatives** from ministries and departments, **22 NGOs** and **other civil society institutions**, international organisations and **30 members of Parliament**. The video conference was organised by the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan together with the Nationwide movement «Yuksalish», the UN Agencies in Uzbekistan, and the National Center for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan<sup>1</sup>.
- In addition to technical and information support, the UN also supported a VNR twinning exercise with Georgia, which was preparing its second VNR report.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://yumh.uz/en/news\\_detail/190](https://yumh.uz/en/news_detail/190)

## **Future VNRs may contain a more detailed description of the stakeholders' engagement and a localised Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Framework**

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Section 5 (Policy and enabling environment) and 5a (Creating ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals and the VNRs) states that, “the review could outline how stakeholders, such as national and local governments, legislative bodies, national oversight/auditing, human rights or other institutions, the public, civil society and the private sector, were involved in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda, including goals and targets. The review could address how different groups, particularly women and youth, as well as children, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons, migrants and other vulnerable groups have been engaged and contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and how direct engagement of people has been facilitated.”

Annex I presents how different countries engage the private, public and third sector (neither public or private) organisations in the VNR process. It is clear that countries communicated ways to encourage and engage stakeholder participation in their VNR preparation and implementation. The examples also feature stakeholders engagement, a VNR timeline template and recommendations<sup>2</sup>.

**The Resident Coordinator Office in Uzbekistan piloted multi-stakeholder regional consultations for the new Cooperation Framework, described further in this report.**

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2 Stakeholder Engagement & the 2030 Agenda, p. 79 and p. 96

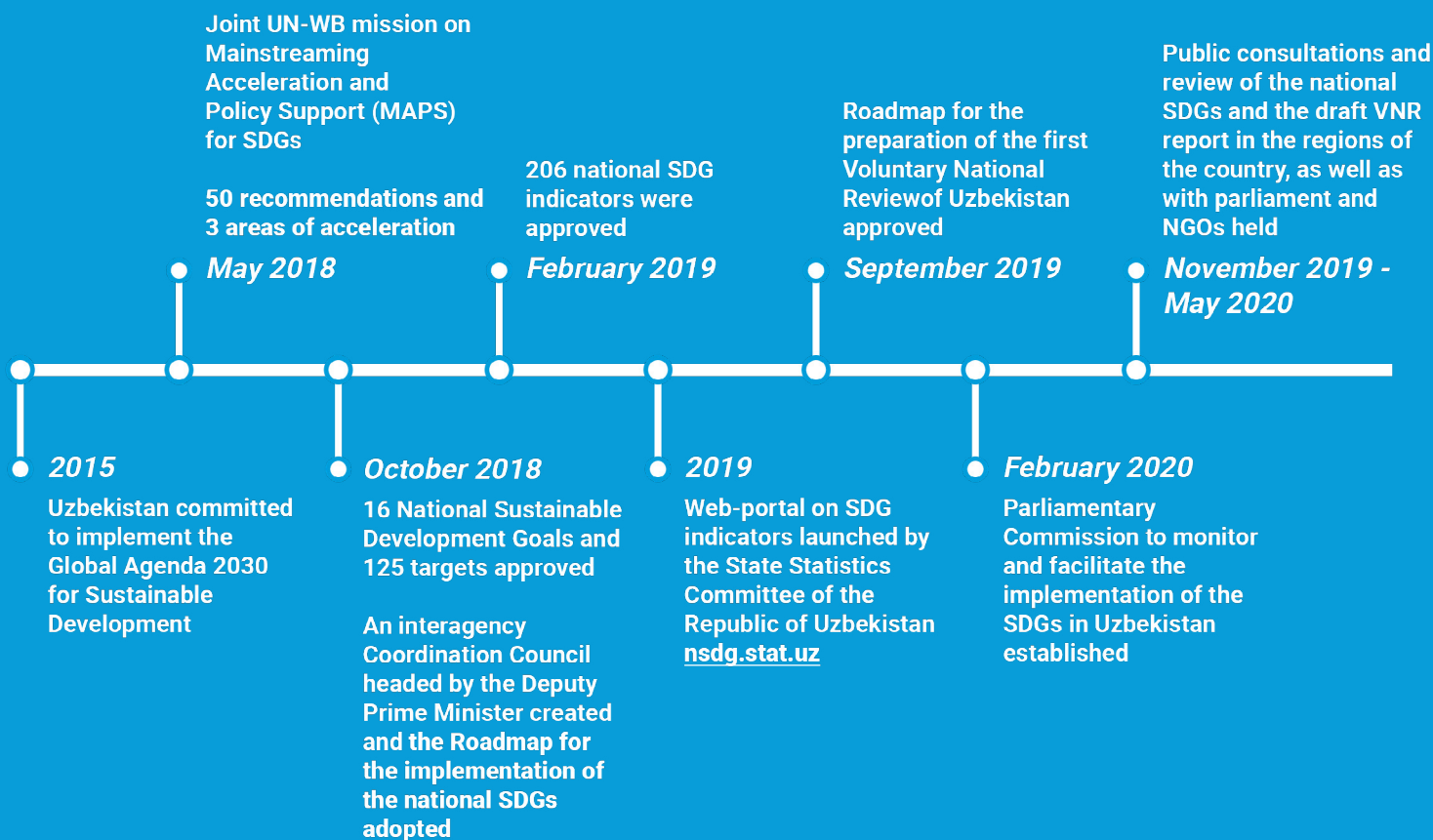
## Involvement of private sector, marginalised groups, CSO and other non-governmental stakeholders could be more significant in preparation of the next VNR

In addition, stakeholders from all regions should be consulted (in 2019-2020 only 5 regions were involved in consultations). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, consultations with stakeholders were conducted mostly online, proving that online tools can be used in consultations as well.

The figure below outlines the nine steps of VNR preparation in Uzbekistan. The involvement of non-governmental stakeholders is in step 8 (Public consultations and review of

the national SDGs and the draft VNR report in the regions of the country, as well as with parliament and NGOs held). It is important to note that VNR development in Uzbekistan is a government-led process, and does not have sufficient emphasis on engaging stakeholders and recognising their contributions. It is therefore recommended that a Stakeholders Engagement Strategy and Plan is elaborated and implemented for the next VNRs.

### How Uzbekistan describes the process of preparing the VNR 2020



# UNCT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES FOR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Stakeholder Engagement Standards in the Cooperation Framework and Agencies' Country Programming process
- Multi-stakeholder consultations as part of developing the CCA and UNSDCF
- UN75 campaign
- COVID-19 Donors and Grants Matrix developed by the RCO
- Current Practices on Mapping of Partners
- Methods and tools to foster participatory engagement
- Cooperation with major stakeholder groups
- Innovation, Technology, and Social Media Platforms for
- Multi-stakeholder Engagement and Participation
- Challenges in Stakeholder Engagement Faced by UN Organisations and Agencies

This section features inputs from key informant interviews, held with the following UN organisations and agencies using the questionnaire in Annex II: RC Office, UNODC, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNDRR, ILO, UNOPS, UN-Habitat, UNDP, OHCHR, and IOM.

### Stakeholder Engagement Standards in the Cooperation Framework and Agencies' Country Programming process

The RC Office recognized that while Common Minimum Standards for stakeholder engagement were minimally implemented at system level by the UNCT over last two years, the UNCT has demonstrated good practices in stakeholder engagement that was fully ensured in the design of the CCA, UNSDCF, UN75 campaign, and other activities. As the RC Office also elaborated, there was a good level of engagement from the Government, parliamentarians, civil society and youth. However, there is still a lot to be done to increase engagement with the private sector and businesses. The RCO highlighted that the Common Minimum Standards should be applied by all UNCT entities and that agency-specific standards should seek alignment with UNCT common standards.

As a good example of successful stakeholder engagement for the new cooperation framework, the RCO mentioned the establishment of the Youth Advisory Board. This advisory board has now become an integral part of the implementation and management structure of the cooperation framework. It was set up at the beginning of 2020 and is a UNCT (interagency) initiative. The YAB consists of young people who were selected on a competitive basis and who represent youth of different ages and from different backgrounds (e.g., vulnerable groups, including children without parental care and young people with disabilities).

UN Agencies are also not particularly aware of the **UN SDG Common Minimum Standards for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement**. However, each UN Agency mainstreams stakeholder engagement practices in their Country programme development, annual review and assessment processes. Some UN Agencies noted issues with knowledge management, saying that there are so many reports and work to do that there is not always enough time to track best practices and read all documents.

Engaging stakeholders at each stage of the country programming process is part of every agency's country programme. All UN agencies respondents indicated that there are requirements and guidelines on stakeholder consultations in the programme planning process, monitoring and evaluation. In the country programme evaluation, there is always a place for external stakeholders to be involved in evaluation.

Each agency has its own country programme cycle and timeframe. For instance, The UNAIDS plan covers two years. UNESCO has a Programme cycle of 4 years and a financial cycle every two years. As such, when mapping stakeholders, it is important to acknowledge the projects and subjects within the agency's scope of work. UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA gave examples of stakeholder mapping processes in the regions of Uzbekistan that they developed once they had started projects in the regions.

At the regional level, UN ESCAP also has a CSO engagement mechanism. However, this is very limited, and it is only at the CSO level. Nonetheless, this would be a good starting point if Uzbekistan chooses to replicate it at a national level.

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The RCO is ready to organise a workshop for all the agencies on learning about and implementing the Common Minimum Standards within agencies' activities.

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All UN Agencies prioritise partnership with the Government, which is driven by the mandate of the agencies. The Government is a key stakeholder in all engagements. The role and place of the third sector, CSOs and business community varies from agency to agency.

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Multi-stakeholder consultations  
as part of developing the CCA and  
UNSDCF

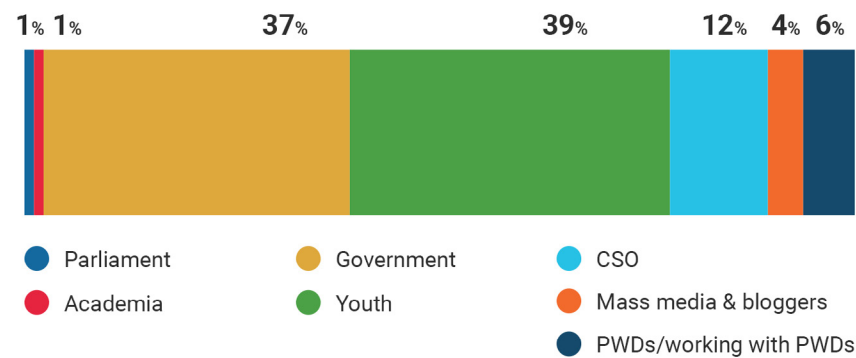
As part of developing the Common Country Analysis and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2021-2025, throughout September-December 2019, UNCT Uzbekistan conducted extensive multi-stakeholder consultations in six regions and in the capital of Uzbekistan. About 1,600 people, including youth and children, local communities and civil society organisations, mass media, academicians, local and central government authorities and Parliamentarians were part of the consultations. Consultations covered the most critical development challenges, their effects and causes, as well asking about beneficial solutions in which the UN could play a useful role. These consultations were instrumental in ensuring that no one is left behind and that the voices of everyone, especially the most vulnerable, are heard.

The outcomes of the multi-stakeholder consultations fundamentally informed and helped to identify strategic solutions to priority development challenges. These were in turn translated into outcomes and outputs of the [Cooperation Framework](#).

Multi-stakeholder consultations by type, %

Overview

- 32 consultations
- 5 regions and Tashkent
- 1459 participants
- 60:40 male to female ratio
- 40% youth participation



The stakeholder consultations helped to ensure that the new Cooperation Framework is indeed needs and demand driven rather than supply driven. This is in line with the new spirit of the UN reforms— the new generation cooperation framework should be built not on what the agencies can do, but what the agencies are expected to do, and what they are demanded to do by the people of the country. The consultations allowed people to discuss problems on the ground and in the regions at different levels (at the community level, with students, with young people in communities, NGOs, makhalla leaders). As part of an innovative approach to consultation, people also offered solutions to problems and proposed strategies for shaping the new Cooperation Framework.

It is the first time that regional consultations involving such a wide array of stakeholders have been organised in Uzbekistan. As well as consulting communities in the regions, consultations also were held with Parliament and with NGOs. Compared to the previous generation of the cooperation framework, this was a truly participatory process, with deputies and senators very interested and curious about the process, discovering the results of field level consultations and learning about the problems that concern ordinary people.

It must be noted that multi-stakeholder consultations of this scale and depth were possible thanks to the growing, albeit still nascent, civic space in the country. The Government NGO and nationwide movement [Yuksalish](#), which has the ability to convene the majority of local NGOs/CSOs, collaborated with the RCO to organise these consultations.

Throughout the consultation process, it is important to recognise the target audience and tailor the common methodology to the needs of the audience. Language differences, a lack of understanding about the UN's role, as well as frustration about why reforms are not working properly are the common reasons why this is important. The use of a storytelling approach in the process led people to say that they have many interactions with both the Government, NGOs and international organisations, however progress is not happening in the way people expected. It is therefore imperative to take a prudent approach during consultations so as not to raise people's expectations.

With the coordination of the RC Office, the UNCT pioneered the aforementioned innovative consultation process in Uzbekistan. Despite the current efforts, it still needs to be structured and formalized. It requires analytical work, a lot of background reading, and exploration of social media to understand people's constantly changing concerns.

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It was a very difficult exercise, it was important to capture what they say and contribute to the cooperation framework, but we couldn't raise expectations that everything people say will be addressed.

There is no single methodology for engaging a wide group of people. There is no single methodology for delivering a message. There is no single methodology for making an assessment of public discussions. While it should be made as inclusive as possible, the methodology must be adjusted to the needs of every single group.

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Resident Coordinator's Office

# UN75 CAMPAIGN

In March 2020, the UN in Uzbekistan, together with the Government of Uzbekistan, launched the #UN75 campaign, within the framework of the Decade of Action for Agenda 2030. In partnership with the Government and civil society, the United Nations system in Uzbekistan held **48 dialogues** with more than **5,500 participants** across Uzbekistan, including with vulnerable groups. Among the non-government stakeholders invited to participate in the campaign were:

- People living with disabilities and HIV AIDS
- Not only 'standard' and government-funded NGOs, like Yuksalish or the Strategy Center, but also regional NGOs, who are called independent NGOs
- Human rights activists
- Independent opinion makers, bloggers and journalists.

More than

**34,000 people**  
in Uzbekistan took the  
global #UN75 survey.

UNCT, jointly with Yuksalish, provided a virtual platform (online meetings via ZOOM) for people to share their stories and opinions. The Cooperation framework consultations and UN75 dialogues helped UNCT to create a group of dedicated young people (the Youth Advisory Board) keen to work with the UN and willing to support different types of outreach and communication activities. Initially, around 50 people signed up to dedicate their time, energy and resources to the campaign. The group also supported COVID-19 related initiatives. For example, the 'Wear a Mask' campaign gained popularity thanks to the activity of youth networks.

## COVID-19 Donors and Grants Matrix developed by the RCO

When COVID-19 started, the RCO initiated the development of a donor and grant matrix specific to the needs of the pandemic in Uzbekistan and the response to it. As part of the exercise, the Grants matrix developed by the RCO aims to support transparency and accountability. In 2020, the RCO circulated the matrix almost on a weekly basis with development partners.

Since March 2020, when national quarantine measures began to be introduced, RCO has established and managed a mailing list of more than three hundred partners to whom it disseminates regular COVID-19 situation analysis reports. The list contains the contact details of development partners ranging from donor agencies, embassies, to the government and CSOs.

For wider reach, the Grants matrix could be published on the UN Uzbekistan website, along with graphic example of how investments contribute to the work of different agencies and partners to advance the Sustainable Development Goals in the country. This is a good example of an innovative, transparent, and analytical tool that is useful for development partners.

## Current Practices on Mapping of Partners

The RCO mentioned that a stakeholder mapping was initially carried out in 2019. This consists of partner mapping, donor mapping, and a database of civil society organisations. While these are complementary, they do not constitute a full-fledged stakeholder mapping as is described in the Common Minimum Standards document guidelines. The standards also require that the stakeholder mapping database should be easily accessible to everyone, to every UN agency in the country in Uzbekistan and also to non-resident agencies.

Many UN Agencies responded that major partners mapping is done during country programmes development. The list of partners is also updated at regular partnership meetings, during the annual reporting process, when a new programme or direction of work starts, as well as at the end of the year for sending greeting cards.



UNFPA has a practice of conducting partner mapping during country programme development and updates it annually. Additional mapping is carried out if a new direction occurs (a population census, for example), when it is discussed and a group on donor support is created. UNFPA referred to the stakeholder mapping they are currently developing for a new programme. The mapping includes legislation analysis, engaging with Ministries and NGOs. At the implementation stage, there are review meetings twice a year, participants are mainly stakeholders rather than beneficiaries, and they report on activities and expenditures. At the Monitoring stage, UNFPA staff travel to the regions and collect data and feedback from beneficiaries on project implementation. At the Evaluation stage, an independent expert assesses the project and provides evaluation.



UNICEF noted that its main partners are Government partners. The agency does not maintain Excel sheets, but engages with partners depending on the matter and subject. They look for partners who are dealing with issues of concern for the agency. There is also a financial system with all vendors with whom the agency works.



UNAIDS is compiling a new database currently since the Agency did not operate in the country in the last three years. There is a practice of updating the list of partners after each partnership meeting.

Some agencies mentioned that partners are limited by their agency mandate. In addition, the small number of CSOs was given as a challenge to expanding partnerships.



UNODC noted that Project ideas come from partners, presidential speeches, conferences, legal acts etc. They discuss ideas with stakeholders, search for global practices, fundraise for the project, then collect feedback from project beneficiaries.



OHCHR bases its planning on the guidelines and priorities for sub-regional programmes sent from Geneva headquarters, and the office will begin consultations with partners from the government bodies, civil society and independent experts. In addition, before developing the Work Plan for each year, they conduct consultations for 2-3 months, as according to their priorities and outcomes they should identify stakeholders and conduct consultations.

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Respondents mentioned various methods and tools to foster participation, including consultations meetings, mid-term reviews with government partners, focus groups, needs assessments, e-mail distribution systems and other methods that are driven by the issue or project.

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UN Agencies describe **the pre-requisites for successful, genuine and efficient stakeholder engagement as:** NGOs—trust among partners; Government—openness, flexibility and transparency; Business—a stigma free environment.

All UN Agencies indicated that there are no limitations on the way they can be approached. They receive requests by email, phone call and at meetings. In terms of possible cooperation, the ideas of stakeholders should meet the mandate and objectives/targets of the specific UN Agency.

### Methods and tools to foster participatory engagement

Organisations and agencies use different instruments/channels publicise activities and engage participation. Some of common instruments include, but are not limited to, publishing annual reports, conducting events in observance of special world days such as World Youth Day and 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (Gender Theme Group). The use of social media and TV channels are widely utilised to promote engagement, especially for public events. The “Innovation and Technology” section of this document further elaborates on the online communication tools used by the UN in Uzbekistan.



UNAIDS, through the support of the RC Office, reached an extended group of partners to discuss critical issues with civil society organisations. For example, the RC met with CSOs in January 2020 and agreed to meet every three months to discuss relevant topics related to UNAIDS. Further, organisations and agencies have set up a Country Coordination Mechanism, mainly conducted through board meetings chaired by the Government, that includes a wide number of partners (Government, UN agencies and NGOs). The common practice is for these board meetings to take place every quarter depending on the organisation/agency and the particular project or initiative.



UNFPA recognised the value of synergy as they also engaged and benefited from UNDAF and VNR consultations. UNFPA also supported meetings with the Government NGO Yuksalish. UNFPA noted that engaging in other UNCT stakeholder engagement activities helps not only reduce organisational or agency costs, but most importantly, supports wider outreach and efficient collection of feedback.



UNICEF has a Youth Advisory Board under the U-Report online platform. Through the YAB, the organisation can gather key information from a particular population group. The YAB has also proved a cost-effective participatory advisory method.

At system level, the UNCT also engages a wide range of stakeholders to the annual UN performance review under the Development Assistance/Cooperation Framework. To illustrate, for last two years, annual meetings of Joint UN-Government Steering Committee under the UN Development Assistance Framework has seen participation of civil society and development partners in addition to Government counterparts. Another case is the implementation of the Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region (MPHSTF) in which the RCO coordinates the work of the MPHSTF Secretariat. As part of this role, the UN RCO and MPHSTF Secretariat ensure that the proposals submitted by the participating UN agencies (PUNOs) are based on on-the-ground outreach and meet the needs of the people in the Aral Sea region. The Steering Committee of the MPHSTF, which approves Joint Programmes, consists not just of members of the Government and development partners, but also with CSOs from the Aral Sea region. In addition, the MPHSTF Steering Committee initiated the establishment of an Advisory Committee for the Sustainable Development of the Aral Sea region under the aegis of the MPHSTF. The Advisory Board stipulates even broader stakeholder membership, not limited to the Fund's donor agencies, but including other partner organisations and academia. These stakeholder engagement arrangements are, however, specific to the Aral Sea region, given the large number of donors and other partner organisations focusing on the region.

## Cooperation with major stakeholder groups

While the UNCT in Uzbekistan work with a wide array of stakeholders, the categories of stakeholders are limited to a few major groups. These major groups of stakeholders include governments (national and local), parliamentarians, civil society organisations (CSOs), businesses, academia, and workers' organisations. Illustrated below are various ways in which the UNCT in Uzbekistan cooperated with these major stakeholder groups.

### Government and Parliamentarians

The key partners of the UN in Uzbekistan at the national level are Government Agencies, mainly the various Ministries. All UN organisations and agencies prioritise partnership with the Government, which is driven by the mandate of the agencies. Depending on the scale of the work and the geographic target, the UN in Uzbekistan occasionally partners with local governments, such as in the case of the Aral Sea Region. In particular, Parliament and its committees are also becoming active stakeholders. UN agencies that have interventions in the regions develop partnership with respective local authorities (regional Khokimiyats).

UNCT engagement with Parliament is coordinated at an inter-agency level. For instance, the UNCT cooperates with the Parliamentary Gender Commission through the Gender Theme Group and with the Youth Parliament through the Youth Task Force.

## Civil society organisations (CSOs)

In 2019, the RCO started to compile a list of civil society organisations based on UNCT's list of partners. The UN in Uzbekistan uses as the mailing list as a source when the UN sends updates, reports, and even meeting invitations to CSOs to ensure their participation. The list is tabulated using MS Word for easy navigation; the RCO may consider using a different platform for simpler filtering.

The RCO also maintains a list of NGOs that includes the regular NGO partners of UN organisations and agencies. The list, however, is not comprehensive as it does not include all the NGOs registered in Uzbekistan, which leads to some being excluded, especially those in the regions. The list should be updated and the UN may want to consider opening an online platform for those not on the list so that their information can be included.

At the global level, there is a [CSO database](#), maintained by ECOSOC. However, only four NGOs from Uzbekistan are in the database (the Center of Civil Initiatives Support, Ecoforum of NGOs, Independent Institute for Monitoring the Formation of Civil Society and "Istiqbolli Avlod"). This international resource may not be known to other NGOs and local stakeholders since transparent mechanisms are limited in Uzbek, Karakalpak and Russian languages.

Some of the civil society organisations that the UN in Uzbekistan has worked with are NGOs set up by the Government (GONGOs) such as the Youth Union, the Oila centre, Mahalla Committees<sup>3</sup>, Yuksalish and the Centre for Social Adaptation of Children. This is noteworthy, since a strong and independent NGO sector is not yet well developed in Uzbekistan and many UN organisations and agencies have mentioned that there are too few NGOs at the grassroots level to work with on specific thematic areas relevant to the organisations and agencies. Those that UN organisations and agencies do work with include Istiqbolli avlod, Intilish, Ishonch va Khayot, Women Shelters, and DPOs.



UNAIDS has a particular focus on CSOs in all consultations they conduct. NGOs should have a seat and voice in decision making at the global, as well as local level. All consultations should include NGOs and people with HIV.

UNAIDS also mentioned the experience of working with initiative groups of people living with HIV, as official NGO registration in Uzbekistan is a complicated process. An NGO in Samarkand working with HIV managed to get registration on its 15th attempt. Accordingly, Initiative groups approach UNAIDS via Facebook, often via the regional offices of NGOs. UNAIDS proposes to involve the Youth Advisory Board in getting young people living with HIV included in the initiative group. In the same vein, UNFPA reported that there are a number of NGOs on women issues, however there are almost no NGOs dealing with reproductive health.



OHCHR engages with civil society actors several times a year by participating in several RC-led meetings. Accordingly, during these meetings, OHCHR hears the views of civil society, which OHCHR and other UN agencies must pay attention to. Civil society can tell UN organisations and agencies where the state is failing to meet its obligations, and where the help/push from UN agencies is needed.

3 NB.: The Oila Center and Mahalla Committees have merged into the new Ministry of Mahalla and Family Affairs

UN organisations and agencies conduct due diligence in engaging with CSOs and have to approve the project with the Ministry of Justice.

## Business sector

Globally, the UN has established relationships with business organisations. In Uzbekistan, cooperation between UN organisations/agencies and the private sector is in its early stages of development, with UNDP proactively paving the way in implementing partnerships with the private sector (e.g., Accelerator Lab and Startup Initiatives with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as Korzinka and the Coca-Cola Foundation). UNICEF and UNESCO have also started other initiatives involving the business sector.

To invigorate the partnership with the private sector, the RCO, on behalf of the UNCT, has taken steps to promote the [UN Global Compact](#) in Uzbekistan, which is a voluntary initiative based on companies' commitment to implementing sustainability principles. In November 2020, the RCO, in cooperation with the UN Global Compact Office in NY, held the inaugural event to introduce the UN Global Compact to the private sector across Uzbekistan. In total, 33 members from local Uzbek companies and global companies with local representation in Uzbekistan participated in the event, at which the convenor explained how the participation of private business organisations could help accelerate the achievement of Uzbekistan's national Sustainable Development Goals. The meeting also enhanced understanding of the benefits of becoming a UN Global Compact member, as some organisations have expressed their interest in taking part in the UN Global Compact.

As a follow-up to the UN Global Compact inaugural meeting, the RCO has scanned the horizon for organisations interested to be part of a UN Global Compact. Since the beginning of 2021, the RCO and has been holding starter guidance sessions to help increase the membership of Uzbek businesses in the UN Global Compact. Given the development of the new UN Global Compact strategy, the UN in Uzbekistan plans to scale up private sector engagement to create a group of private sector organisations that would champion the global and national SDGs, which would be useful in the eventual organisation of a UNGC Local Network.

The participation in the UN Global Compact is a great step towards start to engage business stakeholders more actively in sustainability practices. More attention, however, should be paid to including entities of all sizes and of various interests. Annex III provides some examples of global practices on how to engage the business sector to support start-ups and entrepreneurs.

UNICEF has been working with the private sector as well. For U-Report, UNICEF has partnered with UCell and also involved Korzinka in its public advocacy campaigns. UNESCO also works with UCell and Beeline on its cultural festivals and with Huawei on educational programmes.

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**Ucell** is a mobile network brand in Uzbekistan, owned and operated by the Uzbek company COSCOM.

**Beeline Uzbekistan** is the biggest mobile operator in the country and was the first to launch a 4G network in 2014.

**Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd.** is one of the largest Chinese companies in the sphere of telecommunications which has a large representation in Uzbekistan.

**Korzinka** is one of the biggest supermarket chains and most reputable international brands in Uzbekistan.

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UNICEF noted that the practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has yet to be mainstreamed in private sector culture in Uzbekistan. With most larger businesses being state-owned, CSR is not a common feature of business. It was easier for UNICEF to engage with UCell since it is a foreign-owned company, and with Korzinka, since CSR is part of their corporate culture. UNICEF recommended that although limited, it is important to further explore partnership with the business sector and assess the return on investment at the policy and financial level from working with small and medium businesses in the social sector—big players like retail chains or telecom companies have nationwide reach compared to small and medium enterprises. At times, the overhead costs of engaging with many small businesses is larger than the return. Therefore, if small and medium business enterprises could unite into a coalition, platform, or association, their impact could be greater.

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Conducting due diligence  
is an important step  
in engaging with the  
business sector

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Although the focus of UNICEF is the well-being of children, who for the most part are not involved in business enterprises, this has not stopped UNICEF exploring partnerships with business stakeholders. UNICEF's partnership with UCell resulted in about 20,000 youth anonymously responding to polls which were tracked live online. This can be controversial due to the absence of government oversight over the polls. UNICEF was able to send free messages through short messaging system (SMS) to more than 20,000 youths. The organisation convinced UCell and other telecom companies that the partnership is a long-term investment in the development of Uzbekistan. All stakeholders involved were pleased with the results of the partnership. UNICEF also partners with other UN organisations and agencies such as UNDP to ensure that the programme on developing youth entrepreneurship skills is part of their priority areas. For example, UNICEF is

interested in other organisations' target audiences, such as young people from prison facilities who, after doing their time, need skills to prepare for their return to society. There is also interest in including young women returning from conflict areas, to help equip them with skills.

While other organisations and agencies do not have an active and strong engagement with the business sector in Uzbekistan, many have expressed an interest in working with the private sector as well. UNFPA, for example, although it does not cover start-ups or social entrepreneurship, still has opportunities to engage with the business sector in the areas of drug prevention and families. Accordingly, organisations and agencies shared some of the successful business sector engagement practices in other countries such as in the United States and United Kingdom (e.g., Manchester United's engagement in families and schools).

To make engagement with the business sector more viable, UN organisations and agencies recognise their strength in numbers. For example, UNFPA recognises the importance of working with UNCT members such as ILO and UNDP, while UNODC considers its partnership with the Ministry of Education as a channel to engage businesses in support of its programmes for youth ("Вливайся в жизнь"), programmes to improve legal knowledge, skills, business and social adaptation skills. Further, UNAIDS alluded to the role of the business sector in helping children and youth with HIV. According to UNAIDS, potential partners are pharmaceutical companies.

As part of the due diligence process of engaging with the business sector, UNESCO shared that they have a list of global companies (most alcohol and tobacco companies globally are not eligible partners based on the due diligence criteria). At the global level, UNESCO head office has established some level of partnerships with Microsoft, Apple, and Google. UNESCO also values partnership with UNCT members such as UNICEF to better engage with the businesses sector.

### Academia

The academic sector, research organisations and some think tanks are common partners of many UN organisations and agencies in Uzbekistan. Among the key stakeholders in this sector are the Academy of Sciences, the Culture Institute, the Economic Institute, Tashkent University of Information Technologies (TUIT), Ijtimoiy Fikr, the Centre for Journalism Development, and others. UNDP, UNICEF, UNDOC, and OHCHR work with the Academy of the Prosecutor General's Office to provide support on the SDGs, since the Academy is responsible for several national SDG targets and indicators, particularly SDG16.

To strengthen engagement with the academic and research sector, OHCHR proposes closer cooperation with UN agencies through, for example, lectures, webinars, and public talks. The Tashkent State Law University, for instance, want to create a LLM (Master of Laws) course on Human Rights, but they lack the funds for this. OHCHR suggests that such a course could be a great joint UN project for several agencies to collaborate on. Annex V presents some of the key messages and recommendations from interviews with the academic community as well as selected NGOs. The recommendations complement those mentioned by UN organisations and agencies.

### Reaching marginalised, discriminated and/or underrepresented stakeholders and target audience in the regions

The RCO's partnership with the Yuksalish Movement has helped the UN reach out to those outside the capital cities and those in the regions. As part of the CCA and UNSDCF development processes, the UN consulted first with the Yuksalish Movement, which is an innovative approach as consultation with regional stakeholders took place prior to consultations with Parliament. Because of the success of engaging with regional stakeholders, the RCO followed the same approach in the UN75 dialogues. Annex IV describes the perspective of the Yuksalish Movement as a key partner and stakeholder in various UN initiatives in Uzbekistan.

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Engaging with people in the region should be in the annual work plan. Every single large initiative should be considered engaging with civil society organisations, mass media, bloggers, youth and other groups. This means that the UNCT entities need to increase its regional exposure in the regions of Uzbekistan with a focus on reaching out youth and promoting the national sustainable development goals.

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Resident Coordinator's Office

### UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNODC

work with regional stakeholders via trainings arranged by local NGOs. The UN organisations and agencies also communicate through social media platforms, Telegram, TV and newspapers, regional blogs, independent journalists, and this is often a requirement by donors. In the regions, UN Agencies collaborate and communicate information through their partners, such as the Youth Union (UNESCO), the Association of People with Disabilities, outreach specialists, regional branches of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Yuksalish (UNAIDS), and U-Report (UNICEF). This approach helps to reach target audiences in the regions of Uzbekistan.

UNFPA raised the issue of the lack of data and research on marginalised and discriminated groups which would allow them to be reached. Women and girls in the regions are part of this group, particularly women with disabilities and women with disabled children and young adults. There is a need to enhance research and the availability of data in this area to address the specific problems of the target audience.

To ensure the representation of marginalised, underrepresented, and vulnerable groups in every aspect of development work and decision-making, the RCO referred to the common country analysis (CCA), which includes a structured analysis of those most at risk of vulnerability in Uzbekistan. The analysis used the inputs from multi-stakeholder consultations involving CSOs, youth, central and regional authorities, Parliament, and academia, among others, to formulate its recommended actions. In terms of reaching the most marginalised, each UN organisation should know who, within their mandate, are the most vulnerable and reach them to understand their needs.

### Accountability, Transparency to Stakeholders and Feedback loops

Stakeholder accountability, transparency and maintaining open communication are key characteristics of effective stakeholder engagement. Accountability and transparency are about being open to stakeholders and engaging with them through various channels. By practicing accountability and transparency, organisations and agencies are able to establish decision-making ownership among their stakeholders, resulting in sustainability of results. In the UN in Uzbekistan, standard accountability tools range from reports to online platforms. Organisations and agencies reported that social media communication channels are the main tools they use to report to beneficiaries and civil society. For example, UNICEF uses its website, Facebook, Twitter, and U-Report.

- Country Programme planning process
- Mid-term review
- Steering Committee Review
- Report to government (MFA, MoF, or MIFT) on activities and budget
- Global or regional Platforms to report to member states
- Financial platform to report on expenditure and contributions
- The RCO acts as a coordinating body for UN's joint reporting to the Government
- The RCO regularly publishes reports on the website

**UNODC** explained that they use the handover process to report on the volume of goods and activities conducted. They have follow-up activities on the goods and equipment provided. Specifically, **UNODC** reported a practice of using a follow-up questionnaire after all activities, not limited to the training or workshops conducted. For instance, they had a training in November 2019, and six months later they conducted follow-up questionnaires to learn if the knowledge and skills were useful and how to improve further the policy in place. UNODC also engages expert groups, think tanks, and NGOs to analyse and provide feedback.

While having a feedback loop is something well-practiced in many UN organisations and agencies in Uzbekistan, there are some organisations and agencies that do not implement this practice. **UNESCO** said that they do not have feedback loop instruments per se. For example, when UNESCO receives mails and complaints, very often on World Heritage objects violations, they direct the letters to the respective Ministries to provide a response. Responding is usually time consuming, and it can take 1-2 months to complete the process for one letter.

### **Innovation, Technology, and Social Media Platforms for Multi-stakeholder Engagement and Participation**

The website of the UN in Uzbekistan serves as the main communication channel for the country team. The website features the different members of the UNCT with links to organisations' or agencies' respective websites or webpages. There is also contact information for the various heads of agencies on the UN in Uzbekistan's website. The UNCT and the RCO maintain mailing lists, social media accounts and Telegram channels that serve as a gateway for multi-stakeholder engagements.

UNICEF has a communication and engagement channel, **U-Report**, which has a Telegram channel/bot with over 100,000 users (mainly young people) who participate in social surveys. For UNICEF, the Telegram U-Report channel is one of its main information technology platforms for engaging stakeholders. At present, other UN organisations and agencies including UNODC, UNAIDS, and UNFPA also benefit from the U-Report as a means to collect data from stakeholders.

Agencies including UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, and UNAIDS also indicate that they use Telegram as a communication tool. Other social media platform that UN organisations and agencies use are Facebook, Twitter, and Odnoklasniki. For example, UNESCO created a Telegram channel to invite stakeholders in Khorezm to cultural heritage consultations. Telegram and other social media tools can serve as an additional method to reach a wider range of stakeholders and sustain communication for future engagement and feedback collection. UNFPA mentioned that social media tools help obtain critical comments on their activities. However, some of the feedback is not mandate-related, and such an overflow of comments and requests for help may indicate a challenge for UN agencies as they increase their communication, increase their visibility, and increase information sharing about the UN's role.

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The cooperation framework that was recently signed by the Government includes an annex highlighting the input from civil society and their major concerns, which is a useful feedback loop.

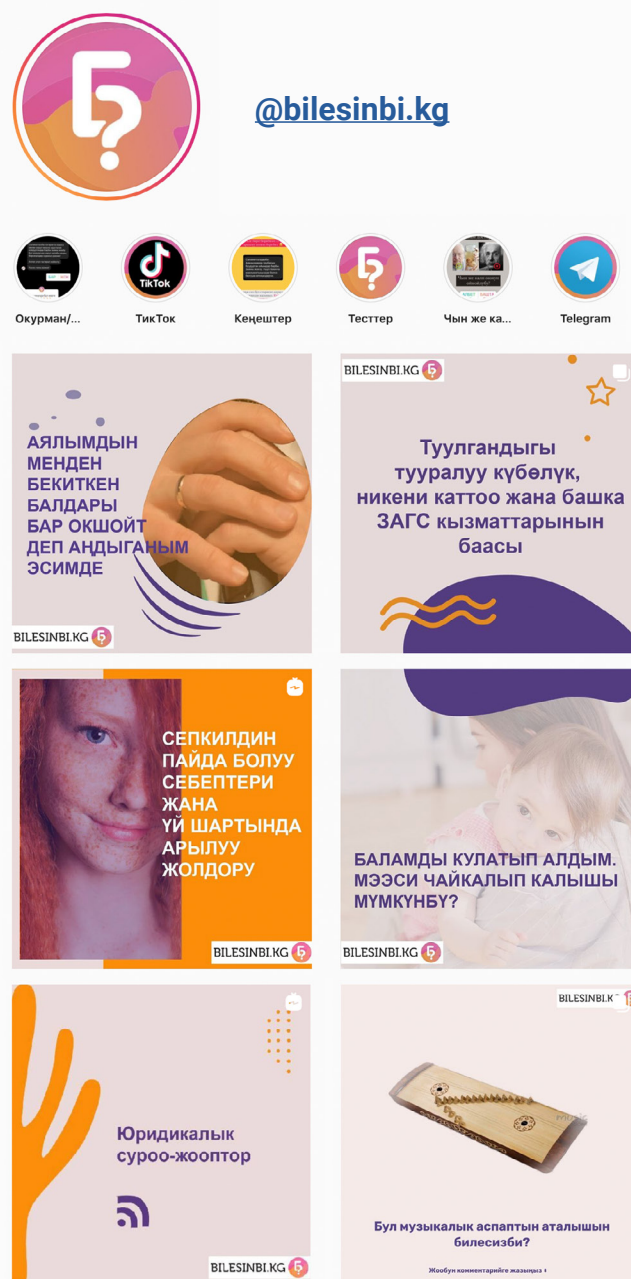
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Telegram is a popular option among UN organisations and agencies in Uzbekistan. Telegram has been used to reach out to national experts, exchange and share news and photos. An example is the "Ahil Oila" campaign or UNODC together with the Ministry of Education. OHCHR also maintains a Telegram account to connect with representatives of civil society, where they track their comments, suggestions, and recommendations.

**UNAIDS** hopes to have a website on HIV AID prevention, with good examples coming from Kazakhstan, with data on prevention.

Kyrgyzstan has an anonymous consultancy where youth can ask and get professional advice in Kyrgyz language.

**UNAIDS** also plans to engage Ambassadors such as celebrities, bloggers and vloggers who can reach a wide audience and can deliver relevant messages.



While the use of information technology is now widely adopted across UN organisations and agencies in Uzbekistan, one of RCO's concerns is that ICT access in remote areas in the country is not adequate. Further, it is important to recognise that not all members of the population have the know-how nor the access to certain information technology resources. In order to ensure that the SDGs' imperative of leaving no one behind is respected, it is very important for the UN to reach out to the people who are hardest to reach, mostly those in remote areas who are elderly and living with disabilities. The RCO, therefore, would like the UNCT to further explore areas that would allow the team to reach these groups more efficiently.

The RCO is taking advantage of the information technology available and has started building a repository of data and information for the entire UNCT. This initiative will enable the UNCT to easily access the information they need. The plan is to create a database like a SharePoint drive or a knowledge platform that can be made public for every UN organisation and agency to use.

The UN is open to every stakeholder and very much willing to cooperate with everyone, especially in remote areas in the regions where stakeholders are hard to reach. The database and possibly a crowdsourcing approach to managing the database is something that UN organisations and agencies can explore. One approach would be for stakeholders to self-propose to be included in the database. The UN organisation or agency concerned can then decide how and where to place the stakeholder in the database.

**UNESCO** shared that there are a number of innovative platforms initiated by UNESCO for multi stakeholder engagement in other countries. For example, in Mediterranean countries, UNESCO has a programme with the youth on developing science capacity through the [Net-MED Youth platform](#). In Uzbekistan, some colleges participate

in a network of UNESCO educational establishments, the [UNITWIN](#) - global network among Universities. Some colleges and universities in Uzbekistan who are part of the network are unable to fully participate, as they do not have enough capacity and financial resources.

Another innovative and technology-based tool relevant to stakeholder engagement is the use of a geographic information system (GIS) to help present data on population on a map. UNFPA is advocating for this in Uzbekistan. The Ministry of Education liked the idea and was interested in developing such a tool. This platform would support data owners such as the Ministries to be able to visualize data and provide comprehensive information for stakeholders. For example, if the Ministry of Education is planning to build a college but data and statistics are only on paper, the new tool can show visual data. A similar tool (piece of software) is used in Africa by UNFPA— looking at an e-map you can select the optimal location for a hospital or a school.

**UNODC** also noted the value of using mapping tools. UNODC has Global Drug monitoring platforms, which map out the various services in each country that address drug issues. The map also captures existing legal basis relating to corruption and human trafficking. Access to this mapping platform is granted to security authorities.

In addition to social media platforms, UN organisations and agencies also use traditional channels such as radio and television to reach out to stakeholders and share information. Some organisations and agencies have close working relationships with the National Association of Electronic Mass Media (NAESMI) and use NAESMI channels to distribute videos and information. RCO communication and social media platforms were also mentioned by a number of agencies (UNFPA, UNESCO, UNAIDS, ILO, UNDRR) as a helpful tool to share and encourage participation.

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UN organisations and agencies also have existing relationship with online media, including Gazeta.uz, Kun.uz. Anhor.uz, Potrebitel.uz, Daryo.uz, Podrobno.uz, Telegraf, and regional bloggers.

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## Challenges in Stakeholder Engagement Faced by UN Organisations and Agencies

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- Very often government partners are overloaded with duties and not always responsive to requests and feedback.
- UNESCO and UNAIDS shared that often Government representatives come for the meetings but leave after two hours; they are not interested in participating as they are not responsible and do not have decision making powers on the topics discussed.
- Bureaucracy (a lot of time-consuming paperwork), long processes for approval.
- Low capacity of partners. Focal points do not meet required criteria. Focal points are often not decision makers.
- High rotation rates in the Ministries and focal points reduces the efficiency of programmes. For example, if there is a meeting with a khokim in the region, tomorrow he is already gone and the new one isn't aware of the previous discussions.
- Due to the high rotation, not all government staff members might be aware of current ongoing activities and do not have time to read all the reports provided by the organisations and agencies.
- When convening focus groups for evaluation, the RCO noted that due to changes in the government, there is high staff turnover, resulting in new personnel not being aware of current ongoing activities, resulting in making response slow (or at times unforthcoming).
- Overload of national partners with too many partners for some projects, which results in exhausting consultations and approval processes.
- UNICEF reported that many plans come in on an ad hoc basis, such as on a Presidential decree or from a conference outcome, and there is no long-term planning. For example, the Government initiates donor coordination on an ad hoc basis. It is important to note that there are good practices on long-term planning in other countries that can be replicated in Uzbekistan.
- UNODC noted that all projects undergo government confirmation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) discusses the project with respective agencies. In Kyrgyzstan for example, this process is more flexible— Ministries can be approached directly without going through the MFA. Last year, the rule for all communication to be channeled via the MFA was cancelled. Now the MFA gets only a copy of the letter, which makes the communication/approval process faster.
- The Government commonly issues letter-based decisions, making follow-up actions slower. In many Government Ministries, specialists do not have personal emails or access to the internet, often using their personal email instead of official accounts.
- A concern of the OHCHR is that many national partners often select implementing UN agencies on the basis of whom they want to work with, irrespective of relevance to the topic or issues. The RCO can help by affirming the relevant agencies. For example, if it is about human rights, then it is imperative to involve OHCHR. If it is corruption, then UNODC should be leading.
- OHCHR noted the misalignment of some issues such as those concerning the LNOB approach. For example, the advocacy and removal of punishment of homosexuality as a criminal activity is not currently a country priority, although it will always be one of the key priorities of OHCHR. As such, OHCHR often keeps a small area of independence based on normative obligations and agenda, which at times does not align with the position of the sustainable cooperation framework.
- Organisations noted that despite the challenges with government partners, there were improvements with the government. The communication process has become more effective and less time consuming. Government agencies are open to new initiatives and recommendations.

## Challenges in Resource Mobilisation and Reaching the Target Audience

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- Organisations reported donor coordination as a challenge. It works more on an ad-hoc basis and there is no systematic way to engage with the international community. This should be done on a regular basis by the Government. The organisations and agencies recognised the effort of the RCO to help mobilise resources for joint programming.
- UNAIDS and UNODC shared their challenge in reaching their target groups such as people with HIV, drug users, human trafficking victims and prisoners as they are not organised in a group. Compared with disabled people, who have organised bodies and communities, the groups mentioned are harder to convene when needed. At times, the Mahalla helps identify these targeted groups.

## Challenges with Civil Society Organisations and Evidenced-Based Information and Data

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- There is high turnover of CSOs and informal NGOs partly due to the registration process with the Ministry of Justice, the government entity that issues approval if a CSO or NGO can work with the UN or other international organisations.
- Quality data to assess needs or conduct analysis are not readily available, making it challenging to reach the target groups and identify priority areas. For example, the UNICEF MIX (multipliable Indicator cluster survey), which includes questions on violence against women, was not conducted for 16 years.
- UNAIDS shared that they have issues with sharing their public reports, because HIV/AIDS is a sensitive topic, and information should be approved by the Government as data on HIV belongs to the Ministry of Health.
- The UNFPA provided an example of not having enough data on “women with disabilities” (on the issue of medical services). On the topic of “youth health”, it is also difficult to identify the problem. U-Report can provide mapping of youth problems, but medical services are difficult to identify. UNFPA suggests having health counsellors in youth consultation centres in the regions who can also collect data.

## Challenges Related to Overlapping Programme and Inter-Agency Communication

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- At times, one government partner participates in several projects with different agencies, which encumbers communication and creates overlapping activities. Not all organisations and agencies inform each other about their respective initiatives, so there is a possibility of overlapping partners. A database of stakeholders could benefit organisations and agencies so they can plan or unite activities accordingly.
- To ensure better coordination and communication, OHCHR and UNAIDS suggested enhancing inter-agency cooperation where the RCO can take a lead role. For example, smaller organisations and agencies such as OHCHR and UNAIDS are not commonly included in the design and implementation of activities supporting the UNSDCF.

While the UN in Uzbekistan advocates for synergy, operating in siloes remain a challenge since each organisation and/or agency has its own priorities. Active information sharing can help partly enhance coordination and increase synergy. For example, UNODC has educational programmes and they would like to be considered as partners to UNESCO, UNICEF in this sector, rather than rivals. Proper stakeholder mapping will be important for UN system in Uzbekistan in general having less duplication and more synergies in working with the same stakeholders.

Annexes III, IV and V respectively provide a summary of interviews with informants from the business community, NGOs, media, university representatives and students in Uzbekistan. These interviews offer insight into the way that these stakeholders engage with UNCT, and offer examples of best practice, challenges and recommendations.

Traditionally vulnerable groups also required for the LNOB principle. The UNCT must ensure the representation of grass-roots CSOs, research and academia, women in the regions, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, environmental activists, people with HIV, migrants and their families, and people experiencing poverty in its programming.

### A national stakeholder mapping for engagement and participation in 2030 Agenda implementation in Uzbekistan: guidelines and recommendations

At national and sub-national level, specific mapping is necessary to address specificities, identify the most vulnerable groups and ensure that no one is left behind. It will be important to map major groups and other stakeholders (MGoS) in the whole country, not just in the capital. The 'Leave no-one behind' principle implies reaching out beyond well-known stakeholders with offices in the capital.

UNCTs are encouraged to identify country-specific and tailored approaches to engaging different sectors to contribute, in diverse stakeholder roles, including on knowledge exchange, situation analysis, policy and programming, monitoring and evaluation, service delivery, among others, as appropriate. On an annual basis, the UNCT should make a short summary of stakeholder engagement available. The summary can serve as a progress tracker.

The "Stakeholder Engagement & the 2030 Agenda: a Practical Guide" suggest to include nine **major groups of stakeholders**:

- women
- children and youth
- indigenous people
- non-governmental organisations
- local authorities
- workers & trade unions
- business & industry
- scientific and technological community
- farmers

The UN in Uzbekistan expanded the engagement to:

- local communities
- educational and academic entities
- faith groups
- foundations & private philanthropic organisations
- migrants and their families
- older persons
- parliamentary networks and associations
- persons with disabilities
- volunteer groups

In support of the LNOB principle, the following stakeholders are also important to the UN in Uzbekistan:

- people experiencing poverty
- socially excluded minorities (ethnic, religious, linguistic)
- LGBT community
- social movements
- workers in the informal sector

## Framework for planning and assessing quality engagement with stakeholders. Recommendations for stakeholder engagement and mapping in Uzbekistan

The framework for planning and assessing quality engagement is described in the [Stakeholder Engagement & the 2030 Agenda](#) (p.45). According to the Stakeholder Engagement & the 2030 Agenda, the four levels of stakeholder engagement proposed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) can be a useful framework for categorising a range of approaches for engaging stakeholder groups in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda.

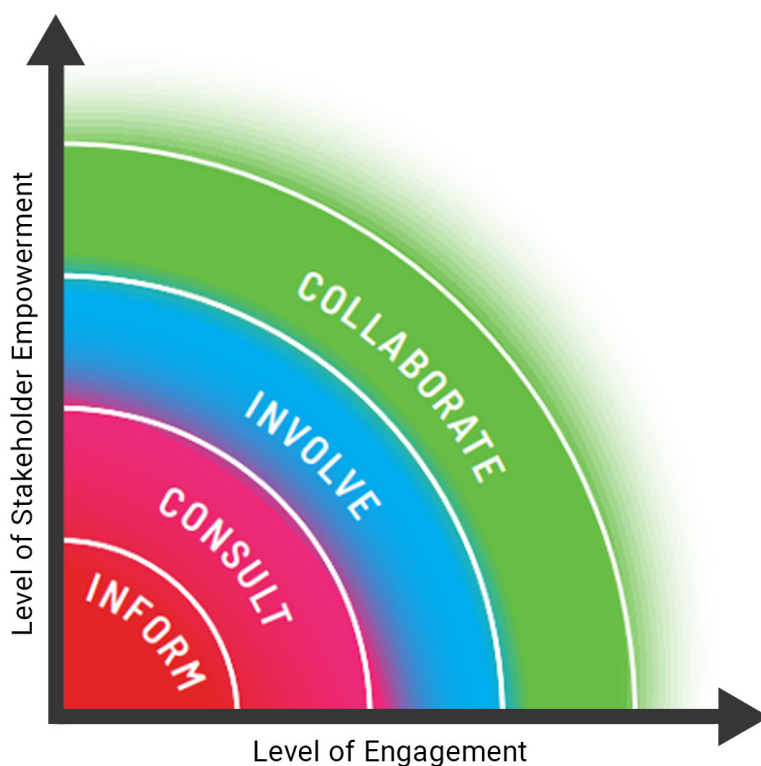
These four levels include:

- 1 INFORM**
- 2 CONSULT**
- 3 INVOLVE**
- 4 COLLABORATE**

A fifth level of engagement “empower” is also proposed by IAP2 and would demand further adaptation.

## **5 EMPOWER**

All UN agencies should review their work on stakeholder engagement practices according to these levels.



Source: UNITAR

## INFORM

LEVELS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	MAY BE APPROPRIATE WHEN	MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE WHEN
This is a one-way communication, where governments <b>inform</b> stakeholders of their plans for implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. There are no expectations of a two-way dialogue.	<p>The process is beginning, and there is deeper participation to come</p> <p>Stakeholders have a low level of understanding of the 2030 Agenda (for example an introductory session to communicate the details of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs)</p>	<p>Stakeholders want more active involvement</p> <p>Decisions have meaningful impact on stakeholders</p> <p>Stakeholders are already well informed about the 2030 Agenda</p>

CURRENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES AT THIS LEVEL	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Giving information and outreach to stakeholders should be done at the very beginning of the programming stages. Mainly agencies inform government stakeholders and those few non-government partners that already have a history of cooperation with the agencies of the programming plans. Commonly, the public and other peripheral stakeholders are informed with periodic press releases either at the beginning, middle, or end of the programmes. There are times that other UN organisations or agencies that may contribute to the agenda are not informed prior to the commencement of the programme, but only once it has already started. As a result, activities may overlap due to a lack of relevant information and lack of stakeholder mapping/database of stakeholders.</p>	<p>It is important to inform all relevant stakeholder about the programming process and opportunities for participation, which should not be limited to outreach activities to high-level government partners. Extra efforts may be needed to reach vulnerable and marginalised groups, and people in the regions can be reached via offline communication and face-to face meetings. Regularly updating websites and social media accounts, channels and groups is needed, for those who can receive information online (especially using Telegram, which is one the most used social media platform in the regions and throughout Uzbekistan). There is a need to promptly inform other UN agencies through newsletters or other internal communication tools.</p>

## CONSULT

LEVELS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	MAY BE APPROPRIATE WHEN	MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE WHEN
<p>This is where governments <b>present plans and options</b> for implementation and <b>review</b> of the 2030 Agenda and receive feedback from stakeholders. The aim is to benefit from the experience and knowledge of stakeholders. Decision making authority remains entirely with the government.</p>	<p>Clear plans exist, and there are a limited range of options for change</p> <p>Governments want to improve their existing plans and are able to use the feedback to do so</p> <p>Stakeholders can understand and relate to the plans and options</p> <p>Governments are committed to providing feedback to stakeholders on how their input influenced the outcome</p>	<p>Plans have been finalized, and feedback cannot be incorporated</p> <p>Clear plans do not already exist, and you are seeking a wide range of opinions</p> <p>Stakeholders need to be mobilized and empowered for long-term engagement</p>

CURRENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES AT THIS LEVEL	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Multi-stakeholder consultations conducted in 2019 and the UN75 campaign that started in 2020 are great examples of consulting with various groups of stakeholders, including Government, parliamentarians, communities in the regions, activists, youth, and CSOs among others. These offline and online consultations helped generate awareness of people's problems and hear about the solutions they propose. All agencies currently consult their respective stakeholders at the beginning of the projects or when preparing work plans. Steering committees and reporting meetings with stakeholders are also conducted.</p>	<p>It is imperative to conduct follow-up with the commitment of UN agencies and Government to share with stakeholders 2030 Agenda implementation, follow-up and review processes, as well as listening to and acknowledging concerns, and providing feedback on how stakeholders' inputs influenced the outcome. To some extent, UN organisations and agencies in Uzbekistan are already implementing consultation processes with regional and vulnerable groups, with grassroots CSOs and local governments. However, the challenge is that local governments still have low capacity and require preliminary capacity building in order to carry out effective consultations.</p>

## INVOLVE

LEVELS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	MAY BE APPROPRIATE WHEN	MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE WHEN
<p>This is where stakeholders are meaningfully <b>engaged</b> with governments in generating plans and options for implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda and carrying out actions based on decisions emerging from this input. Participation falls short of sharing formal decision-making authority.</p>	<p>Governments need the expertise and contacts of stakeholders in order to effectively implement decisions</p> <p>Governments are committed to incorporating inputs received into their decisions, and to providing feedback to stakeholders</p> <p>Stakeholders have an active desire and demonstrate the capacity to be engaged in the 2030 Agenda implementation and review processes</p>	<p>Governments do not have the resources or the time to meaningfully engage stakeholders in implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda.</p> <p>Governments do not have the political space to meaningfully incorporate inputs from stakeholders</p> <p>Stakeholders do not show willingness to be actively engaged in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda</p>

CURRENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES AT THIS LEVEL	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Agencies do involve various government, private, and civil society stakeholders in their activities. Some grassroot NGOS and CSO actors that may have extensive experience in working with vulnerable sectors, however, are left behind because they are not aware of cooperation opportunities or have not been introduced to UN organisations or agencies.</p>	<p>Proper stakeholder mapping and the creation of an online database of stakeholders can help enhance the involvement of stakeholders as the database can help provide opportunities for cooperation. Database should be regularly updated and shared with all agencies. As per the suggested guidelines, stakeholders including those from the private and business sectors that are willing to contribute should have an opportunity to be included in the database and provide their proposals following a due diligence check. Transparent feedback options via a website/Telegram should be implemented. Furthermore, for the private sector, the introduction of the UN Global Compact may increase involvement. The tools particularly recommended for this stage include: deliberative polling, solicitation of recommendations and proposals, workshop, forums, data provision, webinars, and social media chats among others.</p>

## COLLABORATE

LEVELS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	MAY BE APPROPRIATE WHEN	MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE WHEN
<p>This is where governments and stakeholders <b>decide</b> together on the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. It is long-term, complex and demanding, requiring resources.</p>	<p>It is important that stakeholders feel ownership of the process of implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda</p> <p>There is an identifiable extra benefit to all parties from acting together</p> <p>There is enough time and resources to make the collaboration meaningful</p> <p>Governments and stakeholders demonstrate the political will, desire and commitment to develop a meaningful partnership around implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda</p> <p>Governments recognize the need for stakeholders' advice and innovation to create the best solutions and are committed to shared decision-making processes</p>	<p>Time and resources are limited</p> <p>Commitment is low - for example if government holds all the power (finance, resources) and plans to use the collaboration to impose solutions</p> <p>Stakeholders do not have a long-term interest in carrying out identified solutions, they only want to be part of decision-making processes</p>

CURRENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES AT THIS LEVEL	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Currently, the Government has ownership of the 2030 Agenda, which is confirmed by the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025. Though UN agencies and different stakeholders are invited to provide inputs and feedback, the truly collaborative process described in the guidelines is not yet fully implemented. While an increasing number of government decisions are adopted in a consultative manner (e.g., with feedback from the public and stakeholders and partners, including the UN), oftentimes other important decisions are taken rather opaquely and without due consultative process.</p>	<p>It would be useful for UN organisations and agencies to showcase examples and best practices and raise the awareness of government partners on collaboration practices. Some of the tools to enhance collaboration that the stakeholder may use include: guiding or advisory bodies, working groups on joint planning and shared projects, standing or <i>ad-hoc</i> committees, facilitated consensus building and decision-making forums, and training and capacity building to support joint action.</p>

It is important that each level of engagement is purposeful, inclusive, transformative, and proactive. By following this framework at each level, there is a sound rationale for the engagement, and no one will be left behind. Furthermore, the engagement becomes integrated and more responsive to the issues at hand. UNESCAP noted that these four characteristics show the quality of stakeholder engagement. Templates and recommendations for setting up a stakeholders engagement plan and strategy are available in [Stakeholder Engagement & the 2030 Agenda](#) (p.71 and Annexes 1, 2, 3).

# 1

## ENGAGEMENT IS **PURPOSEFUL** WHEN WE:

- Know why we are engaging - clearly define what we want to get out of the engagement
- Develop an engagement plan and allocate resources and responsibilities
- Build engagement into every phase - planning, delivery and follow-up and review
- Evaluate to improve engagement

# 2

## ENGAGEMENT IS **INCLUSIVE** WHEN WE:

- Map and analyse stakeholders
- Recognize stakeholders' views - even if we do not agree with them
- Have special mechanisms for those normally «left behind»
- Put in place ways to remove/reduce barriers that make participation difficult - language, geographic location or distance, abilities, age, income, connectivity, culture bias, discrimination
- Manage power imbalances and find ways to ensure that people feel safe to contribute (e.g. anonymity)
- Recognize and utilize traditional channels of engaging

# 3

## ENGAGEMENT IS **TRANSFORMATIVE** WHEN WE:

- Choose methods that build understanding and collaboration across different groups in society, sharing information from diverse perspectives
- Encourage and recognize contribution - motivate stakeholder action through a «*whole society*» approach
- Choose methods that integrate social, economic and environmental perspectives
- Choose methods that encourage dialogue and shared action across the SDG framework
- Are willing to take a participatory approaches to addressing important societal challenges

# 4

## ENGAGEMENT IS **PROACTIVE** WHEN WE:

- Build engagement planning into implementation
- Communicate the scope of engagement to stakeholders
- Provide the information they need in an accessible and timely manner
- Consult stakeholders on the way they would like to participate
- Respond to questions and concerns promptly

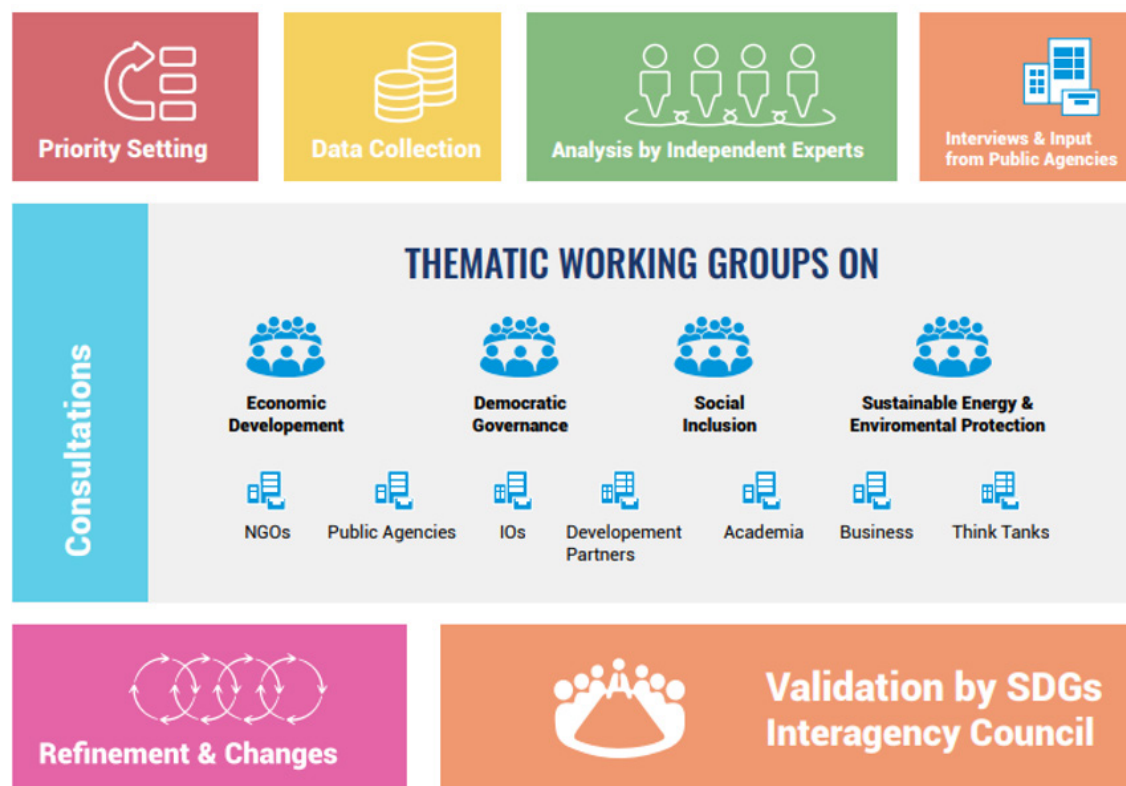
# ANNEXES

- **Annex I: Examples of good practices on stakeholder engagement for VNR preparation from other countries**
- **Annex II. Questionnaires**
- **Annex III. Examples of good practices on stakeholder engagement from other countries**
- **Annex IV. Summary of the interview with the nationwide movement “Yuksalish”**
- **Annex V. Results of the interviews conducted with representatives of business community in Uzbekistan**
- **Annex VI. Results of interviews conducted with representatives from NGOs, media, university representatives and students in Uzbekistan**
- **Annex VII. Examples of international IT platforms that can help engage stakeholders and promote joint actions towards SDGs**
- **Annex VIII. List of interviewed people/organisations**

## ANNEX I. Examples of good practices on stakeholder engagement for VNR preparation from other countries

- [Turkey in VNR-2019](#) has described a “comprehensive **Stocktaking Analysis Project**, which was conducted for one year with contributions of around 350 individuals representing 150 institutions from the public sector, NGOs, academia and private sector. The project aimed to identify the current situation, gaps and emerging needs in line with the key SDG targets relevant for Turkey”.
- Throughout the process of drafting a VNR-2019 report in Turkey, “contributions and views of 62 NGOs directly and 250 NGOs indirectly; of 600 companies directly and 105,000 companies indirectly from the private sector; 50 municipalities directly and 1,400 municipalities indirectly from the local administrations were merged and incorporated in the recommendations for next steps”.
- [Georgia in VNR-2020](#) has stated that: “The draft report has been shared within an existing institutional framework (four thematic working groups) consisting of CSOs, international organisations, think tanks, academia, development partners and private sector. It has also been made available on the special SDGs website to encourage public debate and opinion. All consultations were designed to be participatory and collaborative. In total, the Secretariat has received approximately 200 comments/suggestions/feedback from more than 20 organisations (including international organisations).”

Figure 1. How Georgia has prepared the VNR-2020



- [Republic of Moldova in VNR-2020](#) report described that: **“The public consultation of the draft National Voluntary Report was ensured online**, by organising 5 sessions to present the main components of the Report through the electronic platform ZOOM. CSOs, representatives of the private sector, academia were invited to provide feedback”.
- [In Kenya-2020 VNR](#) described innovative practice of **establishing the “SDGs Kenya Forum**, coordinating the engagement of the civil society on SDGs and being an all-inclusive membership platform on the 2030 Agenda for SDGs. The forum provides space for over 350 structured and coordinated CSOs engagement with (national and sub-national) Governments, citizens, the private sector, media, academia and development partners.”
- In [Lesotho](#), the National **VNR Validation Conference discussions were boosted by live-stream coverage through social media platforms** supported by Vodacom Lesotho outreaching to more than 2,000 people across the country. The Conference was preceded by districts consultations with the support of UN Lesotho Youth Advisory Panel (UNYAP) engaging with citizens, including youth, adults, elderly, PWD and other marginalised groups on VNR and Lesotho’s progress towards the implementation of SDGs ([Lesotho Voluntary National Review 2019](#))
- In [Sri Lanka](#), the elaboration of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) was done through a multi-stakeholder engagement process, including Government, private sector, academia, development partners and CSOs including Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs). A **Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)** was developed in line with the Public Participation Spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). The SEP included several multi-stakeholder consultative workshops to generate inputs for the preparation of the [VNR](#). **An online platform has been developed to engage all stakeholders in the SDG implementation.**
- [Finland in VNR-2020](#) has identified 23 steps of preparing VNR, including organizing multiple seminars, workshops, consultations and meetings with different stakeholders groups, identified in the following steps:
  - 2: stakeholder questionnaire
  - 5: expert panel on SD
  - 6: 2030 Agenda Youth Group
  - 10: stakeholders invited to contribute to VNR (the stakeholders have not only been consulted, but invited to independently write parts of the report)
  - 11: civil society actors are invited to access the 17 SDGs
  - 13: national commission on SD
  - 14: Sustainability Elders group is consulted

**“57 Finnish civil society actors participated in the process of estimating Finland’s performance on all the 17 SDGs**, from few to up to 12 actors on each goal. They represent different actors of the Finnish civil society, from small to big ones, from trade unions or national umbrella organisations of the social sector to CSOs mainly working on development cooperation or smaller activist-based actors. The aim was to give voice to the non-governmental actors in the official report, and thereby strengthen the dialogue between the Government and the civil society in Finland.”

“In order to prepare an inclusive report that contains **views and feedback from peer countries**, Finland invited Mozambique and Switzerland to give comments on the preparation and content of the report (18). This **Peer Dialogue** was an opportunity to exchange good practices as well as to provide comments and recommendations for further improvement of the report. It also reflects Finland’s participatory process in preparing the VNR report”.

## How Finland has prepared the VNR-2020



## ANNEX II. Questionnaires

### Questions for NGOs, media:

1. Tell us briefly about your organisation.
2. What do you know about the SDGs? About UN programmes in Uzbekistan and in the world?
3. What UN agencies have you been in contact with? Are you working on any joint projects? If there is such cooperation, describe in detail.
4. Have UN staff approached you with suggestions for joint initiatives or asking for help with a project?
5. Is it easy to find contacts at UN agencies in Uzbekistan and come up with a proposal for a joint project or initiative?
6. Have you encountered any bureaucratic procedures or barriers from UN agencies and UN staff in Uzbekistan?
7. What help from UN agencies in Uzbekistan would be useful for you in the work of your NGO? Describe in detail.
8. Have there been cases when UN agencies requested any recommendations from you, were they implemented or not? Have you seen the feedback and the impact of your recommendations on the joint work on projects of UN agencies and the state?
9. What technology platforms (sites, software, any IT products) do you use in your work?
10. What communication channels do you use in your work?
11. What communication channels can you recommend for UN agencies to reach their target audience, especially in the regions?
12. How do you see the role of NGOs, the media in achieving the SDGs?

### Questionnaire for Business:

1. Tell us briefly about your organisation.
2. What do you know about the SDGs? About UN programmes in Uzbekistan and in the world?
3. Have you had any ideas for a socially oriented business and / or joint projects with the UN? How do you imagine a socially responsible business?
4. What UN agencies have you been in contact with? Was there any cooperation? Describe in detail.
5. Have UN staff approached you with suggestions for joint initiatives or asking for help with a project?
6. Is it easy to find contacts at UN agencies in Uzbekistan and come up with a proposal for a joint project or initiative?
7. Have you encountered any bureaucratic procedures or barriers from UN agencies and UN staff in Uzbekistan?
8. How do you see your role as a business in achieving the SDGs? How can UN agencies help you? What kind of cooperation is possible?
9. What technology platforms (sites, software, any IT products) do you use in your work?
10. What communication channels do you use in your work?
11. What communication channels can you recommend for UN agencies to reach their target audience, especially in the regions?

### Questionnaire for Government partners:

1. Tell us briefly about your organisation.
2. What do you know about the SDGs? About UN programmes in Uzbekistan and in the world?

3. What UN agencies do you work with? Was there any cooperation – describe in detail
4. Have UN staff approached you with suggestions for joint initiatives or asking for help with a project?
5. Is it easy to find contacts (respective focal point officers) at UN agencies in Uzbekistan and come up with a proposal for a joint project or initiative?
6. Have you encountered any bureaucratic procedures or barriers from UN agencies and UN staff in Uzbekistan?
7. How do you see the role of business, NGOs, the media in achieving the SDGs?
8. How can the third sector (NGOs, business) be strengthened to contribute in achieving the SDGs?
9. What technology platforms (sites, software, any IT products) do you use in your work?
10. What communication channels do you use in your work?
11. What communication channels can you recommend for UN agencies to reach their target audience, especially in the regions?

### Questionnaire for UN Agencies:

1. Tell us briefly about your organisation (2 minutes intro).
2. Are you aware about UNSDG Common Minimum Standards for multi-stakeholder engagement in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework?
  - 2.a. If 'Yes', please can you please describe to what extent the standards are implemented at the agency?
  - 2.b. If 'Not', please specify any policies/standards available in the agency to guide multi-stakeholder engagement practices.
3. Please describe how the standards are implemented at each stage of the Cooperation Framework/Country Programming process (your current practices)
  1. Planning and design (stakeholder mapping, outreach)
  2. implementation and co-creation
  3. monitoring
  4. evaluation
4. How do you enable an environment for stakeholders to contribute? Which methods and tools do you implement to foster participatory engagement?
  - 4.a. Please give examples of the methods and tools that showed good results or did not work
  - 4.b. Please give examples of innovative methods you used or plan to use  
Please describe challenges that you face.
5. How do you ensure accountability and transparency to stakeholders? Please describe tools that you use.
6. What feedback loops do you use?
7. Do you engage social media platforms for sharing information and encouraging participation? Please give examples.
8. Please describe your cooperation with the following groups of stakeholders:
  - a. Civil society organisations (CSOs);
  - b. Local governments;
  - c. Parliamentarians;
  - d. Workers' organisations;
  - e. Business and employers' membership organisations;
  - f. Research organisations and academia;
  - g. Other groups according to national context of Uzbekistan
9. How do you inform stakeholders of your programming activities and opportunities for engagement? How do you reach marginalised, discriminated and/or underrepresented stakeholders?

10. What challenges do you have when working with stakeholders? Please describe in details.
11. What partners do you work with? What Government partners? What NGOs in Tashkent and in the regions? Do you cooperate with online media?
12. What communication tools do you use? What social networks?
13. Through which communication channels do you accept requests /inquiries from citizens, NGOs, and business? What is the procedure for responding to requests and suggestions?
14. What technological platforms (IT products, software) do you use in your work?
15. Do you do any mapping of partners? Do you have a list of partners and how regularly is it updated?
16. What is your experience of working with NGOs and business? Are there any joint projects?
17. How do you generate ideas for new projects contributing to the achievement of the SDGs in Uzbekistan? Describe the process, please. How do you choose project stakeholders?
18. How do you get feedback from the beneficiaries of the project, from the population and NGOs?
20. Describe the process of how your Agency can be approached, with ideas on joint projects, by NGOs or a business company (through which means, which channels of communications, and what are the prerequisites so that you can start a discussion or cooperation with NGOs, a business, or initiative groups).
21. For what reasons, most often, do you refuse to support the projects with which NGOs and businesses come to you?
22. Are there any difficulties in expanding your partners? Bureaucratic obstacles?
23. What interesting practices about your agency in other countries do you know? Could you share the links? What experience would be useful to be implemented in Uzbekistan?
24. Have you worked with startups, would you be interested in working in this direction, supporting startups and social entrepreneurship?
25. What communication channels do you use to reach your stakeholders and your projects' target audience, especially in the regions?
26. What are pre-requisites for successful, genuine and efficient stakeholder engagement? Please share examples.

## ANNEX III. Examples of good practices on stakeholder engagement from other countries

### How UN agencies partner with startups and coordinate startup contests and business conferences globally

- Leading global startup accelerator [500 Startups partners with WHO & WEF](#) to Support Startups Focused on COVID-19.

500 Startups has launched an initiative in partnership with the World Economic Forum and World Health Organisation to identify tech startups that are solving Covid-19-related issues. Together, we will select a batch of startups that will be showcased at the WEF's Sustainable Development Impact Summit and corporate members of the forum for potential POCs to scale.

- In July-2020 UNDP Kazakhstan organised virtual hackathon [Mission 2030](#) powered by global startup accelerator Seedstars with support of UNDP to challenge brightest minds from all over Kazakhstan to find effective tech solutions to solve the issue of SDG game digitalization and popularization.

The game represents a citizen engagement tool to find solutions for the SDGs-related problems. In 2019, the game was presented and played by the citizens of Kazakhstan in 17 regions. In 2020, the game was transformed into a digital format. The event gathered developers, changemakers and techpreneurs to participate in this three-day online hacking marathon.

- 2020 Migration Challenge by global accelerator Seedstars

In partnership with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the Business Advisory Group of Migration, Seedstars is looking at rewarding innovative early-stage Human Resources, FinTech, CivicTech and EdTech start-ups with solution-oriented products to improve migration systems that respond to labour market needs

- UNDP, in partnership with IT and financial companies conduct [SDG Finance Geneva Summit](#) and select the best Growth Stage Impact Ventures for SDGs  
The SDG Finance Geneva Summit (SGS Geneva) is an initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to promote SDGs aligned investments.

### How businesses help promoting SDGs:

- **Asia-Pacific region:** [ESCAP Sustainable Business Network](#). Consisting of executives and representatives of leading businesses in a wide range of industries and sectors from across the Asia-Pacific region, the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN) is set up to drive businesses in working towards the 2030 Sustainable Agenda and associated SDGs. ESBN engages in promoting projects in such spheres as Youth and Women Entrepreneurship, Digital Economy, Green economy etc.
- **Great Britain:** Multi-stakeholder models should be encouraged, as should shared learning between initiatives that follow this approach, such as the [UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development](#) (UKSSD). This platform brings organisations together to accelerate progress on the SDGs in the UK. UKSSD was launched at a conference in April 2016 to over 100 delegates and grew to have more than 1500 organisations in its network, representing most sectors and industries in the UK.
- *N.B.* In June-2020 UKSSD handed over its mission to the [UN Global Compact Network UK](#) (that is an international initiative that would bring companies together with UN agencies, international labour organisations and civil society to support universal environmental and social principles).

### Main projects of these organisations:

- Quarterly SDG Huddles: an opportunity for UKSSD partners and UN Global Compact Network UK members to explore ideas for collective action on the SDGs.
- Food System Working Group: will bring together organisations in the food and beverage sector to use the SDGs to identify actions to shape the system and explore opportunities for collaboration within the sector.
- SDG Advocacy Working Group: launching in October 2020, the new SDG Advocacy Working Group will explore opportunities to further shape a responsible business environment, engage with the UK Government, and continue UKSSD's work in driving collaborative action for the Global Goals
- UnitingBusiness to respond to COVID-19: leaders of over 150 businesses, civil society organisations, and from public life have called on Prime Minister Boris Johnson to use the SDGs to create a socially just and green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic
- 2020 Global Goals Roadshow, with an idea of "Making Global Goals Local Business". These events offer attendees the opportunity to delve into the SDGs and explore opportunities to take action within your own organisation, whilst connecting and interacting with others.

**Turkey:** TURKONFED, TUSIAD and UNDP established a **private sector-led Think-Do-Tank platform in Turkey**, first of its kind in the world, to work for the United Nations' universal call of Sustainable Development Goals. Named "[Business for Goals](#)", the platform aspires to boost the contribution of businesses to sustainable development. The Platform will bring together private and public sectors as well as NGOs on the shared value of "sustainable development" and offer roadmaps to the private sector on how to act as a solution partner in development.

The Platform will engage in analyses on sectors to be designated. **The aim is to start multi-stakeholder dialogues** based on these analyses to formulate policy and strategy recommendations for private and public sectors and NGOs, guide in the implementation, and contribute to implementing solid programmes on the ground. [Source](#)

**Turkey** has also launched [The SDG Impact Accelerator](#) (SDGia), **built by a multi stakeholder platform focusing on empowering "systems entrepreneurs" and innovators** who are providing impact at scale. It aims to generate market-creating innovations initially for refugee populations and least-developed country (LDC) populations. Market-creating innovations will be executed not by focusing on a particular solution only, but by mobilizing different stakeholders to catalyze systems change.

In the **United Arab Emirates**, the **UAE SDG Pioneers connects organisations** that have taken early action to advance the SDGs and in doing so, **have set an example for the business community in pursuing sustainable practices**. Organisations can apply to be UAE SDG Pioneers under one of the five themes of the 2030 Agenda: people, peace, prosperity, planet and partnerships. ([UAE and the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development Excellence in Implementation 2017](#)).

- In **Uruguay**, the government joined forces together with "Empresas por el Desarrollo Sostenible", a private sector organisation, **to seek inputs from 100 companies on their actions towards achieving the 6 SDGs** under in-depth review at the 2018 HLPF. Some of the results of the survey were included in the VNR report. ([Uruguay Voluntary National Review 2018](#))
- In **Ghana**, to ensure a **coordinated approach to private sector engagement** on the SDGs, the President of Ghana hosted a **Breakfast Meeting with selected Chief Executive Officers** (CEOs) in June 2018.

- The meeting aimed to: provide a forum for reflection and dialogue on the SDGs and define collective actions for accelerating their implementation; identify ways of scaling up investments necessary to achieve the SDGs; and collectively agree on financing “quick wins” to help advance efforts towards achieving the SDGs. **The meeting brought together CEOs from various industries including oil and gas, mining, manufacturing, banking, consumer services and telecommunications.** All the participants pledged their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and to make the SDGs an integral part of their organisation’s vision and mission. The group meets quarterly with the President to discuss pertinent issues on the SDGs ([Ghana Voluntary National Review 2019](#))

#### **Engagement of educational institutions into promoting SDGs:**

- UNESCO partnered with the largest technological contest for girls, Technovation, in selected countries Brazil, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan) [to launch free, online, 5-week tech education programme for girls](#)

UNESCO is partnering with global tech education nonprofit Technovation, a member of UNESCO’s Global Education Coalition to support countries to develop inclusive learning solutions. Together they are running the Technovation Idea Lab: a free, online, 5-week tech education programme for girls.

During the programme, girls will learn what artificial intelligence (AI) is, how it works, learn how to build their own AI model, and make a plan for an AI invention that solves a problem they identify in their community.

- The Republic of **Korea** has also encouraged raising public awareness and creating multi-stakeholder ownership of the SDGs **through the inclusion of content** addressing Official Development Assistance (ODA) **and the SDGs in textbooks for primary and secondary school students.**

The Korea Foundation for Advancement of Science and Creativity, in association with the Ministry of Education, **has supported 40 teams of Teachers’ Research Associations of Education for Sustainable Development, in which teachers and students voluntarily form groups to study sustainable development.** The government is also carrying out national campaigns for the SDGs and has expanded funds for sending more youth to the project sites of international development cooperation. The Government of the Republic of Korea is also making additional efforts to strengthen its communications with multiple stakeholders. ([2016 Korea National Voluntary Review](#)).

#### ANNEX IV. Summary of the interview with the nationwide movement “Yuksalish”

Yuksalish nationwide movement is a think tank, established in January, 2019. It is an association of citizens, Uzbek citizens living abroad, non-governmental non-profit organisations, representatives of the business community, and academia, formed to assist in reform implementation, and widely supported by the government. More info can be found on the [website](#).

- Yuksalish actively cooperates with the RC Office helping to coordinate regional consultations with stakeholders, supporting the previously mentioned UN75 campaign, as well as UNICEF (within the two-year research project «Youth of Uzbekistan: aspirations, needs and risks» and as a coordination council member of the U-Report project). The Movement is also cooperating with UNDP (calling for expert consultations or expert assessments of documents).
- Representatives of Yuksalish believe that the multi-stakeholder consultations conducted in partnership with the RC office were very useful and should be conducted regularly, since not all regions were covered in 2019. Government should know how the SDGs are being implemented in the regions, which and problems are of greatest interest. Yuksalish therefore submitted a report on the results of the consultations to the presidential administration, and to the government agencies.
- As an example of an innovative platform and tool for working with stakeholders, Yuksalish has developed the Jamoatchilik online platform, which is the first discussion platform created by a non-governmental non-profit organisation. Its main goal is to expand the participation of citizens in public and state administration. The platform has several functions, including collecting proposals for the development of government programmes, improving the current legislation, receiving messages on current cases and the situation on the ground. Recently they have discussed a UNICEF social support project (and collected over 1,000 comments from the public). This can be seen as a useful tool for receiving people’s feedback.
- Yuksalish believes that to achieve the SDGs the interaction of different stakeholders is very important: our country cannot eradicate inequality if business does not create new jobs. Media and NGOs should raise the issues that government officials need to know.
- On UN resources that can be useful for Yuksalish and other NGOs: Expert support and research on various topics (ecology, human trafficking, gender equality, etc.). Both NGOs and the media need to know the practices of other countries and relevant research, and the UN can help here.
- On reaching stakeholders in the region, the respondent believes that the following tools should be used: on-site regional seminars, cooperation with local government agencies (khokimiyats), the local media, NGOs, schools, universities. There is very little information about the SDGs on television, more videos are needed on social networks, on various regional Internet platforms, including regional Telegram channels. Regional activists need to be involved, especially those who are ready to cooperate. Printed handout materials (posters, brochures, books, etc.) should be distributed widely.

- The respondent mentioned that among all UN agencies, the most open, with good communication channels, sharing reports and other resources are the RC Office and UNICEF. They do not see information from other UN agencies (or this information is not shared publicly), though they are subscribed to both social networks and newsletters from other UN agencies.
- The respondent would like to see more transparency from UN agencies, meaning that when a new UN project with Government is announced, there is always a lot of news coverage, but afterwards it is very difficult to find with whom the project is being carried out, how the project is being implemented, what is being done, with which NGOs the agency is working, etc. More news only comes again at the end of the project. More sharing of the results and activities is needed, according to the respondent, regularly, throughout the project implementation.

In summary, to improve transparency for stakeholders and provide more details on current UN Agency projects, it could be useful to update UN agencies websites to focus on projects (so the project page could feature news, activities, publications, stories, media materials and partnerships and other documents could be shared). Currently many agencies either do not have a separate website, or have one only as part of a global website focused on news, that is not linked with the projects and results achieved in Uzbekistan.

## **ANNEX V. Results of the interviews conducted with representatives of business community in Uzbekistan**

### **Nine in-depth interviews with private business sector representatives (small and medium-sized businesses) were conducted**

- Spheres of businesses: tourism (two people in Tashkent and one in Bukhara), IT & Digital (two people in Tashkent), production (two people, in food and cosmetics sectors), education (one person), events (one person).
- Five people out of nine have heard about the SDGs, but only one person could remember a specific activity from UNFPA on Gender Equality (others couldn't name any project that UN carries out in Uzbekistan).
- Nine respondents out of nine have an understanding of the UN as a large agency that does only large-scale projects working with Governments, and not with entrepreneurs or individuals directly
- None of the nine respondents know about the fact that businesses can help to achieve the SDGs or that cooperation with the UN may be possible.
- None of the nine respondents know about opportunities for cooperation with UN agencies in Uzbekistan on achieving the SDGs.
- One person stated that she had tried to reach UN agencies to establish a partnership, but was faced with bureaucracy and obstacles in finding contacts. The other eight interviewees either haven't tried to contact the UN or haven't experienced any obstacles when doing so.
- All respondents stated that UN agencies should enhance and strengthen their PR component, use Social Media channels (including Telegram) more actively, use TV programmes to promote SDGs (because local TV channels are the main source of information for many people), recruit local bloggers, create more content in Uzbek and use communication channels that are popular with people in the regions. One respondent suggested recruiting volunteers for PR and social media activities, to help promote SDGs and UN projects, and wants to be a volunteer for promoting UN social projects on gender equality herself.
- All respondents have heard about social entrepreneurship (though some think that it means doing 'charity' projects), some – that it means providing good working conditions for employees and paying taxes, or supporting small individual sub-contractors in the regions, others – that in Uzbek culture it's necessary for entrepreneurs to do something good for society.

### **Summary of proposals and suggestions from business sector respondents:**

- Some respondents think that there is a lack of information for businessmen about UN programmes in Uzbekistan, complicated procedures of cooperation, or that information is presented in a very vague and superficial way. The UNCT should try to communicate its messages in simpler, catchy and plain language that would be more comprehensible to the general public.
- UN projects should participate more in the events and platforms that business organises, to promote its causes and engage entrepreneurs. Businesses from the regions should be included.
- Every business can do something to help promote the SDGs, but there is a need to create a community of businessmen and companies, and oversee this activity together with the UN. Not every company should contact the UN personally, with the question "How can I help", but there should be a single organisation that could offer project ideas and coordinate joint projects between businesses and the UN.

- Businessmen are interested in participating in constructive meetings between business and the UN on a regular basis. Foreign speakers may be invited, who will share their experience of interaction between business, NGOs, state agencies and the UN (how it works in developed countries). Not all entrepreneurs (even those who are socially active) have enough knowledge, information and experience to set up social projects to promote the SDGs. A dialogue between different sectors on promoting social issues must be established.
- Business leaders must take a leadership position on the SDGs both inside and outside their organisation, actively incorporating the Goals into the core of their business strategy, demanding clear feedback on how its results are helping to meet those targets. For this role they should be “educated”. Their SDG-related awareness should be raised.
- There is no information on activities in Uzbekistan on the mobile app [“SDGs in action”](#) (though there is a lot of news on programmes from Kazakhstan and Russia. It is recommended to make greater use of existing global online platforms to communicate
- Uzbekistan’s progress in the SDGs.  
The UN could organise a forum on how the tourism sector can recover after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- UN agencies in Uzbekistan that work with small businesses could create a regional forum or exhibition of projects for businessmen.
- The TV shows on many local TV channels humiliate women due to their limited understanding of gender roles and traditional mentality. The UN should conduct workshops for state and private TV and media personnel, to eliminate such language and attitudes, so that TV programmes will work on promoting the role of women in family and society, and to eradicate “traditional” perceptions.
- The UN can cooperate with local khokimiyats to raise the awareness of people about the SDGs, using the communication channels that these people use.
- One respondent, who had created social project, related to culture and museums, has pointed out that their project was widely announced in the media but nobody from UNESCO or state agencies working with culture contacted them. UN agencies could be proactive and reach out to businesses first (or to interesting, mandate-related projects for cooperation).

## **ANNEX VI. Results of the interviews conducted with representatives of business community in Uzbekistan**

### **Eight in-depth interviews with NGOs, Media, students and University representatives were conducted**

- Among them were two universities, two scientists, two students (Urgench and Andijan) and two NGOs.
- All eight respondents know about the SDGs, and two respondents (NGOs) cooperate with the UN on various projects.
- Two of the respondents only know UNDP out of all the UN agencies in Uzbekistan
- Five respondents believe that the UN needs to work more with youth in the regions, including students and those who have not been able to enter university. They perceive UN activities (including social media) to be focused on Tashkent and a Tashkent audience.
- Media representatives believes that the UN needs to continue work on media literacy for youth and the capacity building of regional journalists, khokimiyats, press services, with a focus on the regions.
- Scientists and eco-activists believes that the SDGs can be reached by promoting a range of different professions to youth (so they choose not the three to five most common professions, but also engineering, science, etc.).
- University representative suggests that the unemployment of youth could be solved by introducing vocational training programmes in the regions.
- One representative (scientist) and her research centre already has close cooperation with WHO on COVID-19 test systems and vaccine, and together with a large group of world scientists, experts from Uzbekistan worked on a publication dedicated to «Geographic distribution of SARS-COVID-19 from January-June 2020».
- One respondent (scientist) suggests that more work is needed from the UN and government on promoting clean agro-food sustainability practices and banning all outdated and harmful chemicals and fertilizers that farmers are currently using. A huge amount of educational work (and legislation) is needed, and the UN can help with the PR campaign.

### **Summary of proposals and suggestions from NGO, Media, students and education sector respondents:**

- Scientists believe that the UN does not allocate funds for scientific projects and does not work with the institutes of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.
- A student representative from Andijan believes that most of the time, the UN, like many other international organisations, only invest in Tashkent, and people in other regions don't even know about the opportunities they have. She has tried to launch in Uzbekistan a programme called "UNU Ambassadors" (UNU means [United Nations University](#)) through which more people would be able to find out about the SDGs, has tried to contact the UN office in Tashkent but never got a response. She also volunteered as a country ambassador for a platform called [Tunza Eco Generation](#), supported by UNEP, and believes that such initiatives are needed in Uzbekistan, for our youth.
- A student representative from Urgench had never have heard about any UN-organised events for youth in her region. She believes more efforts are required from UNCT to work with universities, schools and colleges in the Khorazm region, in partnership with the Youth Union / Agency of Youth affairs.

- Students in Tashkent believe that the level of brand awareness about the UN is low among students of national/state universities (Tashkent State University, Agrarian university, etc.) and among employees of public / private companies, especially in the regions of Uzbekistan. The solution could be communication through local TV channels (since people in the regions mostly watch TV), as well as targeted marketing through social networks (through Telegram channels that are popular in the regions, as well as student channels and youth channels).
- Unemployed youth could be provided with work through vocational educational trainings ([example](#)) - this project (funded by the Islamic Development Bank) is considered the best, but Uzbekistan is not yet on the list of participating countries. If young people in the regions had opportunities like this, they would be able to find a normal job and would not need to leave our country without education and without skills for low-paying jobs. Such a project is needed in Uzbekistan.
- More capacity building programmes are needed in order to work on startups, providing as many small grants for youth with entrepreneurial potential as possible (especially for people from the regions). They have an entrepreneurial streak, but no innovative thinking. They need to be trained and motivated, and they need to be reached.
- The UN should popularise socially oriented business (which would help to achieve the SDGs). People need to know that such companies exist in Uzbekistan. UN resources are needed to educate youth about important social professions (scientists, for example). It is necessary to show role models of young scientists, engineers etc. In Karakalpakstan, people outside Nukus lack access to the Internet. It is difficult for the UN to reach them with SDG promotion, except through national TV, meetings, workshops, transmitting information from person to person.
- Media and NGO representative expressed a wish to cooperate with UNICEF, saying that there is a lot of work for journalists to do on children's rights and almost nobody covers that.
- Media representative expressed the opinion that the PR departments of many UN agencies in Uzbekistan aren't really proactive (except for UNICEF and UNDP PR-departments). Many agencies do not send their press-releases to online media. On the other hand, they are always available when media have inquiries for them. Sometimes there is bureaucracy on "who can comment publicly from the UN", and it takes time. UNDP has a lot of internal guides and sometimes it slows down journalists' work, when there is a need to confirm anything officially.
- UN agencies should continue to educate journalists and the media in Uzbekistan (especially those from the regions). There is a lot of work and UN help is needed to educate the press-services of state agencies, khokimiyats and so on.
- Media in Uzbekistan is in need of reliable data and expert opinions. It would be a great help if the UN could create an expert community for the media and NGOs, so that there is a pool of many experts on various topics to whom you can turn for analytics and comments. In our country there is a big problem with experts, since they are not independent. As an example: when the situation with the Sardoba dam happened, Anhor.uz editorial office had to look for an expert on this topic outside of Uzbekistan, because with local experts there would be no independent judgment and there is always pressure. A respondent from the media believes that ordinary people in Uzbekistan do not have an understanding of the SDGs. Someone may understand that ecology and gender are good, but there is no such understanding of the fact that the SDGs work only as a whole. The UN needs to do many explanatory, very simple to understand campaigns, so that the inhabitants of any mahalla could understand. They need to use Telegram and TV more actively, speaking with people in their language. The role of the media in achieving SDGs is through educating people, increasing media literacy, delivering quality and truthful information through the media.

- The UN could create a powerful youth platform based on the prototype of the former Kelajak Ovozi or YLDP (Young Leaders Development Club) in various cities of Uzbekistan. Young people have something to say, but they need a place where they can work on projects, with the conditions for volunteer and social work. Consider the possibility of financing competent projects from the regions, with good goals and results, so that young people can work and do projects where they live.
- Many students have heard about the SDGs and the UN, but not in such detail, and it would be great if the UN in Uzbekistan could come to all universities with guest sessions, hold workshops to give more knowledge about the UN, how to contact them, etc.

## ANNEX VII. Examples of international IT platforms that can help engage stakeholders and promote joint actions towards SDGs

Currently all agencies have databases of stakeholders either in Word or Excel format, which is not user-friendly and is not shared with other UNCT members.

Stakeholder mapping should include not only a list/contacts of stakeholders, but also state their projects with UN agencies, show connections to UN agencies, show overlapping projects, possible synergies etc. Stakeholder mapping should be visualised in the form of mind maps, flowcharts, tree diagrams and other interactive visualisation tools.

Such a platform should not put additional burden on UN Agencies, as stakeholder mapping/ updating is a side duty of programme officers/units. The databases (excel sheets) sit within programme units/officers in each agency and there are no systematic updating procedures.

The platform can be created in a crowdsourcing format (where stakeholders and agencies can add information, and it should be moderated by a responsible focal point). Stakeholders' data should be protected. Data / expressions of interest for collaboration can be added by all agencies and interested stakeholders, but moderation is required from UNCT or RC focal points, considering due diligence, the reputation of stakeholders, alignment of their vision with the UN etc. Such a platform also can be used as a feedback channel and a communication channel.

User generated content/ Web 2.0 online internal resource (like regular projects, news and activities' bulletins) would be useful to implement among UN Agencies, to exchange news on partnerships, ideas, and projects. This would help everyone to keep informed about initiatives and not overlap activities (overlapping activities was a fact was mentioned by some agencies).

- A good example of an interactive IT tool already used by the UN is [The Partnerships for SDGs online platform](#) (United Nations' global registry of voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships, facilitating global engagement of all stakeholders in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals).

This platform also facilitates the sharing of knowledge and expertise among multi-stakeholder SDG-related partnerships and voluntary commitments, and for providing periodic updates on their progress. The platform is open to all stakeholders, including Member States, civil society, local authorities, private sector, scientific and technological community, academia, and others, to register a voluntary commitment or multi-stakeholder partnership which aims to drive the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to provide periodic updates on progress. This global platform can be used as a prototype for a similar platform in Uzbekistan (developed in Uzbek, Russian, Karakalpak and English languages).

- Another good example is the [Sustainable Development Goals HelpDesk and Knowledge Hub by UNESCAP](#).

This website is a great example of both education, reporting, data portal, sharing of events with public and stakeholders, community hubs etc. Uzbekistan lacks a unified website on the SDGs (information is published on the UN website, there is some information on the SDG-themed Statistics committee website, but to learn which agencies conduct which events, many websites and the social media pages of all agencies would need to be looked through. On a portal, information could be collected and shared, providing transparency and engaging more people.

- A separate **Telegram-bot** (similar to U-Report, by UNICEF) could be introduced to receive feedback from civil society and business community organisations, where they can (anonymously or not) provide feedback and answer questions related to cooperation with the UN and SDGs in their regions, and/ or suggest their ideas for meaningful cooperation.
- ECOSOC has a [global website with the database of CSOs](#). This website is a good example of a resource available for agencies and the third sector, to be able to see all the NGOs, filter them by region / type of activities/ partners, and to view the events and workshops planned for CSOs. Calls-for-proposals or invites to NGOs to discuss programming and the challenges agencies face could be also published on such a website. It is a chance for CSOS to start / continue collaboration with the UN in Uzbekistan.

## ANNEX VIII. LIST OF INTERVIEWED PEOPLE / ORGANISATIONS

	Company name	Type (NGO, business, government)	Contact person
1	Center for Advanced technologies under Ministry of Innovational Development	Research / science / startups	Director, Shakhlo Turdikulova
2	Webster University in Tashkent	Research / science / startups	Muzaffar Aripkhodjaev, Student & Faculty Advisor
3	Centre for Economic Research	Research / science / startups	Yuliy Yusupov, Founder
4	Westminster University in Tashkent	Research / science / startups	Aziz Ochilov, Director, WIUT Next-gen Entrepreneurship Lab
5	UWED	Research / science / startups	Gulyamova Gulshakhnoz
6	Cleantech startup "GARDEN"	Research / science / startups	Mirzabek Kazbekov, startup founder, researcher,
7	IT-company VRonica	Business	Director, Akmal Salikhov
8	MyWay orientation center for youth, Olx.uz	Business	Vyacheslav Kan, Founder,
9	English courses in Fergana, Center for Women	Business	Barno Isamiddinova, Director, Social Entrepreneur
10	Association for support of families and children	NGOs	Inkilob Yusupova, Chair Cholpan, Representative in KK
11	Tumaris, Kanimah	NGOs	Narbekova Natalya, Founder, Director, Kanimah
12	Salomatlik + Ecologiya, Kokand	NGO	Hadicha, Founder
13	Nemolchi.uz	NGOs	Irina Matvienko, Founder
14	Anhor.uz	Media	Lola Islamova, Chief Editor
15	Technovation Girls Uzbekistan participants (girls 15-18 y.o.) + mentors	Youth	4-5 girls from Tashkent, Andjan, Urgench and Samarkand

	Company name	Type (NGO, business, government)	Contact person
16	UNESCO	UN Agencies	Sanjar Allayarov, Culture Officer, UNESCO Office in Tashkent
17	UNICEF	UN Agencies	Sascha Graumann, UNICEF Representative in Uzbekistan
18	UNDRR	UN Agencies	Murodjon Ismoilov, National Technical Officer (UNDRR)
19	UNODC	UN Agencies	Mr. Borikhan Shaumarov, National Programme Officer; Mr. Mirzahid Sultanov, National Programme Officer.
20	UNDP	UN Agencies	Doina Munteanu, UNDP DRR
21	UNFPA	UN Agencies	Kamolkhon Inomkhodjayev Assistant Representative UNFPA, Uzbekistan Country Office
22	ILO	UN Agencies	Azizkhon Khankhodjaev National Coordinator for Uzbekistan
23	United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)	UN Agencies	Katja Schafer, Inter-Regional Advisor (a.i.)
24	UNOPS	UN Agency	Ajay Madiwale, Strategic Planning and Partnerships Adviser
25	Nationwide Movement "Yuksalish"	State agency	Sherzod Saparov, Deputy Chairman for Programme Development and Cooperation

	Company name	Type (NGO, business, government)	Contact person
26	RC Office	UN Agencies	<p>Helena Frazer, UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan</p> <p>Matluba Umurzakova, Data Management and Results Monitoring/ Reporting Officer</p> <p>Zarif Jumaev, Economist</p> <p>Anvarjon Meliboev, Programme Communications and Advocacy Officer</p> <p>Rusyan Jill Mamiit, Partnership and Development Finance Officer</p>
27	OHCHR	UN Agencies	<p>Natalya Seitmuratova, Human Rights Officer at UN OHCHR , the Regional Office for Central Asia</p> <p>Guljakhon Amanova, National Programme Officer at OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia</p>
28	Tourism & IT companies Hotellios, Otpusk.uz, OrexCA.uz	business	Leonid Ibragimov, CEO, founder
29	ITECA.uz, Kongress service, LLC Exhibition Platform & services	business	Nigora Khasanova, CEO
30	Bukhara Textile National Embroidery manufacture	business	Khadija Giyasova, owner
31	Small cheese factory in Tashkent region	business	Obidjon Sattarov, CEO, founder
32	"Eastern Bazaar" project (Ferghana region)	business	Fatima Arifdjanova, co-founder
33	Digital Agency 8bit	business	Samira Aslanova , Communications Specialist, founder



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