



**SDGs in Practice** | by UN DESA & UNITAR

Session

# Driving the national transformations we need: lessons from the Global Sustainable Development Report

10 July 2024  
08:30 AM – 10:30 AM (EDT)  
Held virtually

Organized by **UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DESA/DSDG)**, in collaboration the **UN Development Coordination Office** and **UN Development Programme**

**SUMMARY**

SPECIAL  
EVENTS



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



# Driving the national transformations we need: lessons from the Global Sustainable Development Report

10 July 2024, 08.30 AM – 10.30 AM (EDT) (virtually)

Organized by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DESA/DSDG), in collaboration the UN Development Coordination Office and UN Development Programme

## Summary

### Introduction

The "SDGs in Practice: Driving the National Transformations We Need" webinar, hosted by UN DESA, convened experts, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss the essential national-level transformations required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The session brought the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) front and center: authors of the Report presented key findings and recommendations, and government officials and practitioners discussed how the Report is already informing planning processes at the national level. UN system representatives discussed the ways that the "systems approach" that defines the GSDR is also driving UN initiatives.

The webinar began with an overview of the challenges in achieving the SDGs and then presented the key lessons of the GSDR, including its framework of entry points and levers for transformation, as well as its description of the difference phases of transformation. The GSDR is rooted in an understanding of the interactions between Goals and Targets and calls for identifying synergies and managing trade-offs to maximize progress.

### Enhanced Knowledge and Skills

**Key Learnings and Practical Skills Developed:** Participants gained a comprehensive understanding of the recommendations and approach of the GSDR and heard from practitioners who are already using the Report's insights in their national planning processes.

Key insights included:

#### 1. **Integration of SDGs into National Policies:**

- a. Embedding SDGs within national policies and development plans to ensure alignment with global commitments.
- b. Strategies for policy coherence and cross-sectoral integration to address complex and interlinked challenges.

#### 2. **Localization of SDGs:**

- a. Practical approaches to adapting and localizing SDGs to fit specific national and subnational contexts.
  - b. Engaging local communities and stakeholders in the localization process to enhance ownership and relevance.
- 3. Monitoring and Evaluation:**
- a. Effective techniques for monitoring and evaluating SDG progress, emphasizing data-driven decision-making.
  - b. Utilization of indicators and metrics to track advancements and identify areas needing improvement.
- 4. Fostering Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:**
- a. Tools and methodologies for creating and sustaining multi-stakeholder partnerships.
  - b. Collaborative governance structures to foster cooperation among governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations.

## Expanded Network and Collaboration

**Facilitation of Networking and Enhanced Partnerships:** The session facilitated networking and enhanced partnerships through various interactive and collaborative activities:

- 1. Networking Activities:**
  - a. Dialogue between UN system initiatives, government officials from the Global South and Global North.
- 2. Plans for Maintaining Connections:**
  - a. The webinar is part of a process for integrating the lessons of the GSDR into national planning. DSDG will organize an in-person workshop later in the year to continue these conversations.

## Insightful Actions and Innovative Solutions

**Insights and Innovative Approaches Discussed:** The webinar highlighted several innovative approaches to SDG implementation challenges:

- 1. Case Studies and Best Practices:**
  - a. Presentations of successful case studies from countries that have effectively integrated the GSDR approaches into their national planning processes.
  - b. Sharing of best practices and lessons learned to inspire and guide other nations.
  - c. Sharing of relevant UN system initiatives that can bolster and complement national planning processes.

## Background

Eight years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, data showed a general lack of progress in reaching the SDGs on national, regional, or global scales. The 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) highlighted the need for a systemic approach, advocating for identifying and harnessing synergies and managing trade-offs. The report emphasized six key systems or "entry points" for transformation:

1. Strengthening human well-being and capabilities
2. Shifting towards sustainable and just economies
3. Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns
4. Achieving energy decarbonization with universal access to energy
5. Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development
6. Securing the global environmental commons

## Challenges and Objectives

Achieving systemic transformations requires new capacities for governments in both the Global North and South, as well as the UN system and other partners. The S-curve of transformation, highlighted in the GSDR 2023, outlines three phases—emergence, acceleration, and stabilization—where interventions need to be strategically matched. Successful transformations can be seen in sustainable technologies, renewable energy, and universal health coverage, but they require overcoming potential impediments to avoid unsustainable pathways.

## Solutions and Initiatives

Governments, research institutes, UN entities, and civil society organizations are beginning to operationalize the GSDR's calls for action by integrating systems approaches into national planning and governance structures. The webinar provided opportunities for peer learning and exchange across various institutions, showcasing efforts and initiatives at different stages of maturity.

## Format and Audience

The session included dialogues between members of the Independent Group of Scientists, policymakers, UN system practitioners, and civil society representatives. The dialogues aimed to appeal to a wide range of SDG practitioners from government, academia, and civil society, with ample opportunities for audience participation and sharing of short examples.

## References

1. [https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/SDGs%20in%20Practice%20-%20Driving%20the%20national%20transformations%20we%20need\\_0.pdf](https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/SDGs%20in%20Practice%20-%20Driving%20the%20national%20transformations%20we%20need_0.pdf)
2. *10 July 2024 Webinar: SDGs in Practice - Driving the National Transformations We Need*