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YEARS

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United Nations Development Programme

Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate

Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy

2017-2021

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in nearly 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

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Cover Photo: Wind energy replaces diesel powered electricity generation in the Galapagos islands.

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Wind energy.
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Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate

“Energy is the golden thread that connects economic growth, increased social equity, and an environment that allows the world to thrive. Development is not possible without energy, and sustainable development is not possible without sustainable energy.”

– UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

The purpose of this strategy note is to articulate – for the first time – UNDP’s role, approach and focus related to sustainable energy for the period 2017-2021. The aim is to foster internal programming coherence and clear communication to UNDP partners. This note also provides an overview of UNDP’s key partners.

The target audience is a broad range of UNDP partners at global, regional, national and subnational levels, including governments, bilateral and multilateral financial and technical institutions and agencies, civil society organizations and academia. It also targets UNDP staff working on sustainable energy-related issues across the organization at HQ, regional and country offices.

Sustainable energy is at the centre of the new climate and development agendas and progress on sustainable energy is critical for progress on sustainable development. This strategy is therefore guided by the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and other key global processes. It is complementary to other UNDP strategies and frameworks, mainly to those tackling climate change and disaster, livelihoods and jobs, gender equality, youth, green commodities and trade, the sustainable and equitable management of the extractive sector for human development, and the low-emission capacity-building programme. The strategy will guide UNDP’s energy work in the years to come and will help position the organization in the context of the new development and climate agendas.

The strategy comprises five sections:

Section 1: Highlights the purpose of this strategy, the target audience and a summary of the strategy’s main elements.

Section 2: Describes the linkages between energy and sustainable development and the role that sustainable energy plays in advancing the 2030 Agenda.

Section 3: Describes UNDP’s vision and mission, value proposition, theory of change, de-risking approach and guiding principles.

Section 4: Provides an overview of UNDP policy and programming support around three main action areas: energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Section 5: Highlights key partnerships and describes how UNDP works with United Nations agencies and other development actors.



Woman using a Multifunctional Platform Engine.
Photo: © UNDP Burkina Faso

I. INTRODUCTION

UNDP's more than two decades of experience in sustainable energy is evidence of the critical role of sustainable energy as an enabler for poverty eradication, social progress, gender equality, enhanced resilience, economic growth and environmental sustainability. This experience has focused UNDP's work in sustainable energy on three interrelated challenges:

Social challenges, the disparities in access to reliable energy services, including in conflict affected and fragile settings.

Economic challenges, the lack of affordable and reliable energy services, and energy's importance as a key input to job creation and economic growth.

Environmental challenges, the threat to the planet's ecological balance, biodiversity and climate.

Building on UNDP's proven ability to influence policy and develop capacity, its global country presence and a longstanding role as a trusted partner working with multiple stakeholders across sectors, UNDP will tackle these challenges by supporting and advocating for **energy market transformation**, using a suite of integrated interventions in policy, technology, finance, delivery systems, capacity development, community mobilization and awareness creation. The foundation for this work will be UNDP's core de-risking methodology to reduce and, where possible, to remove a range of barriers to policy, legislation, regulation, institutions, financing and awareness that inhibit scaled-up investments in sustainable energy at the national and local levels. Under pre-market conditions, these barriers can act as immediate 'show-stoppers' and attention will be given to early market creation through piloting new business models, promoting productive uses of energy and strengthening business development and incubation support.

UNDP's work on sustainable energy is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7) on "ensuring access to affordable, reliable, modern, and sustainable energy"¹ and is structured around three action areas. These three action areas are:

Energy Access: *The need for electrical, thermal and mechanical energy for households, small and medium-sized businesses and communities, with an emphasis on clean energy for the poor.*

Energy Efficiency. *The promotion of energy efficiency across sectors and the creation of strong market demand and incentives for public and private investment.*

Renewable Energy: *The increased adoption of sustainable on- and off-grid renewable energy technologies and delivery services and de-risking investment.*

UNDP works with governments and multi-stakeholder partners in all actions areas guided by a list of principles, including context-driven interventions, promotion of sustainable energy sources, deployment of appropriate technologies and applications, integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, as well as considering the need for energy security, a key driver for many countries. UNDP's barrier removal and de-risking approaches to catalysing investment will facilitate the inclusion of energy into development, expanding employment and livelihood opportunities as energy services progressively develop. UNDP's support also includes promotion of a range of technologies, but with a focus on development benefits, energy service delivery and productive uses, ensuring consumers and particularly the most vulnerable groups have access to reliable, affordable and clean energy service. Central to the entirety of UNDP's work is that **energy is a means and not an end in itself**.



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