

Regional Capacity-building Workshop on Sustainable Development Goals Modelling for the Least Developed Countries in Asia and the Pacific

Proceedings of the meeting

**Co-organized by ESCAP and
the Government of Lao
People's Democratic Republic**

**30 June 2016
Vientiane**

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Introduction



The 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of sustainable development goals, at the seventieth session of the General Assembly in September 2015. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) has initiated a process to support the efforts of its member States to develop integrated approaches, models and tools aimed at enhancing regional cooperation with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals. This process places special emphasis on the needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small Island developing States (E/ESCAP/RES/72/6).

Most developing countries in the region are only starting to work on a preliminary Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework to be incorporated in national modelling frameworks. Countries with special needs require substantial financial and technical assistance to develop the national modelling capacities to mainstream SDGs into national planning processes.

The objectives of the workshop and related training programmes are to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development and to identify the linkages and impacts of national policies and strategies through modelling frameworks. However, the availability and quality of statistics and data presents a great challenge for carrying out a meaningful modelling exercise that integrates different aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals. Given the ambitious scope of the Goals, data scarcity would significantly constrain countries' ability to develop and maintain Sustainable Development Goals-based models. Therefore, further regional cooperation and stronger capacity support from development partners is necessary and urgent, especially in the context of countries with special needs.

Challenges

The Asia-Pacific region is not only facing external economic and financial shocks that require careful policy intervention, but it is also experiencing social challenges stemming from increasing inequality. In particular, the regional linkages with other regions, especially the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, have further heightened policy uncertainty. This requires, among other things, a more calibrated approach towards obtaining a better understanding of policies. The application of integrated approaches could enable

policy makers to appropriately assess medium-to-long term development perspectives and their policy implications. This would help guide national development policy management and responses, which can further support the use of integrated modelling approaches towards achieving sustainable development.

Opportunities

In this context, last years, ESCAP workshop organized a capacity building workshop on macroeconomic modeling in Bangkok from 8 to 12 December 2015 to support integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda into national policymaking for countries with special needs. Economic policy planning and central bank officials from 21 Asia-Pacific countries participated in a unique capacity building macroeconomic modeling.

The Capacity Building Workshop on Macroeconomic Modelling in Asia and the Pacific aimed to strengthen national capacities to integrate social and environmental indicators into traditional macroeconomic monitoring and policy analysis frameworks for initiating progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region.

The workshop further highlighted the importance of developing a quantitative, modelling framework at the national level that integrates the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. This is a multidisciplinary task involving economic, social development and environmental experts that requires timely, consistent and high-quality data.



SDGs Modelling

Given these challenges and opportunities Asia-Pacific LDCs are facing, the capacity building workshop will give policymakers from the member States, especially from the countries with special needs, the opportunity to learn about the current state of the art progress in making national level monitoring and policy simulation. It will be, among other thing, part of the initial ESCAP regional implementation plans for these special groups of countries for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional and national levels.

ESCAP intends to use this platform to establish a network of experts from member States, including academia, think-tanks and other stakeholders, to support policymaking at the national level in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific attending this workshop.

Way forward

ESCAP will continue to facilitate regional cooperation to advance the development of modelling frameworks to assess the impact of policies on sustainable development in the region and prepare a regional road map to guide and coordinate work in developing such capacities in relevant national agencies.

ESCAP is committed to support our member States, especially the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in adapting the 2030 Agenda to their specific national circumstances and priorities through integrated modelling frameworks, and to facilitate the subsequent follow up and review processes at the regional level.

The capacity building workshop, as a way forward, will further bring together policymakers and experts to promote closer cooperation between different national agencies to ensure progress towards the goal of adaptation of integrated SDGs framework into the national context.

Finally, the rich discussion and sharing of experiences will harness regional partnerships for building SDGs modelling framework required for effective implementation of the transformative 2030 Agenda in the Asia-Pacific region.

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Session discussions



Open plenary session

Welcome remarks



Leeber Leebouapao, Director General, National Economic Research Institute, Lao People's opened the workshop with comments about development goals in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The country is committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda. To achieve the main goals, it must develop the required tools. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is in the process of determining which indicators are most relevant. Having a macroeconomic model would be good for the country in the long-term. It is a new experience, so building one is a learning process for the country.

Regarding this workshop, it will be very important that participating countries determine which areas they require assistance. He stressed the importance of national modelling and the need to establish a statistics system to serve the modelling.

Introductory remarks



Aynul Hasan, Director, Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division, ESCAP discussed the commitment of ESCAP to support the efforts of its member States to develop integrated approaches, model

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