

2025 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Accelerating Synergies for Integrated SDG and Climate Action

Incheon, Republic of Korea, 18 - 21 March 2025

Concept Note

I. Background

Taking urgent action for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the climate crisis

With five years remaining before 2030, the world remains off track in meeting the majority of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As noted by the Global Sustainable Development Report 2023, the challenge of reaching these ambitious goals has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, rising living costs, armed conflicts, and natural disasters, which have halted, and even backtracked, progress on many goals, resulting in increased poverty levels¹. In the face of these setbacks, world leaders recommitted to sustainable development at the Summit of the Future, agreeing to the Pact for the Future which encompasses commitments across various domains, including peace and security, sustainable development, climate change, digital cooperation, human rights, gender equality, youth engagement, and the transformation of global governance. Its two annexes, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations, emphasised the need for digital cooperation and governance as well as the needs and rights of upcoming generations².

Climate action remains a crucial area that impacts the achievement of the SDGs. 2024 was the hottest year on record, temporarily hitting 1.5°C above the pre-industrial era, with greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in 2023 achieving record levels³. These alarming numbers mean that we are currently on course for a temperature increase of 2.6-3.1°C over the course of this century, with devasting consequences for the planet and humanity. The Emissions Gap Report 2024 from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) notes that nations must deliver dramatically stronger Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in early 2025 with cuts of 42 per cent by 2030 and 57 per cent by 2035 needed to be on track for 1.5°C⁴. At COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, progress was made in supporting countries in meeting this ambitious objective. The full operationalisation of Article 6 and the provision of transparent carbon markets, agreed upon at COP29, can help countries reduce the cost of implementation of NDCs by up to US\$250 billion per year⁵. Furthermore, COP29 also delivered the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund as well as the delivery of the US\$1.3 trillion Baku Finance Goal including a new core finance goal of US\$300 billion per annum, which will provide new additional sources of funding for climate action.

The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) has also called for "accelerated actions towards a full and effective implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement" including specific actions highlighting the need for climate finance. The urgency of action was further underlined by the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres in January 2025. Speaking at the World Economic Forum, he emphasised not only the dangers of climate change, but also the economic opportunities of a transition to a sustainable world that must be financed by a surge in climate finance, with current action being insufficient to meet the challenge⁶.

⁶ https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/01/davos-2025-special-address-by-antonio-guterres-secretary-general-united-nations/



¹ https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/FINAL%20GSDR%202023-Digital%20-110923 1.pdf

² https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future

³ https://wmo.int/media/news/record-carbon-emissions-highlight-urgency-of-global-greenhouse-gas-watch

⁴ https://unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2024

⁵ https://cop29.az/en/media-hub/news/cop29-achieves-full-operationalisation-of-article-6-of-paris-agreement-unlocks-international-carbon-markets



The 2025 High-Level Political Forum will focus on Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind. As the science on the impacts of climate change and the finance needed to address climate adaptation and mitigation continues to develop, sustainable development and climate action at national level can benefit from evidence-based planning and data-driven investments. 39 countries will present their Voluntary National Reviews noting national progress on climate action as well.

Aligning the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement–Integrating SDG Implementation and Climate Action from global to national level

Recognizing the intertwined nature of sustainable development and climate action and understanding the need to ensure maximum efficiency in the achievement of the twin goals of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), in partnership with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has been leading initiatives to foster synergies and co-benefits between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement through the Climate Action and SDGs Synergies Platform.⁷

Since its inception, the platform has made significant strides in promoting synergised approaches to SDG and climate action.

- Global Conferences: The platform has convened five global conferences since 2019, which have
 provided unique opportunities to assess practical measures advancing SDG and climate action.
 The Fifth Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies held 5-6 September 2024 in Rio de
 Janeiro, Brazil, emphasised the need for urgent, integrated action to address climate and
 development challenges. The conference highlighted the need for political commitment, cobenefits of aligning climate and SDG actions, and closing financing gaps.
- Expert Group Reports: The expert group co-convened by UN DESA and the UNFCCC has
 released a series of comprehensive reports. These include two global reports, published in 2023
 and 2024 as well as four thematic reports on knowledge and data, policies, finance, and cities.
 These reports offer evidence-based recommendations for policymakers to effectively integrate
 SDG and climate action.
- Data and Knowledge Sharing: Through its online portal, the platform serves as a repository for data, case studies, and best practices, enhancing the capacity of stakeholders to implement synergistic actions that address both climate change and sustainable development goals.

The initial research of the group focused on defining and demonstrating the importance of an integrated approach, and the barriers to synergistic action. The 2023 report "Synergy Solutions for a World in Crisis: Tackling Climate and SDG Action Together", established the global case for synergistic implementation, including examples of successful synergistic action across the globe⁸. Supplementing these insights, research undertaken by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate showing that SDG and climate action integration can lead to US\$26 trillion in economic gains by 2030, produce over 65 million new green jobs, and prevent around 700,000 premature deaths compared to business as usual⁹.

Building on these insights and acting as a bridge from research theory to practical impact, the 2024 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, held 7 – 10 May 2024, Incheon, Republic of Korea, brought together 40 government officials from 20 countries, including national SDG and climate focal points, to build capacity, encourage knowledge exchange and assist countries in developing call to action plans to make initial steps towards SDG and climate action integration 10. Countries such as Kenya and Mexico were showcased as models already making progress in integrating SDGs and climate action at the national level. In addition, countries such as Liberia, Sri Lanka and others have demonstrated concerted efforts to strengthen their synergies for Climate and SDG action, even taking steps towards changing government structures and processes to ensure alignment.

¹⁰ https://unosd.un.org/events/2024ETC



⁷ https://sdgs.un.org/climate-sdgs-synergies#about

⁸ https://sdgs.un.org/climate-sdgs-synergies#global reports

⁹ https://newclimateeconomy.report/2018/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/09/NCE_2018_FULL-REPORT.pdf



The publication of the 2024 global report "Synergy Solutions for Climate and SDG Action: Bridging the Ambition Gap for the Future We Want" and the four thematic reports (knowledge and data, policy, finance, and cities) have delivered further practical insights, delivering action-oriented recommendations across the four thematic areas that can overcome the fragmentation that is a key barrier to progress.

With the advantages of a synergistic approach now established and considering the ongoing lack of progress in achieving the SDGs and advancing climate action, it is imperative to move beyond initial steps. National governments must be equipped with a clear understanding of what constitutes an effective synergistic approach, the structural frameworks required to implement it, and examples of policies and programmes that demonstrate the value of the synergistic approach and how they can be financed.

2025 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) was established in 2011 in Incheon, Republic of Korea under the Division for SDGs of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). With support from the Government of Korea, UNOSD plays a crucial role in assisting Member States in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through capacity building, knowledge sharing, policy advisory, and partnership. Among its notable initiatives, UNOSD organizes the annual Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This training course, organized in collaboration with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Regional Collaboration Centre for Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP and NDC Partnership is designed to equip policymakers from developing countries with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the national level.

Recognizing the interconnected nature of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and as a follow up to the Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)¹³ adopted by the General Assembly in September 2024 and the 29th Conference of the Parties held in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024, the 2025 edition of the Executive Training Course for Policymakers aims to assist UN Member States in adopting a systems-thinking and integrated approach to translating the global synergies and co-benefits between SDGs and climate action into domestic priorities.

II. Objectives

The main objective of the 2025 Executive Training Course for Policymakers is to enhance the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and overall capacities of member states in implementing sustainable development and climate planning, policymaking, and policy shaping through an integrated approach. Building on the 2024 edition by focusing on building capacity for operationalising the synergistic approach nationally, the 2025 course aims to achieve the following key objectives:

- Strengthen practical knowledge and skills for aligning and integrating SDGs and climate action in national planning, through a holistic, practical approach that focuses on coherent policy implementation, knowledge and data governance, and integrated financing.
- Facilitate networking and the exchange of proven practices and case studies among public policymakers to maximise efficiency and effectiveness of national planning and policy on sustainable development and climate action.
- Foster peer-to-peer collaboration and enhance partnership-building capacities across government agencies and departments to ensure integrated and evidence-based policymaking and reporting on sustainable development and climate action.

¹³ https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/pact-for-the-future



¹¹ https://sdgs.un.org/climate-sdgs-synergies#global reports

¹² https://sdgs.un.org/climate-sdgs-synergies#thematic_reports



III. Structure and Methodology

The 2025 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will take place in person in Incheon, Korea (with virtual engagement option for resource persons). The course will centre around the theme of aligning SDG planning and NDCs to ensure that member states, with a particular focus on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), are able to avoid siloed approaches that can lead to negative spillovers¹⁴, understand trade-offs and how to identify and utilize co-benefits.

During the training, participants will examine the development of SDG and climate planning, understand the interlinkages between them, and how to make the connections explicit and reflected in national sustainability planning. Participants will be placed in thematic groups and will work together to consider how SDG and climate interlinkages can be leveraged to enable progress in their areas of focus. The course will cover concepts and opportunities surrounding the interlinkages between SDG and climate action, complemented by concrete policy practices and country cases. It will consist of presentations by international experts, and practitioners followed by Q&A and discussions. It will also include group work on simulations and role playing that feed back to plenary sessions. Preparatory reading and assignments will be requested of participants. Finally, there will be a half-day site visit to illustrate the Korean experience in implementing the SDGs and climate action.

IV. Target Audience

The 2025 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development targets senior national government officials from developing countries who are responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as well as those working on the implementation of the Paris Agreement, including the development of NDCs.

V. Language

The 2025 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be conducted in English.

¹⁴ Spillovers can also be understood as positive or negative externalities across national borders or are also noted as burden shifting, where actions of development in one country impact other countries.





2025 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Holiday Inn - Incheon, Republic of Korea, 18 – 21 March 2024 Agenda

Day 1 Tuesday, 18 March 2025

Time	Session
08:30- 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 10:00	Opening and Welcoming Remarks Mr. Chun Kyoo Park, Head of Office, UN Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), DSDG, UN DESA Keynote Address Dr. Eun Mee Kim, Independent Group of Scientists (IGS) for the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report
10:00 - 10:30	Photo Session and Coffee Break
10:30 – 12:00	Session 1: Setting the Scene – progress on synergised approaches for SDG and climate action integration.
	This session will update the participants on global progress on achieving Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. At the end of the session, the participants understand the flow of the training, and are briefed on the Pact for the Future, the outcomes of COP29 and the progress on NDC 3.0.
	Presentations:
	Overview of UNOSD
	Ms. Sara Castro-Hallgren, Sustainable Development Officer
	Overview of the Executive Training Course
	Mr. Simon Gilby, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD
	Pact for the Future and progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
	Mr. Joop Theunissen, Deputy Chief, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, UNDESA (virtual)
	COP29 and NDCs 3.0
	 Ms. Juhi Bansal, NDC and LT-LEDS Regional Specialist, UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre for Asia and the Pacific
	Regional Perspectives on Climate Action
	 Ms. Aneta Nikolova, Climate Policy Lead, Environment and Development Division, Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific (ESCAP)





	Q&A
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break
13:00 –	Session 2: Stocktaking Progress on the 2030 Agenda and Climate Action
15:15	Moderator: Mr. Adis Dzebo, Consultant, UNOSD
	This session highlights the insights of the Climate Action and SDG Synergies reports as well as sharing the achievements of countries that have embedded synergies into their planning processes. At the end of the session, participants have been briefed on the synergies reports and have heard from leading countries in synergies.
	Framing Presentation: Climate Action and SDG Synergies Platform Progress
	 Ms. Bahareh Seyedi, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, DSDG, UNDESA (video)
	SDG – Climate Synergies Current Progress and Way Forward
	 Mr. Simon Gilby, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD and Mr. Adis Dzebo, Consultant, UNOSD.
	Acknowledgement of attending countries completing VNR at 2025 High-level Political Forum
	Country Presentations
	Guiding Questions:
	 How do national planning instruments and mechanisms enable NDC implementation?
	How do national planning instruments and NDCs currently enable SDG localisation (local impacts and progress) for a just transition and leaving no one behind?
	Q&A
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 – 17:00	Session 3: Moving forward – Peer to peer discussion on challenges and opportunities to strengthen efficiencies in integrated national planning and finance
	Moderator: Mr. Simon Gilby, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD
	Using a world cafe format, this session allows the countries to discuss the challenges they are facing and opportunities to explore in enhancing efficiencies across various national institutions. Participants will discuss how their national development plans (short- to long-term instruments) link to NDCs. They will also be placed in their thematic groups as well as being introduced to the Call-to-Action Plan to strategize their lessons learned and follow up from the training.





Day 2 Wednesday, 19 March 2025

Day Theme: Governance and Policy

Time	Session
08:30 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 - 10:30	Session 4: A Just Transition and Bringing Together SDGs and Climate in a Whole of Society Approach to Leave No One Behind
	Moderator: Ms. Åsa Torkelsson, Chief, UNFPA Representative Office in Seoul, Republic of Korea
	This panel session brings together expert speakers emphasising the need for government to act as the facilitator for a whole of society approach including government (from national to local levels), private sector, civil society, youth, women and marginalised groups. At the end of the session, participants understand the need and value of a whole of government and a whole of society approach to achieve SDG and climate goals.
	Q&A
10:30 - 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:30	Session 5: Integrating Policy Frameworks and Strategizing for Synergies, Inclusive Governance, and Local Climate Action
	Moderators: Ms. Sara Castro-Hallgren and Mr. Adis Dzebo, Consultant, UNOSD
	In this group activity session participants examine a case emphasizing the importance of concepts such as governing Common Pool Resources ¹⁵ like ecosystems to ensure sustainable development for all through inclusive governance. Participants discuss how to create a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the case, incorporating underrepresented groups (e.g. rural areas, youth, women) and other stakeholders for integrated planning, multi-level governance, and effective climate actions that also advance the SDGs at local level. The session's goal is to build the capacity of government representatives for strengthened public institutions, exploring the challenges of balancing inclusive economic growth with ecosystem health and prosperity of vulnerable populations. At the end of the session, exploring the case, participants apply critical thinking skills to advance vertical integration of the SDGs and identify key barriers, stakeholders and actions to strengthen national to local climate action.

¹⁵ Common Pool Resources: These are Resources ("The Commons") that include all ecosystems that are large enough such that excluding potential beneficiaries from their use is costly and each individual's consumptive use (e.g., harvesting of a boatload of fish or a truckload of forest products) reduces what is available to others.

or a truckload of forest products) reduces what is available to others.

Retrieved from: Ostrom, Elinor. (2013). Institutional Diversity of the Commons. Encyclopedia of Biodiversity (Second Edition). Pages 155-166. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-384719-5.00157-X and https://www.ipbes.net/node/41219





12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 -	Session 6: Leveraging Data and Tools for Integrated Policymaking
15:00	Moderators: Mr. Adis Dzebo, Consultant, UNOSD.
	In this group activity, participants use a simplified SDG synergy tool to identify policy intersections and potential co-benefits. At the end of the session, participants understand how data helped highlight areas for enhanced stakeholder inclusion (especially youth and gender) and the elimination of siloed practices. The session will also touch on data to address potential risks of misinformation and siloed decision making. The session will be an introduction to the use of synergies tools, with extended training required to use such tools to their full potential.
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee Break
15:15 –	Session 7: Using Data Insights to Deliver Integrated and Impactful Policy
17:00	Moderator: Ms. Juhi Bansal, NDC and LT-LEDS Specialist, UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre for Asia and the Pacific
	In this session, participants work in groups to design a policy proposal for their thematic area that brings together SDG and climate actions while breaking down silos and ensuring comprehensive stakeholder inclusion.

Day 3 Thursday, 20 March 2025 Day Theme: Finance

Time	Session
08:30 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 10:30	Session 8: Integrating SDG and Climate Finance – Innovations and Insights for Leveraging Finance
	Moderator: Ms. Sara Castro-Hallgren, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD
	This session updates the participants on finance developments, including the progress towards the 4 th Conference on Financing for Sustainable Development, Article 6 and 13 of the Paris Agreement, NDC investment, and transparency.
	Presentations
	Q&A
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee Break





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10:45 –	Session 9: Climate and SDG Finance Deep Dive
12:30	Moderator: Mr. Adrián Flores-Aguilar, Climate Finance Associate, NDC Partnership
	This session will deepen participants' understanding of the tools, methodologies, and data essential for integrated finance planning in support of sustainable development and climate initiatives. Discussions will explore strategies for policy integration, effective governance arrangements, and stakeholder engagement, including private sector involvement. Participants will also examine approaches to improving data availability to better identify and prioritise investments, ensuring more informed budgeting and policy decisions.
	Presentations:
	 Ms. Resina Katafono, Inter-Regional Adviser on Financing for Sustainable Development, Financing for Sustainable Development Office (FSDO) (virtual) Mr. Adrián Flores-Aguilar, Climate Finance Associate, NDC Partnership Mr. Johan Bentinck, Strategic Planning Specialist, Green Climate Fund
	Q&A
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 -	Session 10: Climate and SDG Finance Country Examples
15:00	Moderator: Mr. Adrián Flores-Aguilar, Climate Finance Associate, NDC Partnership
	This session will showcase how different countries are successfully integrating climate and SDG finance through innovative financing tools and policy frameworks. At the end of the session, participants understand the range of financing options and how countries have successfully implemented them.
	Presentations
	Country Presentations
	Mr. Christopher Lilyblad, Finance and Policy Specialist for SDGs and NDCs, UNDP (virtual)
	Q&A
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee Break
15:15 –	Session 11: Designing Integrated Finance Strategies
17:00	Moderator: Mr. Adrián Flores-Aguilar, Climate Finance Associate, NDC Partnership
	In this interactive exercise, participants will engage in a hands-on strategy design process, rotating through thematic stations focused on data, policy alignment, institutional arrangements, and stakeholder engagement. Guided by facilitators, participants will identify challenges, gaps, opportunities, and best practices in each area to strengthen financing strategies that support both SDG and climate objectives. Emphasizing project bankability, local ownership, inclusivity, and cross-sector collaboration, this exercise will culminate in country teams delivering high-level presentations summarizing key





takeaways and proposed approaches.

Day 4 Friday, 21 March 2025

Time	Session
8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 -	Session 12: Call to Action - Development of Action Plans
10:30	Moderator: Mr. Adis Dzebo, Consultant, UNOSD
	Participants reflect on their learning from the training and develop call to actions describing how they can advance policy, finance, and data for SDG and climate synergies using a whole of government and whole of society approach.
10:30- 11:30	Session 13: Call to Action - Presentations and Discussion Moderator: Mr. Adis Dzebo, Consultant, UNOSD
	Participants share and discuss their Call-to-Action Plans.
11:30-	Closing Session
12:00	Participant reflections
	Rapporteur's statement: Mr. Adis Dzebo, Consultant, UNOSD
	Closing Remarks:
	Mr. Chun Kyoo Park, Head of Office, UN Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), DSDG, UN DESA
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch Break
13:00 -	Site Visit
17:00	Participants visit Incheon Metropolitan Smart City and urban history sites on sustainable development and climate action in Incheon

