Sustainable development and climate change
Implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement
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About Bond groups

Bond is the civil society network for global change. Our groups are a key way for members to come together, learn from each other and take joint action. bond.org.uk(groups

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The Bond Development and Environment Group provides a forum where NGOs working at the interface of environment and poverty issues can exchange information, enhance their analysis and coordinate advocacy work.

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2015: a vision for a cleaner, safer and more sustainable planet

This working paper provides an overview of the links between the outcomes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change, and makes recommendations on how these agreements can be delivered in an integrated way.

2015 was a unique year for international policy process, with world leaders signing up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the Sustainable Development Goals) in September and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement in December.

These two agreements set out truly universal frameworks applicable to all countries, whose implementation will set a trajectory for a safer, fairer and more sustainable future. Furthermore, both universal frameworks are grounded in the lifeblood of the United Nations – realising human rights for all, with particular attention to meeting the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Paris Agreement outcomes are intrinsically linked. Without delivery of the Paris Agreement, the SDGs will not be achieved; climate change threatens to undermine each and every one of the goals. In turn, delivery of the SDGs will significantly facilitate greenhouse gas emissions reductions, with commitments on sustainable consumption and production, sustainable energy use, and sustainable economic growth. It will also build climate resilience through reducing climate risk in development policies, programmes and investments, and strengthening governance structures.

The links between climate change and sustainable development are recognised in the text of both agreements. SDG13 focuses explicitly on climate change, while targets are also embedded across the framework linked to mitigation, adaptation and resilience. The 2030 Agenda is also recognised in the Paris Agreement, and SDG13 further concretises countries’ intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) and the multilateral framework realised at COP21.

Making promises a reality: moving from agreement to implementation

The challenge for 2016 shifts from one of agreement to one of implementation.

An urgent and integrated approach to implementation of the sustainable development and climate change agreements is required, recognising that eradicating extreme poverty and preventing further dangerous climate change are inseparable challenges, and that failure to deliver is not an option. These common goals make it imperative for the policy and practitioner communities involved in each of the agreements to work together in their delivery.
The strategic context

- The global political, social and economic context has changed profoundly since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 established the processes for tackling climate change and achieving sustainable development.
- Today our climate is changing amid mass urbanisation, a global refugee crisis, escalating incidences of pandemics, political instability and rapid demographic shifts.
- Climate-compatible sustainable development is an opportunity to address these global risks – it can mitigate risks and facilitate access to basic human needs, employment, health, security and better governance.

Table: The benefits and challenges of integrating the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of integration</th>
<th>Challenges to integration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect the poorest and most vulnerable</td>
<td>Need to strengthen coordination and governance mechanisms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integration will protect existing poverty reduction gains and help address other intersecting challenges which consistently affect the poorest and most vulnerable, such as food and water security. Climate and development gains which are not directed at the poorest and most vulnerable pose social and political stability risks arising from widening inequality and poverty.</td>
<td>Many countries’ institutional structures are not well suited to handle development and environment in an integrated fashion. Successfully integrating these frameworks will depend on adjusting national institutional structures in order to avoid inefficient overlaps between the INDCs and SDGs. This will require enhanced technical capacity, as well as additional funding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid maladaptive development pathways</td>
<td>Need for a holistic and integrated approach</td>
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<td>Policies and practices can be maladaptive if they increase vulnerability to climate change impacts. By integrating climate change when planning development investments, the desired outcome or return is more likely. For example, the energy industry is already suffering challenges to their systems prompted by climate impacts, such as challenges for hydro power to deliver during droughts. Resilient investments that have integrated climate impacts from the start make intended outcomes more probable and protect against financial risk.</td>
<td>The complexity of the SDGs risks countries cherry-picking goals and targets rather than taking an integrated and holistic approach. It is understandable that countries will have to break down the process of implementation into manageable components. However, interconnected and cross-cutting elements, such as climate change resilience, cannot be ignored without undermining the potential for achievements and progress to be sustained.</td>
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**Strategic and efficient use of finance**  
Investments, especially those that include public money, must be accountable to the government (and its public) or the institution which is making the investment. By investing in climate compatible sustainable development, finance can be more targeted and productive. It can also serve to mobilise private investment by reducing risk, especially in relation to the cutting edge innovative approaches that will be key if we are to respond adequately to climate change. This approach will also help to reduce competition for funding among stakeholders, as mutual outcomes are reached collaboratively.

**Build strengthened resilience and effectiveness in governance structures**  
As global, regional and national challenges become increasingly interconnected, integrated governance and joined up thinking in governments will become ever more essential for delivering sustainable outcomes. Integrating planning for climate change and the SDGs will facilitate a process for building more effective governance systems.

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**Recommendations for implementation**

The SDGs are a universal agenda that applies to all countries. All countries should develop SDG delivery plans that link across to existing policy and planning processes, including the implementation of INDCs and 2050 climate plans.

We recommend three components to an SDG plan:

1. Delivering the SDGs domestically for all citizens.
2. Ensuring that official development assistance (ODA) and multilateral development banks support the delivery of the SDGs through their programming and policies.
3. Ensuring that domestic action on the SDGs has a positive impact globally.

Climate change should be front and centre in all three aspects of planning to deliver the SDGs.
National level (all countries)

Implementation

- **Low-emissions pathways and resilient sustainable development plans.** Develop/embed equitable sustainable development strategies that integrate low-emissions pathways and climate resilience within national, sub-national and local development plans and policies. This is implied in SDG target 13.2, as well as activity foreseen under the UNFCCC (eg elaboration of low-emissions development strategies, national adaptation plans). In addition to achieving the SDGs, these plans shall be framed by the context of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.

- **Invest in climate mitigation in and beyond the energy sector.** The 2030 Agenda offers an opportunity for countries to consider low-emission sustainable development across different sectors. This includes reviewing the development trajectory for energy and transport systems, industries, agriculture, infrastructure and cities, and how countries use natural resources in ways that restore and protect our global natural capital. Actions in these sectors will underpin countries’ efforts to deliver their nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, as well as delivery against the SDGs.

- **Uphold human rights at home and abroad.** Ensure human rights principles guide policies, programming and investments in all development and climate action, as mandated by both agreements. This entails a robust safeguards approach to ensure that climate change measures do not inadvertently undermine human rights, as well as upholding the rights to information and participation in decision-making. Rebalancing inequalities should be at the core of SDGs and climate planning, with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups, including women, children, indigenous peoples, migrants, older persons, persons with disabilities and the poor.

- **Climate-smart and disaggregated national and sub-national SDG indicators.** National level indicators processes for the SDGs should ensure that indicators are climate-smart and disaggregated (eg by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts), to underpin the “leave no one behind” agenda. The global indicators are not sufficient in either respect so action is required at a national level.

- **SDGs implementation to be informed by climate and social risks.** A range of temperature scenarios and trends can be used to inform climate risk management plans. These plans should deploy approaches which cater for the whole spectrum of climate risks: mitigation against the worst, adaptation to the inevitable and probable, and contingency planning for the worst incidences.

- **High ambition requires innovation.** To fully deliver the SDGs and make our economies consistent with a 1.5°C temperature increase limit will require new and innovative approaches. There are many tried and tested tools but public money must also be deployed to find new innovative solutions to emerging challenges, while creating the enabling conditions for private sector finance to be directed to low-carbon technological development.

- **Understanding best-practice collaborative approaches.** Making the most of international, regional and national synergies requires a continuous cycle of improvement. Currently, opportunities for sharing best-practice approaches and policy frameworks are limited. Strengthening national governance will help strengthen the foundations for collaborative approaches.

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1 Greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced to near zero before or by 2050 by phasing in 100% renewable energy, and the remaining emissions sources should be balanced through the protection and restoration of ecosystems to restore carbon storage capabilities and biodiversity in the context of equity and sustainable development.
**Process**

- **Integrated, cross-ministerial effort to coordinate implementation.** Bringing the two agreements together and allocating clear roles, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms. Success at integrating the frameworks will depend on adjusting institutional structures at the national level in order to avoid inefficient overlaps between INDCs and SDGs, and to underpin accountability for coherent delivery of targets under each framework, particularly the temperature limit goal of 1.5°C.

- **Governments should lead a process of engaging a broad set of stakeholders** in implementation, including the private sector and civil society, and with particular attention to reaching the most vulnerable, including women, children and youth.

**UN and global level**

- **Science-policy interaction for integrated SDGs and climate change planning.** Global assessment and reporting processes that inform long-term planning (e.g., the IPCC, World Development Reports, scientific scenarios and global and regional models) should include implications for both climate change and the SDGs.

- **Ensure adequate financing is in place for least developed countries.** The SDGs and Paris Agreement commitments will not be met without significant investment in these countries. In particular, investing in vulnerable groups will be critical for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

- **Consulting and mobilising stakeholders.** The UN and global institutions have an important role to play in convening and mobilising an array of stakeholders, including civil society, private sector and academia, and in facilitating the meaningful participation of the poorest and most vulnerable communities that the SDGs and the Paris Agreement seek to reach.

- **Ensure reporting, monitoring and review is joined up** for the two processes, where possible using common metrics, methods and disaggregated data. Reporting on climate-sensitive indicators that contribute to adaptation and mitigation under relevant SDGs will be critical.

- **A cross-institutional approach** is essential for integrated and effective implementation. This should be facilitated by the UN bodies responsible for the two agreements and require reporting from all UN agencies.

- **Allocate responsibility for managing climate risk in UN agencies.** To ensure that UN agencies support delivery of the SDGs and Paris Agreement, they will need to understand the climate risks to their programmes and operations. Assessing climate risk and incorporating climate-proofing and climate resilience measures into decision making and project planning will require dedicated UN agency capacity.

- **Coordinating political moments.** Milestones and events in the UNFCCC and 2030 Agenda should raise ambition towards meeting both climate change and SDGs outcomes.