

UGANDA SDG GAP ANALYSIS FOR SELECTED POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Policy Brief

This brief is based on the study conducted under the leadership of the National Planning Authority (NPA) with financial and technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Background

The endorsement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by countries around the world in 2015 coincided with Uganda's preparation of its second National Development Plan (NDPII). Consequently, the country was among the world's first to begin alignment of the SDGs with its national planning frameworks.

Five years after the publication of NDPII, which set priorities for the country's sectors and local governments, and also at the dawn of the NDPIII implementation period, **this report assesses readiness to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across two areas:**

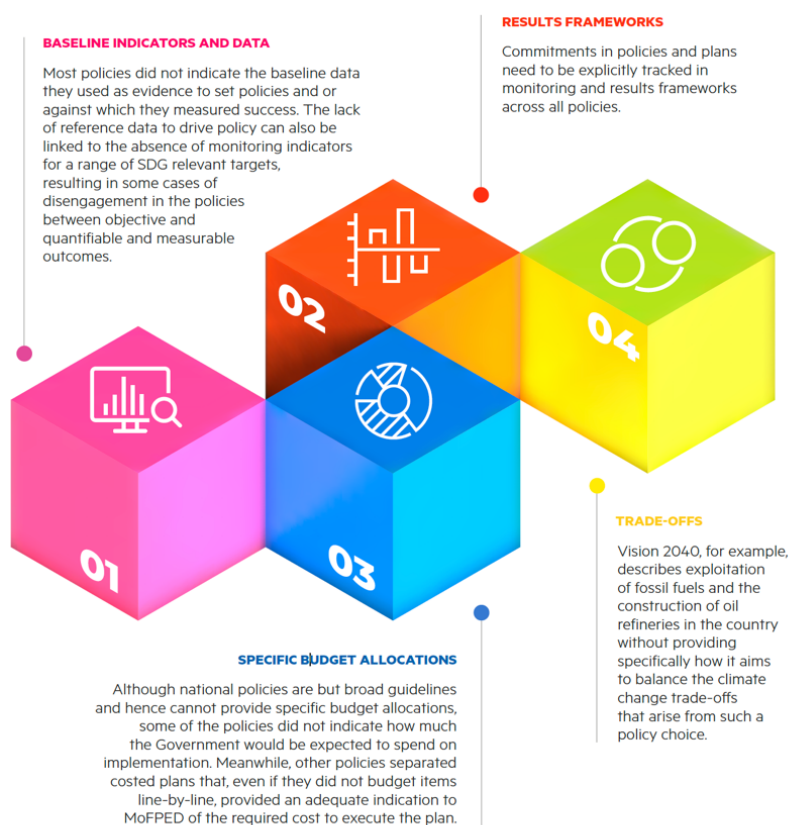
- Uganda's policy environment, through the examination of a selection of **20 policy frameworks** including national planning documents, national policies and 5-year sector plans; and
- Uganda's institutional environment, by gathering primary and secondary data on the preparedness in a selection of **12 government bodies**.

Key Findings

Overall, the Government of Uganda (GoU) presents a mixed picture of readiness to implement the 2030 Agenda in both its policy and institutional environment. Analysis particularly highlights a need to focus on improving alignment of national development strategies with SDG relevant targets, as well as alignment of policies and plans with the pledge to 'leave no one behind' and its framework, and address trade-offs between commitments to climate action and investments in oil and petroleum.

Common themes in gaps were found in the policy frameworks examined: **missing baseline indicators or data for the indicators set; lack of specific budget allocations; commitments evaluated through results frameworks; and conflicting trade-offs.**

Similarly, common themes were found in institutional gaps: **Uganda has sufficient policy frameworks to support implementation of SDGs**, such as Vision 2040, a set of national development plans issued every five years, an SDG coordination framework and an NSI



framework. The coordination framework for the SDGs in Uganda has established a hierarchy of planning and reporting on the SDGs starting with five Technical Working Groups (TWGs) feeding into a National Taskforce (NTF), then to an Implementation Steering Committee (ISC) and finally the Policy Coordination Committee (PCC). However, the country faces challenges in implementing these frameworks in practice. For example, within sector ministries, there is lack of clarity surrounding the significance of the 2030 Agenda.

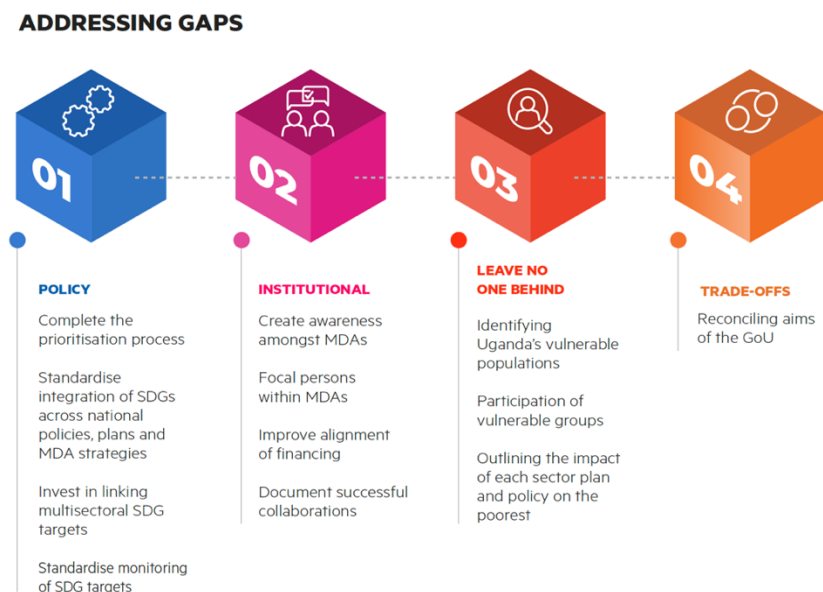
However, in late 2018 and 2019, the Government appointed the Minister for General Duties, Hon. Mary Karooro Okurut, to be in charge of SDGs in the cabinet, in addition to **launching the SDG Secretariat housed at Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), thus signaling a commitment to streamlining SDG efforts in the country.**

Since existing national priorities and budgetary cycles are the channels through which the 2030 Agenda is being localised in Uganda, there are no earmarked SDG funds. Existing analyses have examined **current budget allocations to show that while budget expenditure is well aligned on poverty reduction (SDG 1), on gender equality (SDG 5), on water and sanitation (SDG 6), alignment is much lower on ensuring economic growth was sustainable (SDG 8), on providing technologies to women and other vulnerable groups and hence reducing inequalities in provision (SDG 10).**

Policy Recommendations

To address policy gaps:

i. Complete the prioritization process: While national priorities have been identified in Vision 2040, SDG target level priorities still need to be systematically agreed upon at the national and sectoral level to improve alignment across and between policies and plans. There needs to be a clear rationale behind how SDG targets are selected in line with national priorities as well as specifying how these targets reinforce each other in the national context.



ii. Standardise integration of SDGs across national policies, plans and MDA strategies: In line with the GoU commitment to integrate relevant SDGs across its policy structure, a standardised guideline for this integration is needed. In particular, standard guidelines need to reflect on expectations around how policies and sector plans will reflect budget allocations and select and present indicators for monitoring progress on selected targets.

iii. Standardise monitoring of SDG targets: OPM and UBoS can communicate to MDAs the strategy for deploying the NSI framework to gather data on SDG indicators and the degree of involvement required from sectors. The finalisation of the NSI framework will be critical in the generation of baseline data as well as facilitate monitoring and evaluation efforts.

iv. Invest in linking multisectoral SDG targets: Thematic or programmatic coordination is one way to ensure that one SDG target that is being addressed by multiple MDAs at the same time benefits from the focus of multiple agencies and does not fall victim to conflicting institutional mandates and competing sector interests.

To address institutional gaps:

v. Create awareness amongst MDAs: A communication exercise – in person, or through meetings at the level of Permanent Secretary (PS), and heads of MDAs will be important not just to establish a Government wide position on the 2030 Agenda but also to cultivate buy-in from MDAs.

vi. Focal persons within MDAs: For each MDA, it would prove useful to have two focal people who are at a politically high level within the MDA to participate in the existing SDG coordination structure that is comprised of the sector working groups.

vii. Utilize established SDG coordination structures: As noted above, use of the existing coordination structure, through regular convenings of the working groups, is imperative. Only through the implementation of the structure will it become clear if Uganda's purposes would be served better by a modifying the structure or another means of sector coordination.

viii. Improve alignment of financing: Certificates of compliance and annual Government performance reports should include a section on performance on SDG areas of focus for each MDA.

ix. Document successful collaborations: A body of knowledge can be developed on sector wide collaborations that have been successful in planning, implementing, receiving financing and. monitoring with the involvement of multiple stakeholders.

To address gaps in Leave No One Behind (LNOB):

x. Identifying Uganda's vulnerable populations: To move beyond applying the LNOB framework in silos, it is important for all sectors to recognise – on the basis of data that exists with the Government, with Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and with civil society – the profile of Uganda's vulnerable populations and to integrate targeting to these populations in each sector plan.

xi. Participation of vulnerable groups: Reports on processes to prioritise policy actions and nationally adapt SDGs should clearly indicate which stakeholders were invited, how they were selected and the content of the meeting to highlight areas of consensus and contention.

xii. Outlining the impact of each sector plan and policy on the poorest: It is recommended that in the spirit of LNOB, each sector plan should include the projected impact on their proposed interventions on the vulnerable groups.

To address gaps in trade-offs:

xiii. Reconciling aims of the GoU: Currently Uganda has prioritised simultaneously both investment in fossil fuels alongside the promise to combat climate change and develop renewable sources of energy. An explicit strategy to achieve the two objectives simultaneously in each relevant sector plan and the national planning documents is recommended as the NDPIII period begins. Additionally, if the GoU chooses to sequence national development (i.e. to make an active trade-off in the short term), National Planning Authority (NPA) and relevant sector agencies will need to specify how the costs and benefits were calculated as part of the trade off, particularly costs to vulnerable populations. This will enable the country to make informed decisions and balance the trade-offs.

In conclusion, as Uganda implements NDP III, particularly at programme, sector, and local government levels, it will be important to consider the highlighted recommendations to more effectively integrate the Agenda 2030 goals into planning, budgeting, coordination and reporting frameworks, and ultimately to succeed in achievement of the Goals.

