

DRAFT Concept Note Development Partnerships for Sustainable Infrastructure

April 16, 16h30-18h00, UN Headquarters, New York
Conference Room 11

Background

Sustainable infrastructure is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ensuring the right processes in the establishment and maintenance of sustainable infrastructure will play a key role in facilitating infrastructure development to enhance our ability to manage natural resources sustainably, increase energy efficiency and reduce waste, while addressing inequalities. While sustainable infrastructure is included explicitly in SDG 9, it also underlies all of the other socio-economic SDGs; various estimates by the World Bank, OECD, G20, and others point to the need for trillions of dollars in investment in water and sanitation systems (SDG 6), energy infrastructure (SDG7), food systems (SDG2), transportation infrastructure to support trade and economic growth (SDG 8), among other types of infrastructure if we are to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, at the same time, the choices that we make about the types of infrastructure we build, where we build it, and how it is designed, constructed, and operated will have impacts on the climate (SDG 13) and terrestrial and marine ecosystems (SDGs 15 and 14, respectively).

For infrastructure to contribute to socio-economic SDGs without undermining environmental SDGs, it is essential to adopt an integrated, "systems" approach to its planning and implementation. Such an approach considers the interconnections between different infrastructure systems, sectors, levels of governance (local, regional, national), and elements of sustainability (environmental, social, and economic), and does so early enough in the decision-making process that alternatives are still economically and politically viable.

Despite the need for more integration, most countries tend to follow a siloed approach, addressing sustainability only at the project or sectoral level. In doing so they miss the opportunity for maximizing synergies and minimizing trade-offs among the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability.

Addressing these challenges of 'business as usual', the Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership has been established to promote integrated systems-based approaches to sustainable infrastructure. UN Environment is working with a wide range of partners, including UNIDO, UNDP, World Bank, OECD, UNECE, UNOPS, IUCN, WWF, UNECE, and others, combine expertise into impactful programmes and to further exploit the linkages between infrastructure and the SDGs.

Objective

Taking an integrated approach to sustainable infrastructure requires specialized expertise and institutions, as well as innovative financing solutions. The objective of this event is to bring together different stakeholders from government and the development and finance communities to raise awareness of the need for more upstream, integrated planning and to discuss ways that the development and finance communities can support countries in implementing such approaches.

Event Agenda

16h30: Welcome Remarks: Ms. Claudia Linke-Heep, UNIDO

16h35: Presentation: Integrated approaches to sustainable infrastructure (Rowan Palmer, Programme Specialist, Sustainable Infrastructure, UN Environment)

The presentation will outline the results of a stocktaking report on sustainable infrastructure and present the need for more integrated approaches to sustainable infrastructure as a means of achieving the SDGs.

16h50: Panel Discussion:

Moderator: Mr. Satya S. Tripathi of India, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of UNEP

Panelists:

- H.E. Mr. Ekoputro Adijayanto, CEO, Center for Private Investment, Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia
- Dr. Spiro Pollalis, Director of the Zofnass Program for Sustainable Infrastructure, Harvard University
- Ms. Kate Newman, Vice President, Forest and Freshwater Public Sector Initiatives, WWF
- Ms. Linda Krueger, Senior Policy Advisor, TNC
- Mr. Regis Marodon, Special Advisor, Agence Francaise de Developpement
- Mr. Jeff Gitterman, CEO, Gitterman Wealth Management