



UNDP Sustainable Development Tool Case Study

Preparing a 'Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action' Sustainable Development Evaluation Tool for the UNDP

The Brief

Who is the client?

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in more than 170 countries and territories, the UNDP offers a global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

What is the context?

The term 'Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action' (NAMA) refers to a set of policies and actions that countries undertake as part of a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A NAMA is an emerging mitigation instrument that seeks to bring together public and private players into a coordinated operational framework and an overarching financial architecture in order to scale-up the most promising environmentally and economically effective mitigation actions. Therefore, measurement and reporting of sustainable development impacts is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of mitigation actions, as is a strong integrated approach to assess NAMA's contribution to sustainable development.



What was the challenge?

Aligning the two objectives of climate and development represents a new challenge of how to assess and promote NAMAs sustainable development benefits. National development objectives provide the context for NAMAs and represent a key driver for mitigation actions.

In contrast to traditional project-based mitigation actions, NAMAs focus on a paradigm shift by building a sustainable low-carbon structure in climate-relevant sectors.

The challenge was to create a simple but detailed tool that would be an add-on to all existing standards and tools. The new SD tool would detail in an elaborate manner all the sustainable development benefits, which is currently not possible when using existing tools or standards. The new SD tool also needed to capture the overlapping benefits falling into different domains in order to support project developers when adequately assigning sustainable development benefits.

What was the briefing?

There is a need to give a value to sustainable development for many reasons:

- 1 Report on all sustainable development domains: environmental conservation, economic growth, poverty reduction and public welfare
- 2 Track development over the entire lifetime of a NAMA
- 3 Identify new areas of opportunity
- 4 Demonstrate a level of commitment and results achieved to external parties
- 5 Give donor institutions the confidence that supported actions will be implemented and that climate financing is being utilized effectively

What solution did South Pole Group develop for UNDP?

UNDP looked for a practical but robust approach: The NAMA Sustainable Development Evaluation Tool developed by South Pole Group allows countries to assess the effects of a NAMA on environmental conservation, economic growth, poverty reduction and public welfare and to evaluate the achieved results.





In addition to the three key domains - environment, social and economic - South Pole Group's team created and refined two new domains for better classifying overlapping benefits and for consistent reporting. The new fourth domain is centred around growth and development, and was distinctly designed to cater to the overlapping benefits between different domains. The fifth domain was added to address the institutional and regulatory aspects behind a NAMA and was specifically requested by the client to address policy challenges.

Description of domains and what they cater to:

Environment

Changes in environment (pollution reduction or quality improvement) due to an intervention.

Social

Social impacts not linked to any other domains.

Growth & Development

Development aspects of an intervention without linkages to financial benefits.

Economic

Economic (money) related benefits which can be measured directly.

Institutional

Policy and laws governing the NAMA.

The Sustainable Development Evaluation Tool by South Pole Group is structured and resourceful, with concrete criteria that define and constitute the main sustainable development elements in a measurable, transparent, and user-friendly way.

Guidelines for the application of the tool are being provided in simple language, with step-by-step instructions and examples. Real case studies were used to illustrate the applicability of the tool and it was successfully applied in five NAMAs. These [practical examples are available online](#).



Benefits

The tool is designed for NAMA developers, NAMA implementers and policy makers. In addition, the tool could easily be adapted to measure the sustainability of any development project.

- 1 The proposed approach is universal and standardized, yet flexible enough to ensure compatibility with the variety of possible NAMA designs and national development goals.
- 2 Existing sustainability tools were limited, and failed to provide a comprehensive approach for the measurement of sustainable development benefits.
- 3 The tool considers the alignment of sustainable development indicators with national development goals as well as the multitude of NAMA design options.
- 4 The tool was tested on rural electrification projects in The Gambia, Namibia and Vanuatu, proving the applicability of the approach. The tool has also been applied to an energy efficiency NAMA in Cambodia and an agricultural initiative in the rice sector in Philippines, assessing the adaptation and mitigation impacts of climate smart agriculture.
- 5 The Sustainable Development Evaluation Tool is the only tool that explicitly links sustainable development benefits to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, the tool quantifies but also measures the success of the project, making it the most advanced tool on the market.

Why work with us

Global team

We are a truly global provider of sustainability solutions and services. Our team is made up of over 130 skilled and enthusiastic professionals from over 20 different countries, based in offices spanning 6 continents.

Proven impact

Since 2006, we have measured the climate impact of countless companies, projects and products worldwide. We have screened USD 50 bn+ of investments for their climate impact and we have developed 270+ projects in renewables, energy efficiency, forestry, agriculture, industry and households. Through our efforts, 50 million tonnes of CO₂ have been saved, almost as much as the annual CO₂ emissions of Portugal. We have enabled the production of 35,000 GWh of renewable energy (more than the annual electricity consumption of Denmark), and mobilised over USD 6 bn for clean energy investments in emerging markets. We have protected or restored over 250,000 km² of land, about as much as the total land mass of the UK. In total, our projects have helped create almost 20,000 jobs in developing countries and we saved 17,000+ hectares of forest from deforestation, about the size of 24,000 soccer pitches.

Added value

We help you grow with groundbreaking solutions that benefit your business, the environment and society.