# United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
# Sustainable Development Goals Help Desk

## Background

In January 2016, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, covering 17 Goals and 169 targets came into effect. ESCAP, as the United Nations Regional Commission for Asia and the Pacific, is being tasked with supporting implementation and follow-up and review of this new agenda in the Asia-Pacific region[1]. Member States have requested ESCAP's support in promoting balanced integration of three dimensions of sustainable development; strengthen support to implementation; and provide capacity building opportunities.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), creates an opportunity for both member states and the UN system to explore integrated and inclusive approaches for their implementation. A major challenge that member states face is the lack of tools and methods for implementation of the 2030 agenda. Member States require access to data and methodologies for data collection, capacity building opportunities and tools, knowledge products, including the synthesis of country experiences in the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and for establishing more effective follow-up and review processes at both national and regional levels. Furthermore, and given the complex and multi-faceted nature of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the SDGs, and their focus throughout the entire spectrum of national governance systems, innovative approaches to deliver capacity development that can address the integration of the three dimensions of the SD are needed.

## Scope and Objectives

ESCAP has been tasked to establish a Sustainable Development Goals Help Desk (SDG Help Desk) to support the needs of member States in the Asia-Pacific region to develop effective strategies, tools and institutional mechanisms for implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the SDGs. The SDG Help Desk is designed to serve as the primary modality for coordinating ESCAP's support to member States in specific priority areas such as integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, stakeholder engagement, and effective follow-up and review.

As a one-stop online platform, the SDG Help Desk provides access to tools, knowledge products, expertise, good practices, advice and opportunities for peer-learning and regional South-South cooperation through thematic areas, covering a multitude of topics. Support is being offered through:

- **ESCAP Knowledge Hub for Sustainable Development**: access to e-learning courses, knowledge products through the e-library (articles, publications, videos, WebEx archives), and content through various thematic areas;

- **Capacity building:**  access to capacity development support through training of trainers' seminars to support the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and the SDGs into national planning;

- **Community of Practice:** on-line platforms for networking and peer-learning for a regional network of government experts on sustainable development, i.e. ESCAP Sustainable Development (SD) Focal Points and regional Voluntary National Review (VNR) Focal Points; as well as other already existing networks, such as Climate Finance Champions; SDG 6 experts, Green Growth champions;

- **Technical advisory services:** access to advisory services for national policy makers;

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[1] See ESCAP resolution 72/6 "Committing to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific."

- **Statistical data support:** access to various data portals; and

- **Partnerships:** access to knowledge products, policy toolboxes and training tools, methodologies, on-line networks of partners, including UN DESA, UN Environment and the wider UN family, as well as regional think-tanks, training institutions, and international organizations.

## Functionalities and Structure

The SDG Help Desk homepage is structured around five service lines. The service lines are featured with short descriptions, providing easy access to users. The initial service lines and descriptions are envisaged as follows:



KNOWLEDGE HUB    DATA PORTALS    TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE    TOOLBOXES    COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

### Knowledge Hub

Access to e-learning courses built in an interactive on-line platform using integrative, multidisciplinary approaches towards promoting sustainable development such as the DESA Modelling Tools for Sustainable Development and UNDP eLearning Platform. Search the e-library for articles, publications, case studies, videos, policy toolboxes. Explore more content through various thematic areas, including Water for Life; Sustainable Urbanization; Climate Action; Oceans; Energy for All; Trade for Sustainable Development and much more to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

### Data Portals

Stay updated by browsing, tabulating, comparing and downloading data through a variety of statistical data portals. Immediate portals that will be included are: ESCAP Statistical Database; Asia-Pacific SDG Data Portal; and Asia-Pacific Energy Portal.

### Technical Assistance

Request technical and expert advisory services in the areas of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, namely integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, stakeholder engagement, and effective follow-up and review.

### Community of Practice

An opportunity for SDG practitioners to join an on-line community of experts engaged in similar aspects of implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the SDGs, and to allow for peer-learning and networking, and sharing of good practices and lessons learned among members of regional networks of government (SDG focal points and VNR focal points) and non-governmental experts, think-tanks, research institutions and relevant organizations.

### Toolboxes

Browse through toolboxes, including the Social Protection Toolbox; UNDG's Sustainable Development Goals Acceleration Toolkit, providing access to models, methodologies and guidance to support policy makers in the implementation of the SDGs.

### Information Retrieval

To enable quick and efficient access to these main functional areas the SDG Help Desk will use a mega search engine to harvest information from various sources and providing access to information, knowledge products and services to users. The main knowledge product repositories forming the backbone of the SDG Help Desk will be the Asia-Pacific Knowledge Platform on Sustainable Development and the ESCAP on-line library (a diagram is provided in the Annex 1). The SDG Help Desk will direct users to knowledge repository platforms where multiple knowledge products and databases are located by users faster and more directly. The SDG Help Desk searching capability will evolve and increase with widening of the base of partnerships. This scope of partnerships will widen in various stages to make the programming and testing manageable:

- **Stage I:** ESCAP knowledge products repository (ESCAP and ESCAP's immediate partner websites and platforms);

- **Stage II:** United Nations Environment, United Nations Development Programme, UN organizations members of the RCM Thematic Working Group on Resource Efficient Growth knowledge platforms repositories;

- **Stage III:** Repositories of various research institutions and think-tanks in the region and beyond.

## Project Milestones

**Regional Expert Consultation on the Scoping Study**

16-17 October 2017, UNCC, Bangkok
- Final round of discussions on the functional and thematical scope of the SDG Help Desk

**SDG Week**

27 November-1 December 2017, UNCC, Bangkok
- Soft launch of the SDG Help Desk

**5th Session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development**

28-30 March 2018, UNCC, Bangkok
- Regional launch of the SDG Help Desk