

Policy Development Workshop on Applying Urban Nexus Concept to Implementing Global Agendas

"Employing Resource Integration in Cities to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Climate Actions"

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CONCEPT NOTE**

Background

Rapid urbanization in the Asia and the Pacific region along with the region's unsustainable production and consumption patterns and extractive economy approach is intensifying risks and vulnerabilities contributing to resource scarcity and the depletion of biodiversity and ecosystems services. Of all natural resources, energy, water and food are the most essential to sustain development efforts – but they are also the most vulnerable to future demands.

The "nexus" approach aims to integrate planning and management processes of the key sectors of energy, water and food, contributing to the long-term sustainable development of rapidly growing cities and their regions. Since 2013, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has been implementing the project "Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities: the Urban Nexus", in partnership with ESCAP and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, and with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project supports 12 cities in seven countries with developing cross-sectoral infrastructure projects and integrating the nexus approach into urban planning and policies. Horizontal and vertical integration, coordinating and collaborating between sectors and with different government levels, is a key component of the project.

The Urban Nexus approach applies to the management of natural resources at the city level and serves as an ideal entry point to addressing landmark global agendas adopted in 2015 and 2016, mainly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement. Optimizing the use and production of water, energy and food/land in urban areas, and promoting innovative, multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional and inclusive solutions to address key urban challenges, such as energy and water supply, wastewater and solid waste management, urban agriculture, land use planning and management, and service delivery aligns strongly with the goals and objectives of the global agendas, which are interlinked and require integrated solutions. The global agendas and the nexus approach promote synergies and the use of innovative policies and technologies to achieve co-benefits.

In 2018, GIZ Urban Nexus and ICLEI South Asia led four national workshops in India, Indonesia, Mongolia and Vietnam. These four country workshops engaged national and local officials in interactive trainings that combined the nexus concept with a systemic approach to analyzing complex

challenges as well as design thinking against the backdrop of the global agendas. Participants examined political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors influencing urban challenges they have been working to address. Participants developed influence matrices and elaborated solutions.

Further, in 2018, ESCAP, in partnership with GIZ Urban Nexus, hosted a panel session, “How can Water-Energy-Food Nexus in Cities Contribute to Mitigating Climate Change?”, at the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Committee on Environment and Development to highlight climate actions and co-benefits of applying an urban nexus approach. The discussions at this event revolved around how national and local governments can effectively collaborate to mitigate climate change with innovative actions and transform cities into healthier, cleaner and sustainable habitats. The future of sustainable cities requires reducing greenhouse gas emissions today, and integrated resource management is one solution to alter the trajectory of global warming.

This policy development workshop will expand upon the work undertaken in 2018, once again with the four countries, by bringing them together in one forum to exchange experiences, identify common challenges, and find ways to fill the gaps for effective implementation, follow up and review of the global agendas through the lens of integrated resource management.

Objectives

Building on the outcomes and feedback from the national workshops, this Policy Development Workshop aims to achieve the following:

- Assess the status of each country’s Voluntary National Review (VNR) and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) preparations, in relation to the Urban Nexus approach.
- Identify and share cross-sectoral and integrated resource approaches that have been successfully advanced in the region and can be replicated in the four countries.
- Discuss the needs and opportunities to advance vertical integration, considering criteria such as institutional governance, knowledge sharing (including data collection), learning/training formats, financing and technological capacity.
- Integrate SDGs and urban nexus efforts into national policy frameworks.

Participants

Workshop participants will be drawn from a subset of officials that engaged in the four country workshops. To the extent possible, the officials will have relevant exposure and responsibilities for policymaking on national implementation of SDGs and climate change.