

## Implementing the SDGs in India

The 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development has moved into the year of *implementation* as several countries have set their priorities and course of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The month of September in 2016, when the UN convenes for its 71<sup>st</sup> session, will be pivotal for policy makers across the world. The progress of nations on the SDGs would be reviewed more thoroughly as a follow-up of the recently concluded High Level Political Forum (HLPF) meeting held in July, 2016 in New York, USA. The 2030 Global Agenda is a *transformative agenda* as it calls for a systemic view of policy strategies and implementation mechanisms by governments worldwide. This is explicit in the SDG target 17.14 of *enhanced policy coherence for sustainable development*. It has also implied that nations would require to move beyond the purview of aligning national and local level policies, and work in an integrated manner across sectors and stakeholders. The emphasis on the required policy transitions is advocated largely on the basis that the SDGs will be monitored, reviewed, and the progress of development will be assessed at the national and global scale.

However, the congregation of nations convened in the HLPF, July 2016, put forth the sentiment that the current stature of policies in every country entails massive gaps in its scope and the scale of actions required to implement the SDGs. Policies are essential enablers for sustainable development as they define the sustainable choices of a society, for instance policies entailing the utilization of sustainable construction materials, advocating intensive use of renewable energy coupled with incentives and subsidies, are some of the intrinsic elements of a coherent policy development. An inclusive, equitable policy also reflects the commitment of a nation at a global level on the trajectory that it has embraced towards sustainable development. It also reflects the transformative governance, role of leadership that will be influential in effective mainstreaming of policy integration to achieve the necessary goals and targets.

## Principles for Policy to Achieve SDGs in India

With an overarching view of addressing the diverse policy issues, challenges and transitions required in the sustainable development process, **Development Alternatives** initiates its annual flagship event **TARAgram Yatra (TGY) 2016** on the theme **Policy Shifts for Implementing the SDGs in India**. The Yatra focuses firstly, to comprehend the challenges pertaining to policy sectors that are essentially governed with the principles of horizontal integration among multiple sectors focussing on economic, social and environmental policies. Secondly, to address the policy levels and spatial scale challenges managed by vertical integration at multiple levels from sub-national and supranational levels. The overall agenda of the Yatra 2016 is to review national policies and programme and align them to the SDGs and targets.

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# BACKGROUND

The Yatra will be held in diverse states of India highlighting the critical need of localizing the SDGs and the imperative of connecting policy with practice. *Localising* will take into account sub-national contexts and relate on how local and regional governments will synergise work with national processes for implementing the SDGs. It will initiate critical thinking on specific SDGs addressing sectoral themes - *Agriculture, Housing, WASH, Skills and Livelihoods, Integrated Village Development and Resource Efficiency*. Through intensive discussions being taken up at the state level, the principle is to involve sub national governance structures within the discourse of SDGs. The TGY 2016 deliberations seek to answer the following questions, among others:

- How do countries that have adopted the SDGs early with their current national policy framework avoid the pitfalls of a 'single-out' approach?
- What critical political, social, and economic drivers and incentives have galvanized these nations to rapidly embed this agenda into their current national policies? What challenges and issues have been faced?
- How to bolster the integration of national sustainable development strategies for enhanced collaboration between the central government, local governments, and cities?



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## Theme 1: Food, Resources and Livelihoods

Indian agriculture production systems are predominantly small scale, resource scarce and face tremendous pressure in terms of high livelihood dependence and cater to the food and nutrition needs of the entire population. In this context, farmer producer companies, which have its origin in the cooperative movement across the country, collectivises farmers, especially small and marginal farmers across various activities of the agriculture value chain. This theme at the TARAGram Yatra will explore how the genesis and nature of such farmer producer companies established by government bodies (NABARD, SFAC), civil society (*Vrutti, Pradan, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture*) differs its impact on food production, farmers livelihood security and natural resource management of the region. This consultation aims to provide relevant inputs to the National Policy for the Promotion of Farmer Producer Organisations, *Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana* that promotes Farmer Producer Organisations for farmers' livelihood security.

## Theme 2: Sustainable Social Housing

Housing is primarily an energy and resource intensive sector. There is an imperative growing demand to find sustainable housing solutions that will not lead to a disproportionate increase in carbon emissions and resource use due to the production, transport, use and disposal of materials or products and the operational energy of the building. The emergent need and identification of appropriate building materials and technologies for social housing is an opportunity to address energy and resource efficiency, and devise means to embrace a greener development trajectory. In order to cater to the growing need of appropriate alternative building materials, four new alternative options of Marble Sludge, Construction and Demolition waste, Foundry Slag and China Clay stand out as viable options depending upon their regional availability. These alterative materials have demonstrated satisfactory performances in production of cement, concrete and concrete based products. The consultation aims to explore these new alternative building materials and their scope of use by integrating them with sustainable social housing.

## Theme 3: Integrated Village Development (*Humara Gaon*)

The current development strategy follows a siloed approach that fails to capitalise on the principle of the whole being more than the sum of its parts. Development Alternatives' Integrated Village Development programme (*Hamara Gaon*) targets issues related to the economy, environment and society systemically, as a whole, helping communities realise the benefits of integrated development. Embedded in holistic and sustainable thinking, the programme inspires ownership amongst the villagers, designs rational environmental management systems, promotes diversified and dynamic local economies and fosters social harmony. This is catalysed through the creation of people-oriented institutions, dissemination of knowledge and appropriate technologies, strengthening local governance systems and enabling access to credit and finance. *Hamara Gaon* is operationalised on the principle of "*Haryali, Udyamita aur Sampanata*" – Environment Well-being, Economic Development and Social Prosperity. This consultation will focus on identifying critical action for the delivery of integrated models within the SDGs framework.

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## Theme 4: Climate Change and WASH

Climate change is already causing erratic weather events across the world. Prime hazards for the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector would be experienced through erratic weather events, increased frequency of droughts, flash floods and heat waves. The direct impact will adversely affect quality and availability of drinking water, critical infrastructure and hygiene and sanitation services. These threats will unequally affect the most vulnerable sections of the society that is women and children. The key to such a situation would be the increased resilience in the form of developing ability of women & children, households and community systems to anticipate manage and overcome shocks and cumulative stresses. Enhanced resilience has to be done by strengthening the governmental plans/ guidelines/ policies to incorporate a climate lens when looking at risk. The consultation on this theme will explore how the current governmental schemes contributing to SDG goals 6 (WASH) and 13 (Climate Change) can be integrated and inter-linked while encouraging community action and building resilience especially among children, adolescents and women.

## Theme 5: Employment, Entrepreneurship and Empowerment

India is one of the youngest nations in the world with more than 54% of the total population below 25 years of age. In the past few years, the Indian Government has launched various campaigns to accelerate employment & entrepreneurship like “Skill India”, “Make in India”, “Start-up India” etc. Through the consultation, we aim to explore and understand various approaches being adopted which drive employability, entrepreneurship and empowerment for India’s economic growth. The four main pillars which propel employability, entrepreneurship and empowerment are *Capacities, Technologies, and Finance and Market Linkages*. Eminent thought leaders, practitioners, government representatives, CSOs, bi-laterals and corporations shall participate in these discussions to identify win-win solutions. The discussions in these sessions shall center around the belief that employment and entrepreneurship opportunities of the future shall place significantly greater emphasis on creation of wealth from waste. The overall thrust of the consultation shall be to facilitate growth of youth in communities, either through employability or entrepreneurship to empower them.

TARAGRAM Yatra 2016		
20 September (4pm-6pm)	21 September	22 September
<u>trialogue 2047</u>  Economic Transitions to achieve SDGs (Delhi)	<u>Round Table Consultations</u>  1. Food, Resources and Livelihoods (Telangana) 2. Sustainable Social Housing (Delhi) 3. Integrated Village Development (Madhya Pradesh) 4. Climate Change and WASH (Delhi) 5. Employment, Entrepreneurship and Empowerment (Delhi)	<u>Plenary Sessions</u>  Policy Shifts for Implementing the SDGs in India (Delhi)

### About Development Alternatives

Development Alternatives (DA) is a not for profit organisation engaged in research and action for sustainable development. It innovates Eco-Solutions and implements programmes aimed at markets, people and environment for enhanced livelihoods. For more information about our work, please visit: [www.devalt.org](http://www.devalt.org)

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