

Report of the Sub-Regional Workshop on Strengthening Coordination for Measuring Progress on Responsible Consumption and Production and Policy Coherence, South Asia 30 November - 2 December 2021 Venue: Microsoft Teams, VIRTUAL

Background

The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development has elevated the profile of the environmental dimension of development and how we monitor this dimension. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has implemented Phase I of the project on Enhancing Capacity for Measuring Progress towards the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Phase I focused on the methodological development of SDG indicators under UNEP's custodianship and the reclassification of these indicators into Tier II or Tier I. Due to the nature and complexity of some environmental indicators, further capacity building is needed to equip member states with the necessary tools and knowledge to put in place the necessary data collection systems.

UNEP is currently implementing Phase II of the project (2020-2022), funded by the European Commission, that focuses on enhancing national capacities to measure SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production and strengthening policy coherence. One of the project's activities focuses on conducting workshops to enhance capacities of member states through hosting data producers and users together to emphasize the need for cooperation, as well as improving the understanding of the efforts made to collect data and the need for data for evidence-based policymaking. The South Asia Sub-Regional Workshop on Strengthening Coordination for Measuring Progress on Responsible Consumption and Production and Policy Coherence serves as one of the tools of development and training capacity under the projects activities.

Day 1, Tuesday 30 November 2021, 10:00 – 13:00 EAT

Session 1: Opening session

Therese El Gemayel, Programme Management Officer, Science Division, UNEP opened the workshop and welcomed the representatives of the various South-Asian countries to the 3-day sub-regional workshop. She then introduced Dr. Ludgarde Coppens and invited her to provide her opening speech. The workshop was attended by 15 participants from the following countries (in alphabetical order): Bangladesh, India, Iran, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. A full list of participants is presented in Annex I.

Ludgarde Coppens, Senior Programme Management Officer, Science Division, UNEP welcomed the participants and focused on how circular economy is gaining prominence in achieving the SDGs. She highlighted that Asia accounts for 60% of the global population and has the potential to make a difference in the transition to circular economy. Moreover, she focused on how countries pledged at UNEA-4 to scale up efforts in addressing environmental challenges in a



balanced and integrated manner through sustainable resource use and management. Her speech also focused on identifying available data, understanding measurement gaps, and the importance of developing evidence-based policies and sound policy-based management strategies to advance SCP and waste management. Her remarks were concluded by highlighting the importance of policy coherence to foster synergies and maximize benefits across policy areas.

Therese El Gemayel gave a summary on the European Commission project on Enhancing capacity for measuring progress towards the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals – Phase II. She explained the objectives, needs and outcomes of the project, as well as activities that were implemented to date and upcoming activities. She also provided an overview on the scope of the project, which has a global, regional covering Africa and Asia, and national scope including six beneficiary countries where activities will be implemented in 2022 (Ghana, India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Senegal, and Uganda).

Session 2: WASTE SDG INDICATORS: DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY IMPORTANCE

Dany Ghafari, Programme Management Officer, Science Division, UNEP presented the respective internationally adopted methodologies of the seven waste-related SDG Indicators (11.6.1, 12.3.1.a, 12.3.1.b, 12.4.1, 12.4.2, 12.5.1 and 14.1.1.b), including a high-level overview on how to calculate these indicators, their institutional custodian agencies and the level of data availability.

Therese El Gemayel gave a presentation on the importance of policy instruments and how the seven waste SDG Indicators can be used for evidence-based policies and their contribution to the circular economy approach. The presentation highlighted how sound waste policies contribute to a reduction in natural resource exploitation, waste generation, and pollution concentrations, while improving human health and reducing adaptation costs related to environmental damages, health care, infrastructure, agriculture, freshwater, and marine ecosystems.

Q&A Session

A representative from Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change inquired whether food losses occurring due to environmental calamities or degradations are included in the definition of food loss as per SDG indicator 12.3.1a.

UNEP responded, quoting the Food and Agriculture Organization, that is the custodian agency for SDG indicator 12.3.1a, that pre-harvest losses are out of the scope of SDG indicator 12.3.1a as the scope of the Food Loss Index starts on the production site with postharvest/slaughter/catch operations up to but not including the retail level, in line with the Food Balance Sheets conceptual framework. The metadata of SDG indicator 12.3.1a can be found [here](#).



A representative from Nepal's Environment Statistics Section explained that Nepal has made tremendous efforts in waste management data collection and reporting, especially with the Waste Management Baseline Survey of Nepal 2020 that can be found [here](#). He emphasized that technical support from UNEP will go a long way into seeing the country making progress when it comes to data on various waste.

A representative from Bangladesh's the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change inquired about the status of e-waste data collection and reporting. UNEP has been recording data on e-waste management, collection, and recycling from various countries such as the United States, New Zealand and Australia. Efforts are in place to increase the recycling rate to achieve the 2030 target. In many countries, the option of sending e-waste to a collection point instead of discarding it into normal household waste is lacking. Once it reaches the landfill it is difficult to sort, and some countries do not have the capacity to do so.

Session 3: SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY IMPORTANCE

Dany Ghafari presented the twelve SCP SDG indicators (7.3.1, 8.4.1/12.2.1, 8.4.2/12.2.2, 12.1.1, 12.3.1.b, 12.5.1, 12.6.1, 12.7.1, 12.c.1 and 17.7.1). A high-level overview of the internationally adopted methodology and the level of data availability for each indicator was highlighted. He further pointed out that the three main objectives of SCP are to decouple environmental degradation from economic growth, to apply a life-cycle thinking, and to seize opportunities for developing countries.

Therese El Gemayel gave a presentation on the relevance of the twelve SCP SDG indicators to sound-policy making. The presentation highlighted the importance of SCP in transitioning to a circular economy, which aims at keeping products, materials, and resources, when possible, within the economy. She also provided examples on how these indicators could be used in developing national policies.

Q&A session

A representative from Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change highlighted that fossil fuel subsidies are important for developing countries, due to the opportunities they bring, such as infrastructure development and the reduction of national energy expenditure. However, subsidies in the country seem to do the opposite of what they are intended to and there is a need to have data that will show change.

In some countries, fossil fuel subsidies are implemented in a sound manner, but SDG indicator 12.c.1 aims at eventually eradicating subsidies on fossil fuel. The transition from a subsidy system to a non-subsidy system is considered difficult. There are some targeted subsidies that benefit more than others and the process takes a long time depending on what type of subsidy is in place. However, one of the main issues is that subsidies do not ensure the efficient use of fossil fuels.



A representative from Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change inquired about data on material footprint and domestic material consumption (DMC).

UNEP informed participants that data on material footprint is available on both regional and international levels. In regions such as Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia, DMC per capita has outweighed the global average. The [SDG Report 2021](#) outlines the recent data figures.

Session 4: SDG POLICY COHERENCE

Hyun Sung, Programme Management Officer, Law Division, UNEP presented a comprehensive summary on policy coherence in the SDG context. The presentation highlighted the methodology of SDG indicator 17.14.1: Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development. She emphasized the importance of institutionalization of political commitment with the aim of ensuring the achievements of the objectives of policy coherence. She presented steps taken by various countries such as Finland, Bangladesh, and Burkina Faso in ensuring proper monitoring, reporting, and financing towards policy coherence.

Day 2, Wednesday 01 December 2021, 10:00 – 13:00 EAT

Session 5: DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

Therese El Gemayel gave a presentation, on behalf of the Life Cycle Initiative, on the SCP Hotspots Analysis Tool (SCP-HAT) (<http://scp-hat.lifecycleinitiative.org/>), which is an online tool to provide science-based support on key areas in the economy that are driving unsustainable patterns of consumption and production and therefore generate more impacts (hotspot-areas). The tool is based on a multi-regional input-output model and highlights two perspectives: Domestic production and consumption footprint. It is not targeted at providing reporting but can help setting priorities and can be used to inform in policy areas such as resource efficiency and climate action. The presentation was concluded with a live demonstration of the SCP-HAT tool and its 2 modules, by selecting one country from the region.

Sofie Clausen, Monitoring and Reporting Analyst, One Planet Network, UNEP presented the SDG 12 Hub (<https://sdg12hub.org/>), which is a one-stop-shop for progress on SDG 12. It is the result of a UN inter-agency collaboration for more coherence across SDG indicators and aims to raise the profile of SDG 12 and encourage its implementation, streamline, and simplify reporting processes for member states, and inform voluntary national reviews and policy interventions. Links to other platforms and initiatives that are of help in the implementation of SDG were also provided. In 2022, a dynamic country report and toolboxes to support member states and UN Country Teams in implementing SDG 12 will be introduced. The presentation concluded with a live demonstration of the SDG 12 Hub.



Session 6: WORKING GROUP

This session focused on having a moderated working group with the objectives of discussing challenges faced by data producers and data users in the respective countries, as well as opportunities to improve the current situation. The moderator guided the discussion with a set of questions that focused on encouraging countries' representatives to share their experience. The main discussion points were then collected and disseminated to representatives through an online whiteboard tool, "Mural", and are presented in Annex III.

Day 3, Thursday 02 December 2021, 10:00 – 13:00 EAT

Session 6 continued: WORKING GROUP

Countries' representatives were presented with a summary of Day 2 discussions and continued to discuss the implementation of a framework for collaboration at the national level, where all stakeholders might be involved, its structure and objectives. The findings of the discussion were also introduced on Mural and are presented in Annex III.

Session 7: WORKING GROUP PRESENTATION

Ralf Heidrich, Associate Programme Manager, Science Division, UNEP summarized the results of the working group. In general, some of the challenges in data collection were discussed such as a lack of funding or technical challenges. The importance of data disaggregation for sound environmental accounting was stressed, but participants also mentioned difficulties in understanding definitions and metadata of some SDG indicators, lack of joint platform for data collection, unavailability of timely and frequent data. Other challenges for data producers were centered around the lack of multisectoral and intra-governmental collaboration by lacking coherence and communication between the data collection agencies. This causes problems, and one participant mentioned that the data parameters might not be the same when working with secondary data. Additionally, especially in India, challenges arise from the sheer size of the country, including challenges with different authorities and national questionnaires which might not be applicable for all regions and the standardization of data. Lastly, participants are facing some bureaucratic challenges or difficulties in high turnover rates of staff. Hence, enhancing interoperability could be a solution to this problem.

One of the main opportunities mentioned is to improve stakeholder collaboration to ensure sound data collection and sharing. Additionally, participants mentioned the opportunities and benefits of technical training and capacity building dedicated to the SDGs and data reporting.

In India, an integrated data sharing system is being developed in a user-friendly format to access designated data from different authorities and institutions. A participant outlined that technology has the potential to enhance collaboration between governmental institutions.

In Nepal, further capacity building for municipalities to enhance data disaggregation at the source is necessary and an opportunity to enhance sound waste management. In addition,



further capacity building to improve the skill sets of staff provides an opportunity for collaboration. Furthermore, data collection is mostly decentralized, and data dissemination is not done by one central platform; data users need to search for respective institutions to access various data, which proves very difficult.

In Bangladesh, an SDG tracker platform to measure progress exists as an initiative for a framework for collaboration, followed up by frequent meetings between relevant institutions.

Finally, legal coordination frameworks were discussed among participants and the benefits that such frameworks provide for enhanced coordination between relevant institutions and for providing integrated and centralized system for data users.

Therese El Gemayel presented three main recommendations and action plans based on the outcomes of the working group discussion. First, she pointed out that we are living in a world of data, where new data requests come in frequently, especially in line with the Agenda 2030 and circular economy. Therefore, there is a need for a new framework for collaboration in some countries, with coordination and collaboration between institutions in member countries being key, which can be especially challenging in decentralized settings. Second, it was highlighted that the transfer of human resources is challenging, but the process of passing on knowledge to future staff is crucial. Third, the technological advancement of attending more meetings online can improve technical skills and capacities, especially during the pandemic.

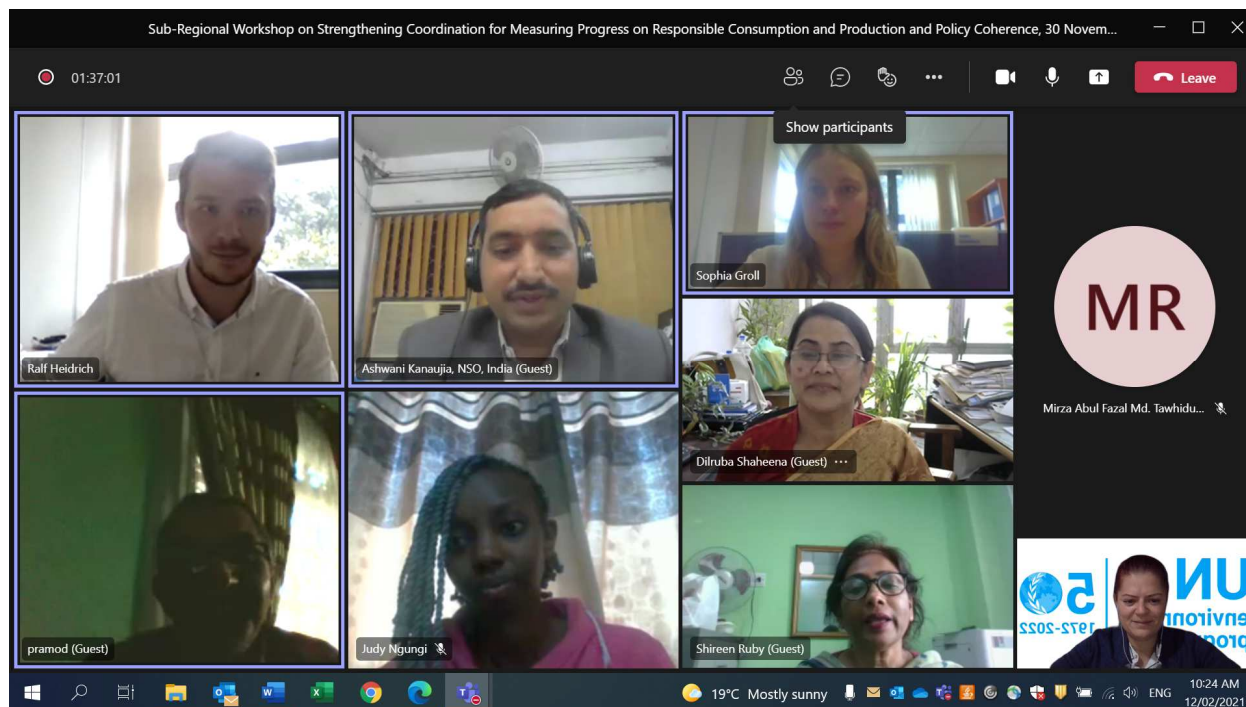
Finally, she pointed out that UNEP is always ready to assist in capacity building. She advised countries that would like to receive capacity building to use official channels to request technical assistance. Capacity building requests concerning the 25 environment-related SDG indicators under UNEP custodianship can be directed to UNEP, using the following email address: unep-science-sdgs@un.org. UNEP will then coordinate with the respective UNEP regional office and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to agree with the country on the best targeted approach to enhance the needed capacities. She also advised about directing requests for other SDG indicators to the respective custodian agencies, which can be found on the following link: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/>

In terms of immediate needs, she pinpointed to the available technical resources that UNEP recently worked or is working on. The Environmental SDG Indicators Online Course, which was launched earlier this year, provides users with 10 modules related to environment statistics. This free, self-paced online training material is accessible on the following link: <https://www.unitar.org/event/full-catalog/environmental-sdg-indicators>

She also advised participants to use the manuals that were developed by UNEP with the purpose of providing detailed information on how to collect data and calculate SDG indicators, specifically the Global Manual on Economy Wide Material Flow Accounting (<https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.11822/36253>), and the Global Chemicals and Waste Indicators Review Document (<https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/36753>).



Therese El Gemayel closed the workshop by thanking the representatives of the different countries and the presenters for their participation and the fruitful discussions. She also encouraged countries' representatives to fill the evaluation of the workshop. A group photo was taken prior to closing of the sub-regional workshop.



Workshop evaluation

A total of six participants filled in the evaluation form of the workshop. 83.3% of participants evaluated the overall value of the workshop as excellent or good, and 83.3% rated the extent to which the workshop objectives were reached as excellent or good. All the respondents viewed the quality of the material shared as excellent or good, while 83.3% of the respondents assessed the quality of the presentations to be excellent or good. 66.7% of the respondents stated that the balance between the discussed topics was excellent or good and 83% stated that the clarity of the conclusions reached was excellent or good.

In terms of workshop organization, 83.3% of respondents assessed excellent or good the overall planning and organization of the workshop, and 83.3% assessed the format of the workshop as excellent or good. All the respondents assessed excellent or good the video conferencing tool used during the 3-day workshop. Additionally, all respondents considered the registration procedure excellent or good, while 83.3% rated the timely distribution of materials as excellent.



Annex I - List of Participants

BANGLADESH

Dilruba Shaheena
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate
Change
shaheena.dilruba@gmail.com
+880-1979137660

Mirza Abul Fazal Md. Tawhidur Rahman
Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission
mirza.rahman@btc.gov.bd;
tawhid019@yahoo.com
+880-1937859843

Md. Mamun-Ur-Rashid Askari
Ministry of Commerce
mamun.askari@btc.gov.bd
+880-1717121698

Muhammad Amir Hossain
Bangladesh Bank
mdamir.hossain@bb.org.bd
+880-1742395045

Shireen Ruby
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate
shireenruby1965@gmail.com
+880-1715009230

INDIA

Ashwani Kanaujia
National Statistical Office
ak.dgfasli@nic.in

Siljo V.K.
National Statistical Office
dir5.ssddiv@mosp.gov.in
+91-8860413898

UNEP

Dany Ghafari
Science Division
dany.ghafari@un.org

IRAN

Mahshid Dowlat
Statistical Center of Iran
dowlat55@yahoo.com
+989123345058

NEPAL

Pramod Raj Regmi
Government of Nepal/Environment Statistics
Section
rpramodraj@hotmail.com

Sushil Kumar Sharma
Central Bureau of Statistics
sushil.cbs@gmail.com
+977-9841320637

SRI LANKA

D. Wickramaarachchi

Indika Amal Shantha Ranaweera
Ministry of Environment
amalsr@gmail.com
+94-718496109

Ishari Salgamuwa
Ministry of Environment
hiranyai@yahoo.com
+94-718097243

Rifa Wadood
Ministry of Environment
rifagee@gmail.com
+94-112034215

Samantha Kodithuwakku
Ministry of Environment
samanthakodi71@gmail.com
+94-718146803

Hyun Sung
Law Division



hyun.sung@un.org

Judy Ngungi
Science Division
Judy.ngungi@unep.org

Ludgarde Coppens
Science Division
ludgarde.coppens@un.org

Ralf Heidrich
Science Division
ralf.heidrich@un.org

Sofie Clausen
One Planet Network
sofie.clausen@un.org

Sophia Groll
Science Division
sophia.groll@un.org

Tess O Neill
Life Cycle Initiative
tess.oneill@un.org

Therese El Gemayel
Science Division
elgemayel@un.org



Annex II - Workshop Agenda

Tuesday 30 November 2021	
SESSION 1	OPENING AND INTRODUCTION
10:00 – 10:20	Welcome and opening addresses - Dr. Ludgarde Coppens, UNEP Project Overview and activities Therese El Gemayel, Project Manager, UNEP
SESSION 2	WASTE SDG INDICATORS: DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY IMPORTANCE
10:20 – 11:15	Sustainable Development Goals Waste Indicators, Methodologies and data availability (Dany Ghafari, UNEP) Waste SDG Indicators – Policy importance (Therese El Gemayel, UNEP) Q&A
11:15 – 11:20	BREAK
SESSION 3	SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY IMPORTANCE
11:20 – 12:30	SCP SDG Indicators, Methodologies and data availability (Dany Ghafari, UNEP) SCP SDG Indicators – Policy importance (Therese El Gemayel, UNEP) Q&A
SESSION 4	SDG POLICY COHERENCE
12:30 – 12:55	Policy coherence in the SDG context (Hyun Sun, UNEP) Q&A
12:55 – 13:00	CLOSING OF DAY 1

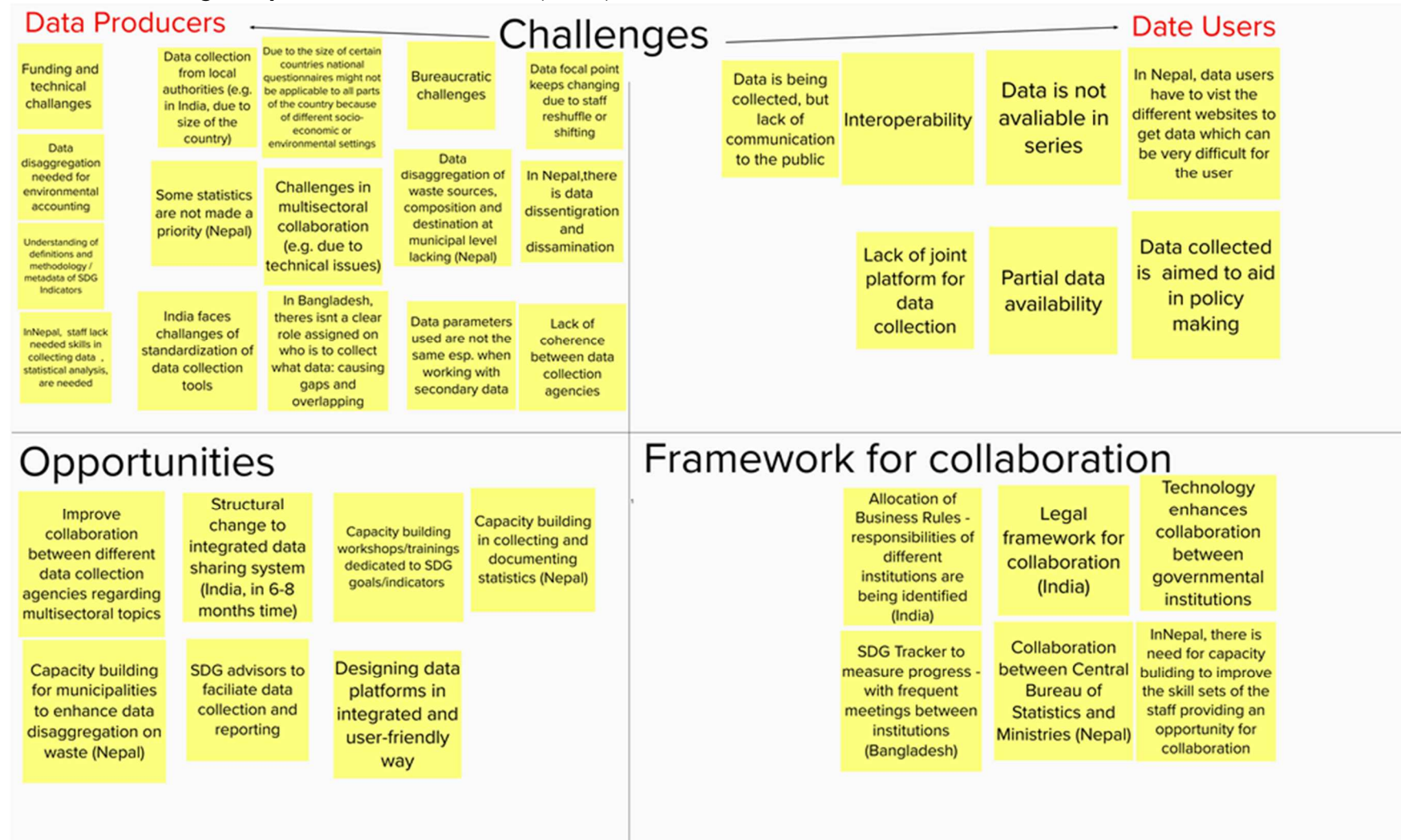
Wednesday 01 December 2021	
SESSION 5	DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS
10:00 – 11:10	SCP-Hat (Therese El Gemayel, UNEP) Q&A SDG 12 Hub (Sofie Clausen, UNEP) Q&A
11:10 – 11:15	BREAK
SESSION 6	WORKING GROUPS
11:10 – 12:55	Moderated working groups
12:55 – 13:00	CLOSING OF DAY 2



Thursday 02 December 2021	
SESSION 6 - <i>continued</i>	WORKING GROUPS
10:00 – 11:10	<i>Moderated working groups</i>
11:10 – 11:15	BREAK
SESSION 7	WORKING GROUPS PRESENTATIONS
11:15 – 12:15	<i>Presentations of each working group</i>
12:15 – 12:45	Main Recommendations and Action Plans
12:45 – 13:00	CLOSING OF WORKSHOP



Annex III - Working Groups Discussion Outcomes (Mural)



Annex IV – Detailed Evaluation Responses

1. Content and conduct of the workshop

Options	Excellent	Good	Fairly good	Unsatisfactory	Not applicable
Quality of material	4	2	0	0	0
Quality of presentations	4	1	1	0	0
Adequate time for discussion and participation	4	2	0	0	0
Balance between topics	3	1	2	0	0
Clarity of conclusions reached	4	1	1	0	0
Extent to which workshop objectives were reached	4	2	0	0	0
Overall value of the workshop	4	1	1	0	0

2. Comments or suggestions on the content and conduct of presentation

- This type of workshop should be organized more often
- Case study for each of the target could be considered

3. Comments or suggestions on the content and conduct of break-out rooms

No suggestions provided

4. Organization of the workshop

Options	Excellent	Good	Fairly good	Unsatisfactory	Not applicable
Timeliness distribution of materials	5	1	0	0	0
Registration procedures	5	1	1	0	0
Duration of each session	4	1	1	0	0
Video conferencing tool	4	2	0	0	0
Format of the workshop	4	1	1	0	0



Overall planning and organization of the workshop	4	1	1	0	0
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5. Comments or suggestions on the organization of the workshop

- More workshops are needed
- Is there any option of arranging similar workshop covering other SDG indicators?
- No specific question
- What type of assistance can you provide in the capacity development of the staffs? Is there any provision of providing financial assistance in the data collection process?
- Many workshops are online, so the participation rate is not satisfactory. It may affect the achievement of workshop objectives, so it should be in hybrid mode.

6. Additional comments

- More participants from the relevant authority who deals with coordination of SDG issues could be invited for the workshop.

