SDG Philanthropy Platform: Helping Philanthropy Engage in the Global Development Agenda

M&E FRAMEWORK REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The SDG Philanthropy Platform is a global initiative formed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Foundation Center, and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) that envisions a proactive role for philanthropy in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since its inception in 2014, the SDG Philanthropy Platform has met its initial goals: (1) The Platform has ensured that a growing number of philanthropy organizations are familiar with the SDGs and have the opportunity to work with the UN and governments on them, and (2) has ensured that the UN system, governments and other sectors understand the important role that philanthropy can play in achieving the SDGs.¹

Although the Platform has expanded its efforts, increased its profile, and achieved a number of successes in 2016, there has been no systematic and comprehensive evaluation of its activities. In October 2016, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors commissioned M&E Specialist, Dr. Deborah Rugg, to develop an M&E framework and indicators for the Platform to monitor and evaluate its progress and effectiveness. From November 2016 to January 2017, consultants Deborah Rugg and Nina Sabarre engaged with stakeholders to understand each partner’s expectations, perceptions, and theories of change for the Platform. The consultants triangulated qualitative interviews, workshop observations, meeting notes, and relevant documents to develop a new “Impact Pathway” for the Platform. The “Impact Pathway” includes inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes to achieve the immediate impact of strong cross-sector partnerships and the ultimate impact of achieving the SDGs. The linkages of the pathway and metrics for each output, outcome, and impact are described in the following sections of this report.

¹ SDG PP BPPS Audit (2016)
### Figure 1: Impact Pathway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>IMMEDIATE IMPACT</th>
<th>ULTIMATE IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDG website, Funding, Government, Foundations, Communication materials, Research resources, Staff</td>
<td>Engage partners through events and outreach</td>
<td>More social finance investing in SDGs</td>
<td>Collaboration around SDGs to reduce duplication, create synergies, and leverage resources among partners</td>
<td>Strong partnerships are fostered among philanthropies, the U.N., governments, civil society, and business to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals</td>
<td>Partnerships result in effective programs that help countries achieve Sustainable Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG website, Funding, Government, Foundations, Advisors, Trainers, Training materials, Data collection resources, Staff</td>
<td>Create diagnostic tools and thematic road maps</td>
<td>More grants aligned to SDGs</td>
<td>Network approaches in and between countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG website, Funding, Government, Foundations, Advisors, Trainers, Training materials, Data collection resources, Staff</td>
<td>Consolidate research</td>
<td>Reduced duplication of SDG efforts across various sectors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG website, Funding, Government, Foundations, Advisors, Trainers, Training materials, Data collection resources, Staff</td>
<td>Engage partners in ongoing policy dialogues</td>
<td>Partners understand SDG landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG website, Funding, Government, Foundations, Advisors, Trainers, Training materials, Data collection resources, Staff</td>
<td>Provide data-driven technical support and training</td>
<td>Partners understand the value added by Platform</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG website, Funding, Government, Foundations, Advisors, Trainers, Training materials, Data collection resources, Staff</td>
<td>Thematic problem-solving workshops and convening</td>
<td>Improved data capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG website, Funding, Government, Foundations, Advisors, Trainers, Training materials, Data collection resources, Staff</td>
<td>Identify bottlenecks and accelerators</td>
<td>Evidence-based policy making using philanthropic data and approaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDG website, Funding, Government, Foundations, Advisors, Trainers, Training materials, Data collection resources, Staff</td>
<td>Prototypes of solutions for SDG programming and processes</td>
<td>Pathways are developed to scale solutions</td>
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</table>
IMPACT PATHWAY

The “impact pathway” (Figure 1) was developed instead of a theory of change due to the high-level size and scope of the Platform. The Platform is an avenue for philanthropic foundations, governments, and civil society organizations to form cross-sector partnerships that yield specific and targeted theories of change for the 17 Sustainable Development goals. Therefore, the Platform itself can be best described by the impact pathway that facilitates theories of change at the country and programmatic level.

LINKAGES TO IMPACT

The Platform Impact Pathway (PIP) is presented in a linear model (Figure 1) illustrating how inputs (e.g., resources, staff, partners, etc.) directly relate to activities. Each activity directly results in particular outputs, with some activities achieving more than one output. Outputs are color coded and categorized in three main outcomes: (1) Collaboration around SDGs to reduce duplication, create synergies, and leverage resources among partners (dark blue), (2) Increased voice of philanthropy and grantees in the national plans for the SDGs implementation (orange), (3) Innovation and scaling methods applied to SDG programs and exchanged between philanthropic and government partners (light blue). These three outcomes result in the immediate impact of strong partnerships fostered among philanthropies, the U.N., governments, civil society, and businesses to achieve the SDGs. The ultimate goal goes beyond partnerships to on the ground impact through effective programming that achieves the SDGs. The PIP (Figure 1) illustrates how each level serves as a prerequisite for the next (left to right); however, it can also be understood from right to left, demonstrating the big picture approach towards development.
OUTCOME 1
The pathway towards outcome 1 involves inputs, activities, and outputs that result in more concerted and synergistic collaboration around SDGs. Inputs include funding, communication materials, research staff and resources, SDG website, and cross-sector stakeholders from the private sector (i.e. foundations and philanthropists) and governments. With these inputs, the Platform can engage partners through events in outreach (Activity 1.1), which results in more social finance capital (Output 1.1) and more grants aligned to the SDGs (Output 1.2). Activity 1.2 is the development of diagnostic tools and thematic roadmaps, which demonstrate network approaches in and between countries (Output 1.3). Activity 1.3 involves consolidating research, resulting in reduced duplication of efforts across sectors (Output 1.4). These four outputs are intended to contribute to the desired outcome of collaboration.

OUTCOME 2
The pathway towards outcome 2 involves inputs, activities, and outputs that result in an increased voice of philanthropy in national plans of SDG implementation. Through inputs such as resources, partners, funding, website, and staff, the Platform can engage partners in ongoing policy dialogues (Activity 2.1) and increase data capacity through trainings and technical support (Activity 2.2). Engaging partners in ongoing dialogue ensures (Activity 2.1) that the SDG landscape is understood by both private and public partners (Output 2.1) and partners recognize the value added by participating in the Platform (Output 2.2). Providing data driven technical support and training (Activity 2.2) leads to improved data capacity (Output 2.3) and evidence-based policy making using philanthropic data (Output 2.4). These four outputs are intended contribute to increased voice of philanthropy in SDG national plans.
OUTCOME 3
The pathway towards outcome 3 involves inputs, activities, and outputs that result in innovation and scaling of methods. Inputs of resources and staffing are used to implement thematic problem solving workshops (Activity 3.1) and identify bottlenecks and accelerators (Activity 3.2). Thematic problem solving workshops will yield prototypes of solutions for SDG programming and processing (Output 3.1), and identifying bottlenecks will lead to pathways to scale solutions (Output 3.2). These two outputs are intended to contribute to the ability to exchange and apply innovation and scaling methods across sectors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More social finance investing in SDGs</td>
<td>Increased % social finance capital</td>
<td>Available available data on social finance</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More grants aligned to SDGs</td>
<td>Increased % in grant funding</td>
<td>Administrative grant data</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network approaches in and between countries</td>
<td>Number of networks and number of organizations</td>
<td>Network mapping</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced unintended duplication of SDG efforts in focus countries</td>
<td>Increased ability to make effective grant-making decisions based on understanding the landscape of existing funding</td>
<td>Website analytics, review of FC database, key informant interviews of grant making officials</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners understand SDG landscape</td>
<td>Increased # of events, opportunities, and publications for policy dialogue</td>
<td>Internal monitoring, content analysis of annual reports, key informant interviews</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners understand the value added by Platform</td>
<td>Increased utilization of resources</td>
<td>Website analytics, internal monitoring and tracking</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved data capacity of partners</td>
<td>Increased perception of platform value</td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Semi-annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based policy making using philanthropic data and approaches</td>
<td>Increased data collection and data sharing</td>
<td>Web analytics; internal review of data capacity</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prototypes of solutions for SDG programming and processes</td>
<td>Increased use of philanthropic data in national plans</td>
<td>Content analysis of national plans</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways are developed to scale solutions</td>
<td>Increased # of problem solving workshops, increased use of Sphaera (or similar platform)</td>
<td>Key informant interviews, web or Sphaera analytics</td>
<td>Semi-annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased # of addressed bottlenecks; evidence of sharing lessons learned</td>
<td>Content analysis of reports, key informant interviews</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUTPUT INDICATORS & DATA COLLECTION

As demonstrated by Figure 2, each outcome is defined by a measurable indicator. Indicators and data collection methods for the ten outputs are described in detail below.

OUTPUTS 1.1 & 1.2:
MORE SOCIAL FINANCE CAPITAL & MORE GRANTS ALIGNED WITH SDGS
The Platform engages philanthropic foundations and governments through outreach (e.g. strategic recruitment and communication) and events (e.g. workshops and thematic conferences). These activities are expected to generate more social finance investment (Output 1.1) and more grants aligned with SDGs (Output 1.2). These two financial outputs are measured with increased percentages in capital through social finance and grants. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors will collect data on social finance by triangulating resources on impact investing annually. The Foundation Center is responsible for tracking grants aligned with SDGs using annual data from SDGFunders.org.

OUTPUT 1.3:
NETWORK APPROACHES IN & BETWEEN COUNTRIES
Diagnostic tools and thematic road maps are used to develop network approaches in countries and between countries. Analysis of these tools and mapping exercises will be used to collect data on the network approaches towards SDG implementation. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, with inputs from UNDP and the Foundation Center, will conduct this analysis on an annual basis.

OUTPUT 1.4:
REDUCED UNINTENDED DUPLICATION
The Platform aims to consolidate research across sectors in order to reduce unintended duplication of SDG efforts in focus countries. To measure the increased ability of stakeholders to make effective grant-making decisions based on the landscape of existing funding, Foundation Center and UNDP will do an annual review of website analytics and conduct key informant interviews with grant making officials.
OUTPUTS 2.1 & 2.2:
PARTNERS UNDERSTAND SDG LANDSCAPE & VALUE ADDED BY PLATFORM
By engaging foundations and governments in ongoing policy dialogues, partners understand the SDG landscape (Output 2.1) and understand the value added by the Platform (Output 2.2). Understanding in the SDG landscape (i.e. actors, knowledge, processes, and policies) is operationalized by an increased number of events, opportunities, and publications for policy dialogue. These will be measured by internal monitoring, content analysis of annual reports, and key informant interviews conducted by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. Partners’ understanding of the value added by the Platform is indicated by increased utilization of resources and increased perceptions of the platform’s value. These data will be collected through monthly website analytics by Foundation Center and internal monitoring by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. Key informant interviews will be conducted twice a year by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

OUTPUT 2.3:
IMPROVED DATA CAPACITY OF PARTNERS
The Platform will provide data-driven technical support and training in order to improve the data capacity of foundations. This will be measured by increased data collection and data sharing, collected through web analytics and internal review of data capacity by Foundation Center.

OUTPUT 2.4:
EVIDENCED-BASED POLICY MAKING USING PHILANTHROPIC DATA
Data-driven technical support will also yield evidence-based policy making using philanthropic data. This outcome will be measured by an increased use of philanthropic data referenced in national plans. UNDP will do an annual review of national plans.
OUTPUT 3.1:  
PROTOTYPES OF SOLUTIONS FOR SDG PROGRAMMING & PROCESSES  
Through the Platform, partners are invited to participate in thematic problem-solving workshops to produce prototyping of solutions. This will be measured by an increased number of problem solving workshops and increased use of technology for sharing solutions (e.g. Sphaera). Data will be collected twice a year through key informant interviews by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and web analytics from Foundation Center.

OUTPUT 3.2:  
PATHWAYS ARE DEVELOPED TO SCALE SOLUTIONS  
The Platform aims to identify bottlenecks and accelerators in order to develop pathways to scale solutions. This is indicated by an increased number of addressed bottlenecks and evidence of sharing lessons learned. Data for this indicator will be collected through a content analysis of reports and key informant interviews by UNDP.
Figure 3: Outcome & Impact Indicator Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>DATA COLLECTION METHOD</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration around SDGs to reduce duplication, create synergies, and leverage resources among partners</td>
<td>Sub-elements of a composite indicator of collaboration: (1) memorandum of understanding, (2) coordinated funding, (3) shared reporting, (4) joint accountability</td>
<td>Website analytics, Content analysis of reports &amp; internal monitoring, Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased voice of philanthropy and grantees in the national plans for the SDGs implementation</td>
<td>Clear and defined philanthropic contributions in national plans and decision-making</td>
<td>Content analysis of national plans / case studies, Key informant interviews</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and scaling methods exchanged between philanthropic and government partners</td>
<td>Increase # of foundation funded projects are scaled by UN and national governments</td>
<td>Key informant interviews with UN officials, regional officers, country coordinators, Content analysis of reports</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACTS</th>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>DATA COLLECTION METHOD</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong partnerships are fostered among philanthropies, the U.N., governments, civil society, and business to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals</td>
<td>Number and quality of strong partnerships with a clear connection to Platform activities</td>
<td>Content analysis of reports, key informant interviews</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships result in effective programs that help countries achieve Sustainable Development Goals</td>
<td>SDGs are impacted more favorably in countries served by SDG Philanthropy Platform compared to countries that are not</td>
<td>National SDG indicator statistics, review of SDG PP activities in countries (evidence of presence and strength)</td>
<td>Every two years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUTCOME INDICATORS & DATA COLLECTION

Figure 3 illustrates the operationalization of outcomes and impacts. Indicators and data collection methods are described in the following section.

OUTCOME 1: COLLABORATION AROUND SDGS
The first outcome of the Platform is collaboration around SDGs to reduce duplication, create synergies, and leverage resources among partners. There are four sub-elements that make up the composite indicator of collaboration: (1) a memorandum of understanding (formal or informal), (2) coordinated funding, (3) shared reporting, (4) joint accountability (formal or informal commitment). Data will be collected on these elements from quarterly web analytics by Foundation Center, annual content analysis of reports, and key informant interviews by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

OUTCOME 2: INCREASED VOICE OF PHILANTHROPY
The second outcome of the Platform is increased voice of philanthropy and grantees in the national plans for SDGs implementation. Increased voice is operationalized by clear and defined philanthropic contributions in national plans and decision-making. Data for this outcome will be collected from a content analysis of national plans, case studies of countries, and key informant interviews by UNDP and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

OUTCOME 3: INNOVATION AND SCALING
The third outcome of the Platform is innovation and scaling applied to SDG programs and exchanged across sectors. This indicated by an increase number of foundation funded projects scaled by UN and national governments. Data will be collected via key informant interviews with UN officials, regional offers, and country coordinators by UNDP. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors will also conduct an annual content analysis of reports.
IMPACT INDICATORS & DATA COLLECTION

Indicators and data collection methods for immediate and ultimate impacts are described in the following section.

IMMEDIATE IMPACT

The immediate impact of the Platform is to foster strong partnerships among philanthropies, governments, the UN, businesses, and civil society in efforts to achieve the SDGs. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, UNDP, and Foundation Center will systematically measure the quantity and quality of partnerships with a clear connection to Platform activities. Not all SDG achievements through cross-sector collaboration will be attributed to the Platform’s inputs, outputs, and outcomes. An annual analysis of reports and key informant interviews will determine the linkage between SDG partnerships and partners’ engagement and participation in the Philanthropy Platform.

ULTIMATE IMPACT

The ultimate impact of the SDG Philanthropy Platform is the support effective programs that directly contribute to achieving the SDGs in countries where the Platform is active. Analysis of national SDG indicator statistics and a systematic review of Platform activities in countries will be conducted for evidence of presence and strength of Platform. The indicator of ultimate impact will be measured by evidence that SDGs are impacted more favorably in countries served by the Platform compared to countries that are not. Analysis of SDG progress will be conducted every two years.
LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

1: Developmental Evaluation Approach

A developmental evaluation approach was employed to construct the M&E framework presented here. Developmental evaluation assists stakeholders and implementers develop social change initiatives in complex or uncertain environments. This formative process allows the evaluation plan to adapt as needed for the purpose of learning and improvement of the Platform. Standards for developmental evaluation include: methodological flexibility, systems thinking, adaptive design, and critical thinking.

M&E Consultants engaged stakeholders to define the program theory and describe elements of the logic model (i.e. “Impact Pathway”) through meetings and interviews with Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, UNDP, country coordinators, Hilton Foundation, and Foundation Center. Throughout the process, it was evident that stakeholders had diverse opinions of the purpose of the M&E Framework. While some felt the framework should be used as a marketing and communication tool, others felt it should be used for internal accountability and management. We recommend stakeholders revisit the purpose of the M&E Framework and take a developmental approach towards evaluation design and implementation. It may be useful to develop multiple evaluation designs (e.g. metrics at the country and program level, in addition to the Platform level presented here) and the implementation of the metrics developed in this project.

2: Integrate Communications Strategy Work in Impact Pathway

We recommend integrating the communications strategy in the next version of the Impact Pathway. Communication activities include strong brand alignment for consistent messaging and appearance, develop content for specific audiences, launch SDG campaigns leveraging existing momentum, and undertake data-driven iteration to understand how users interact with the SDG Philanthropy Website. The communication strategy should be added as a fourth level to the impact pathway, contributing to the immediate and ultimate pacts.
3: Conduct Pilot Test
In the indicators section of this report, we recommend data collection methods and responsibilities of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, UNDP, Foundation Center. Due to the time and budget constraint of this project, the consultants were unable to conduct a pilot test of the proposed metrics in this phase of the project. We recommend a Phase II of this M&E project that includes a pilot test to determine the feasibility, validity, utility, and reliability of evaluation metrics. We also recommend exploring the addition of metrics that may already be in use in monitoring the internal progress in implementing the goals and objectives of the platform and in learning operational lessons to help refine the platform strategies in future.

4: Data-Driven Capacity Building
The SDG Philanthropy Platform Impact Pathway, M&E Framework, and the associated metrics developed during this consultancy could easily serve as instructional tools in any follow-up M&E capacity building efforts. The largest obstacle to monitoring and evaluating of the SDG Philanthropy Platform is the low data capacity of foundations and philanthropies. We recommend providing technical support and trainings to help Platform partners understand the value of rigorous data collection. Capacity building workshops will equip partners with the competencies, skillsets, and tools to collect and share comparable and useful data across sectors.

5: Technology for Data Collection
The evaluation plan depends on content analysis of many reports and resources. We suggest SDG PP invests in a knowledge sharing platform, such as Sphaera, to store and organize these resources thematically. If possible, we also recommend adding specific metrics to SDGFunders.org to measure output indicators.
6: Implement Evaluation

This report concludes Phase I of the SDG PP Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. A developmental M&E Framework was designed to establish the impact pathway and metrics for outputs, outcomes, and impacts. We recommend Phase II of this project includes a pilot test and feasibility assessment of proposed data collection methods and M&E capacity building efforts with key stakeholders at global/headquarters and country levels. Based on the pilot test and feedback from potential trainings or workshops, a more detailed two-year evaluation plan should be developed and implemented in Phase III. A proposal for these phases can be prepared and submitted upon request.