

Introduction to the Approaches to Sustainability Series

Capacity 21 has piloted the implementation of Agenda 21 principles in more than 75 developing countries and countries in transition, and is strategically placed to draw on an extensive knowledge base to share good practices and experiences with the global development community.

Through Capacity 21 support, many countries have adopted innovative capacity-building approaches to meet the challenges of environmental degradation, social inequity and economic decline. As you will read, each experience in building and strengthening capacities is unique and aims to meet national priorities. There is no blueprint for sustainable development.

The Approaches to Sustainability series is Capacity 21's main tool for the analysis and dissemination of the innovative approaches and lessons emerging from Capacity 21 programmes (and selected other experiences from around the world).

The objectives of the Approaches to Sustainability series are:

- To foster the exchange of knowledge and experience of capacity building for sustainable development among programme countries, national stakeholders and their development partners; and
- To facilitate analysis and advocacy of experiences and approaches in capacity building for sustainable development to inform global, regional, national and local-level decision- and policy-making.

Approaches to Sustainability publications are available in four forms:

Country studies explore the challenges, opportunities and obstacles faced by specific countries as they define and implement their unique visions of sustainable development. Each publication investigates, step by step, a single country's most effective sustainable development planning, implementation, monitoring and learning processes.

Regional studies provide a synopsis of the experiences, approaches, methodologies and lessons piloted by each Capacity 21 programme in each region. Building on this analysis, and on processes of national and local consultation, analysis and review, the regional studies articulate a continental vision for the future implementation of Agenda 21.

Thematic studies analyse specific themes or challenges facing countries as they move towards sustainable development. Drawing on the approaches, experiences and lessons of a range of countries, these studies reveal how different countries deal with common issues and concerns. **Regional thematic studies** analyse themes or challenges relating to specific regions.

Country-driven, country-owned production process

Approaches to Sustainability publications promote a country-driven, country-owned approach to production of both country and thematic studies, advocating the full participation of local actors to ensure ownership, credibility and relevance. As such, the series serves as a capacity-strengthening exercise in its own right. Specifically, the process of consultation, review and analysis behind the production of each Approaches to Sustainability publication helps to strengthen forward-looking, participatory management of regional and national programmes; develops skills and competencies for strategic analysis and synthesis of the experiences and approaches emerging from programmes; and strengthens capacity to communicate key issues to decision-makers to influence policy choices.

The series provides a useful outreach, advocacy and learning tool for the numerous civil society, public and private sector partners involved in the production of each publication.

We hope that you will find the series interesting and useful and, as always, we welcome your feedback.

For further information about the Approaches to Sustainability series, please visit www.undp.org/capacity21