# Advancing Sustainable Development in Practice

*How to adopt an integrated approach to action on environment, climate, and poverty reduction.*

*e-learning course*

*SYLLABUS*

# Introduction

Almost 685 million people are living in extreme poverty across the world assessed against the US$1.90 poverty line (World Bank, 2022). Around 70% of the world's poor draw upon natural resources for most of their livelihoods (UNEP, 2018 / Green Economy Coalition, 2012). Yet, these natural resources continue to rapidly degrade around the globe. The 2030 Agenda reflects the major poverty-environment challenges facing the world's population: depleted natural capital, climate vulnerability, rural-urban migration, and growing resource demands — all of which disproportionately harm the livelihoods and well-being of the poor, and notably women and marginalized groups. Considering the inextricable nature of these problems, an integrated approach is needed to find plausible solutions.

An integrated approach to strengthen the sustainable management of natural resources and at the same time address poverty was the key focus of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development (PEA). The collaboration dedicated itself to bringing poverty, environment, and climate objectives into the heart of national and subnational plans, policies, budgets, and public and private finance in over 10 developing countries – following over 20 countries in the predecessor project, Poverty Environment Initiative.

The PEA and UNITAR have now joined forces to develop and deliver a set of two free, self-paced e-learning courses *"Sustainable development in practice"*.

1. ***Introduction to Sustainable Development in Practice:*** Why we need an integrated approach to action on  Environment, Climate and Poverty Reduction
2. ***Advancing Sustainable Development in Practice:*** How to Integrate Environment, Climate and Poverty Reduction?

The courses are based on years of experience, lessons, case studies, and practical guidance distilled by the PEI/PEA project and synthesized in the [PEA Handbook](#). The courses form part of UNITAR's growing portfolio of trainings that promote an inclusive green economy and a holistic approach to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

# Overall Goal and Learning Objectives

This is an *Advanced Course* that builds upon the learnings from the *Introductory Course* titled ***Introduction to Sustainable Development in Practice: Why we need an integrated approach to action on environment, climate and poverty reduction*** The *Introductory Course* raises awareness for adopting and implementing an integrated approach to tackling poverty and environment issues and achieving the sustainable development goals. It also explains the rationale, drivers, challenges, and opportunities in integrating environment, climate, and poverty issues.

Building upon the foundations of the *Introductory Course*, the *Advanced Course* looks at how to  take an integrated approach to policy analysis, integrated planning, designing interventions, financing, communications, and monitoring and evaluation of poverty and environment issues at national and sub-national levels.  After completing the advanced course, learners will be able to:

- Examine and promote evidence-based approaches to poverty and environment issues
- Set up effective sustainable development dialogue process with key stakeholders
- Develop strategies for embedding poverty and environment issues into policy processes and plans
- Demonstrate the integration of poverty and environment issues into public and private finance, including fiscal policy
- Design an effective communication strategy supporting poverty and environment issues integration
- Formulate approaches for effective monitoring & evaluation of poverty and environment actions

- Discuss institutional change approaches to enabling integrated sustainable development

Ultimately, by strengthening capacities for applying an integrated approach to sustainable development, the advanced course aims to accelerate the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

# Target Audience

The integration of poverty and environment issues in the policy process requires the engagement and intervention of multiple stakeholders. The target audience for the advanced course includes:

- Policy, planning, and technical staff at the national, regional, and local levels
- Development practitioners
- Change agents from civil society, academia, the private sector, as well as youth
- Citizens interested in sustainable development in practice

The course is especially geared towards learners from developing countries, particularly in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, which house the largest populations of the global poor, are most vulnerable to impacts of climate change, and are simultaneously facing unprecedented degradation of their natural capital in current paths to development.

# Course Scope and Structure

The focus of the advanced course is to build upon the learnings from the introductory course and provide learners with a conceptual understanding of how to operationalize integrated activities on interlinked poverty and environment issues, with pathways based on practical examples and case studies, notably from the PEA project. The Advanced course follows a policy cycle approach, and looks at key interventions which can be made at each stage of the cycle to adopt an integrated approach to interlinked poverty and environment issues.

The course consists of 7 core modules:

## Module 1: Analysing Poverty and Environment Issues

Module 1 deals with the first stage of the policy cycle i.e., analysis, and speaks to the various pathways, methods, and approaches for identifying and analysing the interlinkages between poverty and environment issues, so as to facilitate the adoption of an integrated approach to sustainable development.

After completing Module 1, learners will be able to:

- Explain the importance of a holistic – integrated, inclusive, and iterative – approach to analysing poverty and environment issues
- Outline approaches to poverty and environment analysis and their main characteristics
- Determine suitable analytical frameworks, tools and methods for analysis
- Discuss approaches to analysing relevant stakeholders and change processes, as well as the context as a whole

## Module 2: Engagement and Dialogue

Module 2 looks at the processes of engagement and dialogue, as an important step in shaping an integrated approach to interlinked environment and poverty issues that works for stakeholders.After completing Module 2, learners will be able to:

- Discuss how dialogues support poverty and environment outcomes
- Outline the main elements of an effective dialogue process

- Analyze the different forms of stakeholder participation in dialogues
- Design and manage an effective dialogue process for integration of poverty and environment issues

## Module 3: Mainstreaming an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development in the Planning Process

Module 3 deals with the important issue of mainstreaming and integrating poverty and environment Objectives into the planning processes – encompassing national plans, sub-national plans, sectoral plans, and thematic plans. The module looks at existing plans and planning processes, the involvement of stakeholders in these processes and practical steps for incorporating the integrated approach into these planning processes. Practical examples from different countries are presented.

After completing Module 3, learners will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of mainstreaming poverty and environment issues into the planning processes
- Give examples of different types of integrated plans found in a developing country
- Identify key challenges in adopting an integrated approach in planning processes
- Formulate practical steps for mainstreaming integrated sustainable development into planning processes

## Module 4: Financing an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development

Module 4 delves into the issue of financing an integrated approach, by looking at integrating poverty and environment objectives into national budgets as well as public expenditure and private investment. It provides environment and development professionals with a common understanding to work with finance professionals in furthering an integrated approach to sustainable development.

After completing Module 4, learners will be able to:

- Discuss the role of public and private finance for enabling sustainable development
- Examine ways to build poverty and environment outcomes into public budgets, expenditures, and investments
- Discuss opportunities and risks for integration into fiscal policy
- Identify pathways and tools for leveraging public and private finance for poverty and environment outcomes

## Module 5: Communications on Poverty, Climate, and Environment

Module 5 looks into the important issue of *communication* and how poverty and environment issues can be framed to effectively reach different stakeholders. The module builds learners' understanding on how to design an effective, audience-led communication strategy featuring compelling narratives, messages, activities, and channels.

After completing Module 5, learners will be able to:

- Discuss the role of communication at various stages of the policy process
- Recognize the diverse goals and elements of an effective communication strategy
- Design an effective communication strategy that facilitates the adoption of an integrated approach to sustainable development
- Identify communication tools suitable for different audiences and different objectives

## Module 6: Monitoring and Evaluation of an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development

Module 6 provides guidance on how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can track the integration of poverty and environment issues across the policy cycle—including in analysis, dialogues, policy formulation and planning, resource mobilization and allocation, and related activities. The module also discusses approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of poverty and environment interventions for achieving the broader agenda of sustainable development.

After completing Module 6, learners will be able to:

- Discuss the characteristics of effective monitoring and evaluation for advancing poverty and environment outcomes
- Design indicators and monitoring frameworks for tracking both policy processes and outcomes
- Discuss challenges and opportunities related to effective evaluation of outcomes and impacts
- Outline approaches for improving existing monitoring and evaluation systems

## Module 7: Building Integrated Transformative Institutions

Module 7 offers an introduction to the kinds of robust and integrated institutions that are needed to integrate poverty and environment issues across the policy cycle. The focus here is on four kinds of catalytic institution that can help to evolve new, more effective institutional 'ecosystems'.

After completing Module 7, learners will be able to:

- Discuss institutional change in the context of sustainable development
- Identify key characteristics of transformative institutions
- Demonstrate approaches and best practices for selecting, mobilizing and building transformative institutions

# Course Methodology

The course is self-paced and takes approximately 8 hours to complete.

The course is interactive, engaging, and relatable. Each of the Modules has a similar flow and feature a combination of the following elements:

- ➢ Interactive videos
- ➢ Interactive lessons
- ➢ Reflection points
- ➢ Discussion boards

- ➢ Polls
- ➢ Knowledge checks
- ➢ Formal quizzes

# The course in a nutshell

| MODALITY | SELF-PACED |
|---|---|
| TARGET AUDIENCE AND OUTREACH | TECHNICAL AND POLICY PLANNING STAFF FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS, CHANGE AGENTS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, YOUTH |
| ACCESS, FEE | FREE OF CHARGE, SELF-ENROLMENT |
| SEAT-TIME | 420-480 MIN, 45-60 MIN PER LEARNING BLOCK |
| COGNITIVE LEVEL | UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION, ADVANCED SKILLS BUILT |

| SUBJECT | POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS AND INTEGRATED APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT |
|---|---|
| LAUNCH DATE | 01.10.2023 |
| LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY | ADVANCED |
| LEVEL OF INTERACTIVITY | HIGH (VIDEOS, SCENARIOS, QUIZZES, POLLS, DISCUSSION BOARDS, EXERCISES) |
| LANGUAGE | ENGLISH |
| PLATFORM | UN CC: E-LEARN |
| ASSESSMENT | + COMPLETION OF VIDEOS, INTERACTIVE LESSONS, AND ACTIVITIES<br>+ 1 FINAL QUIZ (70% MIN)<br>+ PRE AND POST-INTENT-TO-USE SURVEY |
| CERTIFICATION | CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION |

# Completion and Certification

Each module of the course features a short quiz. The *wrap up* module features a final quiz and an interactive problem-solving scenario. A certificate of completion is awarded to learners who complete:

- All videos, interactive lessons, and activities
- Final quiz with a 70% or higher score

The certificate will be available upon completion of the course. Once conditions are met [explain], the certificate will become available to download automatically.

# Course evaluation

At the start of the course, a short survey measures learners' motivation and "intent-to-use" course knowledge. At the end of the course, learners can complete the course evaluation survey which measures their satisfaction with the course and intent to use the knowledge and skills acquired. The "intent to use" at the beginning and the end of the course can be compared to assess changes in motivation and abilities.

Ideally, an impact survey 1 year after the course completion can be carried out

to evaluate the impact of the course.

# Technical requirements

The course is available solely in an online format. UNITAR recommends the following as minimum hardware and software to take this e-learning course:

- Platform: any modern version of Windows (7/8/10) or Mac OSX (10.9 Mavericks (2013) onwards)
- Browser: any modern version of browsers such as Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Internet Explorer. Java, cookies, and pop-ups must be enabled