

Regional Baseline MDG Report for 4 EU Accession countries: the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary and Slovenia

This brief lays out the concept for a baseline MDGR for the 4 accession countries, which do not have country offices.

Proposal & Terms of Reference for National Consultants

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, the states of the United Nations reaffirmed their commitment to working toward a world in which sustaining development and eliminating poverty would have the highest priority. The Millennium Development Goals grew out of the agreements and resolutions of world conferences organized by the United Nations in the past decade. The goals have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress.

The goals focus the efforts of the world community on achieving significant, measurable improvements in people's lives. They establish yardsticks for measuring results, not just for developing countries, but for rich countries that help to fund development programs and for the multilateral institutions that help countries implement them. The first seven goals are mutually reinforcing and are directed at reducing poverty in all its forms. The last goal—global partnerships for development—is about the means to achieve the first seven. Many of the poorest countries will need additional assistance and must look to the rich countries to provide it.

MDG monitoring will take place globally through an annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, and at the country level through the preparation of national MDG reports (MDGRs).

The MDGR is a tool for awareness raising, advocacy, alliance building and renewal of political commitments at the country level, as well as a platform to build national capacity for monitoring and reporting on goals and targets. In countries that have them, UN country teams (led by UNDP) will support governments in monitoring progress and preparing national MDGRs. These reports are not intended as in-depth analytical reviews of policy reform, institutional change and resource allocations. MDGRs are rather based on national ownership of the process and product for monitoring progress towards the MDGs, where countries adapt their targets and indicators in light of national realities for the endorsement of national stakeholders. Data for the MDGR should reflect information contained in other national planning reports, prepared by government, UN agencies, and other partners.¹

¹ Taken from www.developmentgoals.org/About_the_goals.htm

Each report covers the eight Millennium Development Goals, with 18 targets and 48 different indicators. The goals, to be met by 2015 (unless otherwise noted) and using data from 1990 as a baseline, include:

1. **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:** Reduce by half the number of people living on less than one dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger.
2. **Achieve universal primary education:** Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.
3. **Promote gender equality and empower women:** Eliminate gender disparities at primary and secondary education levels by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4. **Reduce child mortality:** For children under five years old, reduce mortality levels by two thirds.
5. **Improve maternal health:** Reduce by three quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.
6. **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases:** Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. **Ensure environmental sustainability:** This includes reducing by half the number of people without access to safe drinking water, achieving significant improvement in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, and integrating sustainable development principles into national policies.
8. **Develop a global partnership:** This includes addressing the needs of the least developed countries, dealing with debt problems, developing employment for youth, improving access to drugs and pharmaceuticals, ensuring the spread of technology to all people, and focusing the international finance and trade system on development and poverty reduction.

While at first glance, the MDGs may not appear to be relevant to the EU accession countries, a closer look reveals their direct relevance. The Millennium Development Goals look incorporates a human development perspective providing a more nuanced understanding of poverty and the preconditions for long term, equitable growth.

There are two areas where the MDGs are particularly relevant:

1. *The eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1) and*
2. *The development of a global partnership (MDG 8).*

The eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1)

Currently many of the indicators used to measure poverty in these countries fail to capture the reality of the situation faced by significant portions of the population. This is due to 3 reasons:

1. the prevalence of income based approaches to poverty measurement. Most of the current approaches including those introduced under the EU accession process are mostly income based;
2. A reliance on aggregate measurements
3. The use of primarily relative measurements of poverty which may fail to capture the depth of poverty

The MDGs can be useful in addressing these gaps.

The United Nations, and the UNDP understand poverty more broadly than merely low income. Human poverty means that ‘opportunities and choices most basic to human development are denied.’² This includes the ability to ‘lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self respect and the respect of others.’³ Defined in this broader sense, work remains to be done in the accession countries on poverty reduction, since for large portions of the population unemployment figures remain high, social benefits have been reduced, and access to services such as health care remain uneven. This is particularly apparent when aggregate indicators are broken down into various demographic categories such as age, gender, or ethnicity. Territorial disaggregated indicators reveal even more differences within the country. This is particularly true for regional and rural-urban disparities. While the development levels of the major cities – Prague, Budapest – are on par with Western European capitals, they exist alongside significant rural unemployment and human poverty. Finally, the MDGs are an attempt to introduce a system of global benchmarks for poverty measurement.

The Development of Global Partnerships (MDG 8)⁴

EU accession represents for these countries not only the acceptance of a new partnership with the other member states and with the Union as a whole, but the adoption of a new role in the global arena. The graduation from being recipients of global aid to net contributors of international assistance represents a shift in national mind set and the development of new capacities and priorities.

As part of this new role, the new member states must now honor the commitments that they have made to international conventions and work towards creating a global partnership for development. The MDGs recognize the interdependence of development in a world of globalization. Unless there is a commitment on the part of the more advanced countries to a global development partnership, the countries at the lower end of the development spectrum will not be able to meet their goals. Such a partnership also translates into responsibilities at the regional and national levels.

The reports will focus on both of these themes as the framework for their analysis to the degree that it is useful. In particular, attention should be paid to the interlinkages and correlations between the various disaggregated MDGs in order to have a textured, relevant understanding of poverty in the region allowing for tailored and effective policy making.

Links between the EU accession agenda and the MDGR

The challenges of acceding to the EU, and of making the MDG process relevant to the EU accession countries, are daunting. The report will meet both challenges by focusing

² UNDP Global Human Development Report 1997, p. 15

³ Ibid.

⁴ This section will draw upon the results of the Emerging Donor publication (forthcoming, UNDP RC)

on social exclusion within the EU accession framework. The report will therefore be complementary to the Joint Inclusion Memoranda to the extent possible.⁵

This complementarity will be made explicit in two ways. First, in terms of process, there the national teams engaged in writing the MDGR must be closely linked right from the start to those ministries and government officials involved in the JIMs. Secondly, where possible, Social Inclusion Indicators will be used to report on the MDG targets and goals. It should be noted that as the monitoring frameworks that are to be used by the EU are currently under debate, the report will focus on complimenting and supplementing rather than aligning with the EU monitoring frameworks.

There is at present no explicit directive in either the EU or UNDP on how EC/EU reporting requirements should be connected to the MDGs and *vice versa*. While work is being done on this at the corporate level, no consensus has yet emerged. The authors of the report will treat the MDGs as goals to be attained and the JIMs as a tool for monitoring this progress. UNDP stresses the need to tailor the MDG reporting process and targets to local circumstance and priorities. There is no greater priority for these countries, at this time, than to join to the EU. At the same time, it is imperative to concentrate on the complementarities of the two processes.

Future Relevance of Work

The implications of this report are two-fold. First, the link between EU reporting requirements and the MDGs is an issue that will return with subsequent waves of anticipated accession. There is the need to open a dialogue on what MDGs mean for these countries and to anticipated accession countries.

Second, very little work has been done on what the MDGs mean for developed countries. MDG 8 remains a vague category. More work will need to be done on the role and obligations of more developed countries to help the less developed countries reach their goals. Such assistance should not be seen as primarily altruistic: in an age of globalization, continued growth and economic success of the richer countries is intimately tied to the development progress of poorer countries. While international actors are increasingly aware of these interdependencies, the imperative of taking concrete actions beyond the assignation of aid budgets is only beginning to be made operational. As such, the theme ‘Developing a global partnership for development – the role of emerging donors’ will play a prominent role in this report. As well as their ‘emerging donor’ role this could include the implications of the countries’ emergent roles as EU members, and in their national obligations to international norms and conventions.

Proposed outline:

⁵ As part of the EU, the new member states have responsibilities to ensure that they are meeting the EU’s social inclusion requirements. These include the monitoring of a series of social inclusion indicators that must be reported on the Joint Inclusion Memoranda (JIM). This Memorandum, which has to be prepared by each country prior to accession, will describe how aspects of social exclusion will be rectified in national policy. The existing institutional structures in place within the EU provide are focused primarily on Social Inclusion⁵ and Economic and Social Cohesion.⁵

The proposed format of the report is to have 4 country reports – one per country – each with the same regional section.

A proposed outline would be:

- I. Introduction**
- II. Executive Summary**
- III. Part A - Regional Overview and Comparison**

This section would look at the regional trends. Through a visual representation, it would look at the geographic distribution of poverty at the sub-national level including representation of unemployment, access to social benefits, transfers, and health trends in the four countries. If possible, a professional cartographer will be brought in to aid with the visual representation of the data. Background analysis will compare the current accession process to the previous enlargement waves. The regional analysis would also be the section where a discussion of MDG8 would be best placed.

- IV. Part B – Country Reports**
 - a. Czech Republic/Hungary/Slovakia/Slovenia**
 - 1. Background
 - 2. MDG Data Analysis
 - 3. Links of MDGs 2-6 to 1 and to each other (face of poverty)
 - 4. Best practices/lessons learnt
- V. Conclusion and Country Policy Recommendations**
- VI. Annex 1: (Capacity for monitoring and reporting MDG progress)**
- VII. Annex 2: List of MDG Goals, Targets and Indicators**

Indicators:

Annex 1 contains a list of the indicators as agreed at the first focal points meeting, July 29th, 2003. After submission of the complete matrices on data availability, a core set of comparable indicators will be selected that will be used across the regional report.

Process:

Overall coordination will be done from UNDP's Regional Center in Bratislava in conjunction with an external regional coordinator. UNDP Regional Center has final say over the substantive content of the report. All correspondence concerning the substantive or advocacy aspects of the report must be copied to both the Regional Coordinator and UNDP Regional Center.

Each country report will be done by a national coordinator working in close contact and repeated consultation with the regional external coordinator and the overall coordinator in

Bratislava. Each national coordinator will be responsible for the development of a national team consisting of (at a minimum), representatives from relevant ministries, governmental bodies, international organizations or NGOs. Ideally, they should include a representative from the body involved in the JIM and from the statistical office.

Data:

All data will be collected by the national coordinators according to the agreed specifications and submitted to the regional coordinator and Bratislava. Data collection specifications and a template will be provided by the UNDP and the Regional Coordinator no later than August 15th.

Responsibilities of the National Coordinator:

In preparation for the July 2003 meeting:

- Review existing EU approaches on socioeconomic indicator measurement and monitoring at the country level;
- Review the obligations of member states regarding these measurements and monitoring at the country level;
- Review existing data at the national level and establish comparability at the regional level according to the specifications of the Regional Coordinator and UNDP;

At the July 2003 meeting:

- Work with the UNDP project coordinator, the regional coordinator and other national coordinators to finalize the list of indicators and methodology;
- Work with the Regional Coordinator and UNDP to establish the specifications for data collection. No primary data collection shall be undertaken unless explicitly agreed with the UNDP project coordinator;
- Suggest possible national partners who will write the national components of the report.

July – December 2003

By August 5, 2003:

- Submit filled matrix on data availability to Regional Coordinator and UNDP Bratislava.

By August 15th, 2003

- Submit draft work plan for report preparation;

By August 21st, 2003

- Finalize work plan

By September 30th, 2003

- o Collect and submit data to Regional Coordinator and UNDP Bratislava according to specifications established by the Regional Coordinator and UNDP Bratislava (data collection specifications and template from UNDP and the Regional Coordinator will be provided no later than August 15th, 2003);
- o Create national teams composed of (as a minimum) a focal point and 2-3 other people representing ministries responsible for the JIM, NGOs, the Statistical Office;
- o Establish a peer review group for the report in consultation with UNDP and the Regional Coordinator;
- o Together with UNDP, prepare an in country advocacy strategy for the Millennium Development Goals to be submitted to UNDP in final form by September 30th. Guidelines for the advocacy strategy will be provided by UNDP no later than August 15th. In September, UNDP will coordinate meetings between the relevant government counterparts and the national coordinators.

By October 30th, 2003

- o Prepare the first draft of the country reports to be submitted for English Language translation and editing – final version to be returned from editor by November 15th;

November 15th, 2003 – January 15th, 2004

- o Work with the Regional Coordinator and UNDP on the preparation of the first draft of the regional chapeau.
- o Work with the Regional Coordinator and UNDP on the finalization of the national reports including the following activities:
 - o Hold a national workshop in conjunction with the UNDP project coordinator based on the preliminary findings of the report to solicit feedback on the report (no later than December 15th);
 - o Circulate the draft report for peer review within the country;
 - o Submit consolidated comments from the workshop and peer review to UNDP and the Regional Coordinator (no later than December 15th);
 - o Revise the National Reports according to the comments from the Peer Review;
- o Carry out any other related advocacy activities as per the advocacy work plan.

January 15th, 2004

- o All reports submitted for Copy and English Language editing

Until April 30th, 2004

- o Organization of in-country launching events, in conjunction with UNDP;
- o Carry out advocacy activities as detailed in the Advocacy Strategies.

Resources:

- MDG Toolkit (attached)
- Previous MDG Reports
<http://www.undp.sk/index.cfm?module=RSC&page=MDG&Area=SearchResults&RecordTypes=document&TypeID=41>
- Readings on the JIMs, social inclusion, poverty in CEE, Roma Report.
- Reports from the *International Conference on "Modernisation of social protection systems in Candidate Countries"*
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2003/jan/conf_en.html
- Executive Board Paper 111/3: WHO contribution to the achievement of the MDGs. http://www.who.int/gb/EB_WHA/PDF/EB111/eeb1113.pdf