



**SDG**  
**Investment** fair

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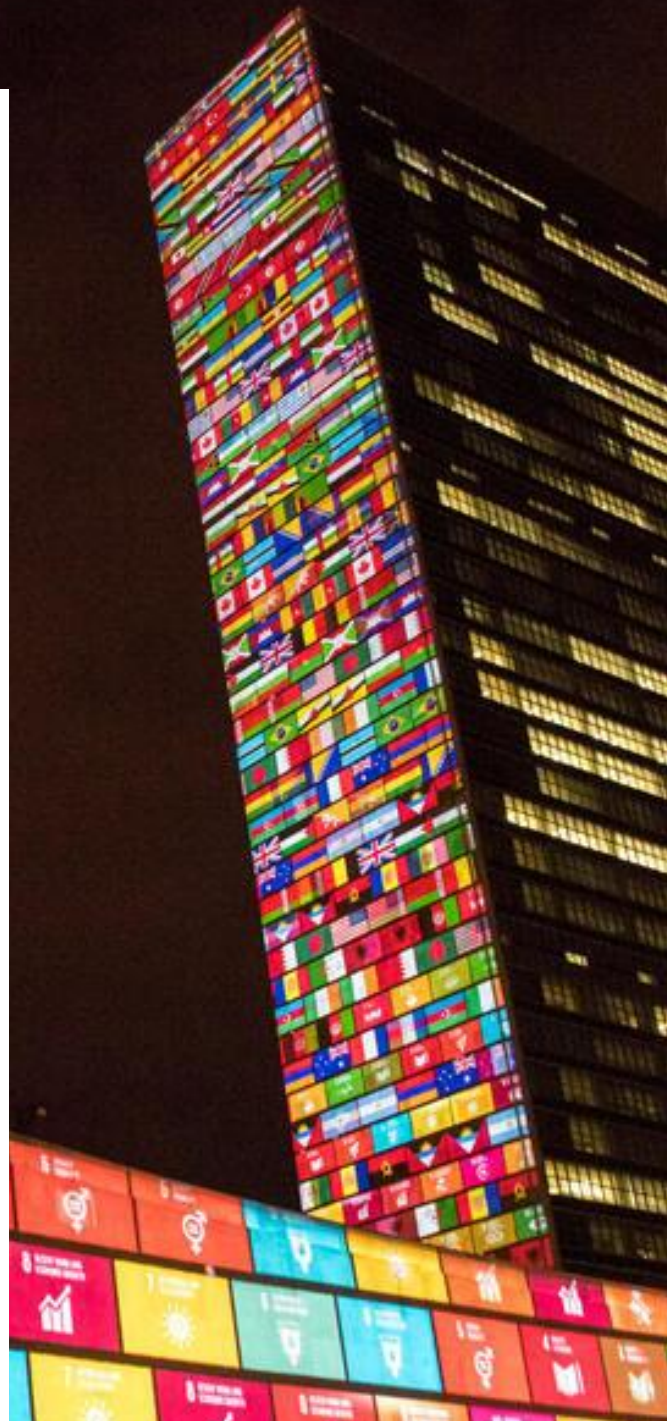
# Participation Guidelines for for SOURCE host countries 2025

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**United  
Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs



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## I. INTRODUCING THE SDG INVESTMENT FAIR

The UN Sustainable Development Goals Investment Fair (“SDG Investment Fair” or “Fair”) is a platform that connects governments and investors with sustainable development projects in emerging and frontier markets. Participating countries use the Fair to present impactful and bankable projects to investors looking for SDG-aligned projects.

The Fair has the following objectives:

### **Partnerships and networking**

- Participants include investors and bankers, government officials, civil society, and UN representatives who connect to identify roadblocks and actions needed to scale up private investment for the SDGs.
- Countries benefit from showcasing concrete investment-ready projects and presenting themselves as potential SDG investment destinations to a group of investors and development partners.
- Investors gain early access to information about high-impact projects, including public-private partnerships.

### **Peer learning**

- In spotlighting successful transactions, the Fair facilitates the sharing of innovative approaches, business models, and instruments that enabled fruitful partnerships to advance the 2030 Agenda.
- Countries deepen their understanding of financing methods and risk mitigation strategies to advance more bankable SDG project pipelines.

### **Capacity Building on SDG investment project preparation and financing**

- Customized training and workshops improve participating countries' project quality and financing readiness. Training focuses on investment essentials and financing structures like blended finance, thematic SDG bonds issuance, and risk mitigation.
- Enhances the country representatives' skills of project development and raises the importance of creating SDG project pipelines.

UN-DESA serves as the Secretariat for the Fair. It collaborates with UN Resident Coordinator Offices to effectively prepare countries through the process.

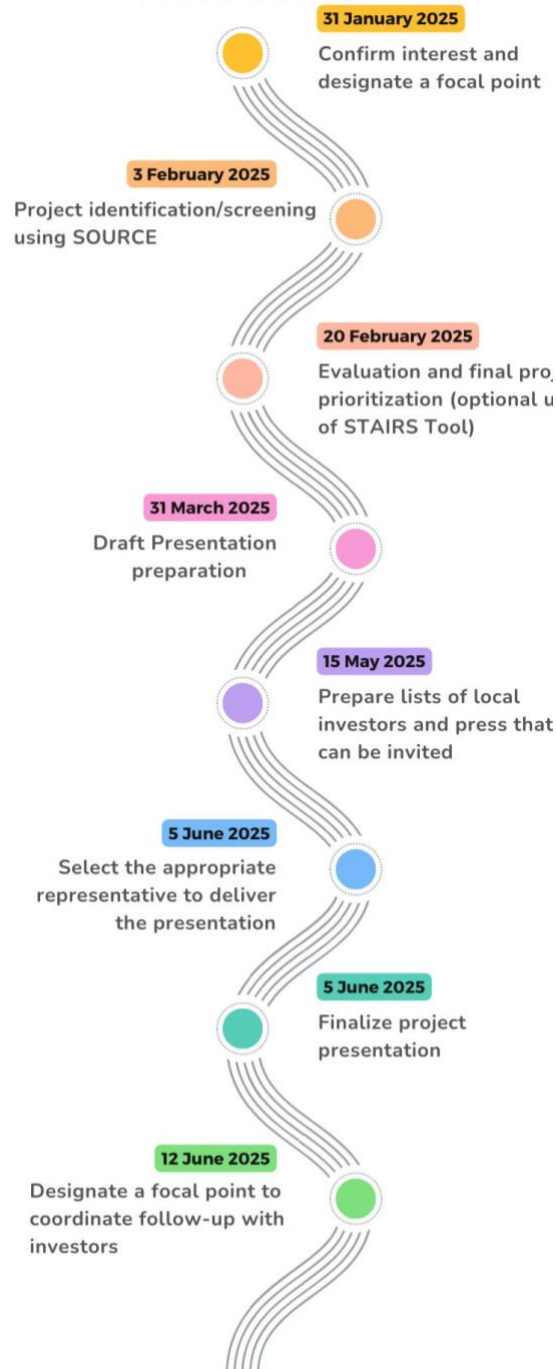
DESA is also making a special effort to collaborate with countries who are users of SOURCE - a sophisticated project management software housed on UN servers that supports countries in mounting sustainable infrastructure projects<sup>1</sup>. Through this effort, DESA and the Sustainable Infrastructure Foundation will partner to identify advanced, investment-ready projects that can be shared with investors and participating development finance institutions at the Fair. Countries using the SOURCE platform for participation in the SDG Investment Fair benefit from a well-structured process to present investment-ready projects. By leveraging the SOURCE pipeline, countries streamline project identification and preparation. A designated Focal Point (FP)

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<sup>1</sup> SOURCE serves as a cornerstone in this collaborative effort, offering a sophisticated, standardized, and comprehensive framework for project development. It integrates international best practices and adapts to individual country processes, significantly enhancing the capacities of countries to mount high-quality projects including PPPs suitable for private investment that can be presented at the Fair.

coordinates with the Fair Secretariat and stakeholders to select projects that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and possess commercial viability. SOURCE’s comprehensive framework helps evaluate project details, including financial structures and expected impacts. Focal Points use the platform’s tools, along with DESA-provided diagnostics, for a thorough project evaluation. After the Fair, DESA assists in facilitating connections between countries and potential investors, offering opportunities for continued engagement and collaboration.

## II. ROADMAP FOR PARTICIPATION FOR COUNTRIES USING SOURCE



A country's typical journey in the process of participation in the Fair has four distinct phases: (i) Initial Preparation (i.e. pre-organization well in advance of the Fair; (ii) Screening and Evaluation prior to participation (i.e. diagnostics and coaching to qualify specific projects); (iii) Active Presentation in the Fair, including as a presenter of specific opportunities or case studies; and (iv) Post-Fair follow-up.

The next section elaborates on the specific steps undertaken in each of these phases, with an indicative timeline for their completion.

### **PHASE 1: General Preparation**

SOURCE host countries can express interest in presenting projects at the Fair to the Secretariat. A country focal point (FP) should be designated to coordinate with the Fair Secretariat, local UN Resident Coordinator's Office, and country's Permanent Mission to the UN.

The FP will convene relevant stakeholders to identify a long list of potential projects for initial consideration that are already in the SOURCE pipeline, focusing on those that advance one or more SDGs and possess commercial viability. The Secretariat will participate in a meeting with country stakeholders to outline all steps, including key milestones and timelines.

### **PHASE 2: Diagnostics and Evaluation**

In this phase, initial projects under consideration will be further evaluated and prioritized to qualify their readiness for sharing with investors. With the aid of SOURCE, detailed project information, including funding needs and financial structures, expected impacts, and the status and outcome of preparatory studies will be collated through the FP for submission to the Fair Secretariat. SOURCE host countries' focal points will use the platform's tools and other DESA provided diagnostics for thorough evaluation. This process includes assessing each project's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, financial viability, and environmental sustainability. The FP will refine the projects based on analysis, enhancing aspects like project details, sustainability measures, and attractiveness to investors.

### **PHASE 3: Presentation**

During the Fair, countries with mature and investment-ready projects using SOURCE for their development may actively engage in sessions showcasing their high-quality projects. Each country will have a dedicated setting for its presentation, where selected representatives, including senior government officials and technical experts, will deliver a concise 15–20-minute presentation to an audience of potential investors. The presentation may be virtual or in-person with hybrid options for dialing in.

The Fair may also include high-level side events and capacity building workshops centered on specific themes as well as introducing the countries presenting projects with more information about the investment landscape, or case studies of past successful projects.

Immediately before the event, marketing and communication activities should be undertaken by the UN and the project champions to promote the country's participation. The FP will support compiling a target list of investors, other actors in the ecosystem, and press contacts. UN-DESA reserves the right to distribute and publicize any materials (including videos and presentation slides) presented during the Fair.

#### **PHASE 4: Post Fair Follow-up**

After the Fair, there tends to be interest from investors and other attendees in connecting with project sponsors and learning more about the investment opportunity. DESA can provide countries with a list of private sector actors that registered to attend the event. As per our privacy policy, DESA cannot disclose individual contact details but if there is a particular interest in connecting with a specific organization, DESA may facilitate an introduction. The contact details of panelists and experts that contributed to the country presentation participants who raised a query can be shared upon request. If there are any unanswered questions from investors or other experts during the presentation or if any questions come up after the presentation, an adequate and complete response can be provided within 3 – 5 working days.

If a request comes to DESA, the Fair Secretariat can connect the two interested parties and support the initial meeting between them. Thereafter, a focal point of contact should be identified to coordinate with the investors, explore opportunities for collaboration, and follow through with requests for additional information.

Additionally, the FP (or an alternative designated monitoring FP) will be requested to share updates on the project's development both informally and through a more formal annual survey. DESA will also seek updated data on the project's funding, successful completion, and SDG-related outcomes to facilitate contact and pairing with appropriate investors.

In addition to sharing feedback with the Secretariat, a country can also express interest in returning to the Fair in the future including through the co-hosting of a targeted investor outreach event with DESA.

### III. WHAT TO INCLUDE IN THE PRESENTATION

The presentation should have the following elements:

- Executive Summary
- Overview of the Country:
  - Including Macroeconomic Highlights, Country background, and Project Relevance
- Business Climate:
  - Information about the relevant market, rationale and targets
  - Relevant investment incentive regimes
- Overview of Projects:
  - Business Model Description
  - Business Case
  - Timeline for Investment
  - Financing structure
  - Partners
- Investment Details:
  - Expected rate of return, Key financial projections, breakdown of the budget and total investment funding required
- Timeline:
  - Status of Preliminary Feasibility Studies
  - Current Stage
  - Expected time for project completion
- SDG Alignment:
  - Impact on the SDGs including data on KPIs
- Summary of concrete requests for investors including monetary value, financing model and timeline for the investments being sought

A detailed template that countries are encouraged to use can be accessed [here](#).

### IV. SAMPLE PRESENTATIONS



#### **Colombia: *Solar Project and Indigenous Community Development plan***

Colombia presented the Terra Initiative, a project showcasing a partnership between a private corporation and an indigenous community to construct a 162MWp grid-connected photovoltaic plant and 3 sustainable villages for a thousand indigenous community members. With a projected investment need of US\$135.4 million and rate of return over 15%, the project also demonstrated a positive direct impact on six SDGs, including a forecasted decrease in carbon dioxide emissions by 3.8 million tons over 35 years.

Full presentation can be accessed [here](#).



### **Suriname: *Green Wood Processing Fund & Industrial Park***

Through a two-pronged project, Suriname presented plans to boost domestic wood processing, develop eco-tourism opportunities, increase exports, and create an industry park for sustainable operations. The projected capital expenditure for the combined project was about US\$70 million and the internal rate of return for individual SMEs under the fund ranged between 7% and 138% across several business cases. The financing structure for this initiative is based on preferred debt capital.

Full presentation can be accessed [here](#).



### **Ethiopia: *SDG-aligned Investment project***

Ethiopia presented its framework for scaling SDG Investment through the Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH), a new body that was created to aggregate Ethiopia's funds, state-owned enterprises, and assets, as well as to serve as the government's strategic investment arm. EIH presented three projects in its pipeline ranging in ticket size from US\$7 million to over US\$31 million in the agriculture, water, and manufacturing sectors. The projects demonstrated contributions toward advancing five SDGs and key priorities under its Nationally Determined Contribution for climate action.

Full presentation can be accessed [here](#).



### **Namibia: *Green Hydrogen and Derivatives Strategy***

Namibia's presentation pivoted around its investment plan and key project components to develop a green fuels industry for export that can capitalize on shared infrastructure in the Southern African region. Namibia sought investment in hydrogen production in three valleys across the country as well as related port and logistic infrastructure for trading. The country aims to generate green hydrogen production volumes of 10-15 million tons per annum by 2050. Namibia projects that the project would contribute US\$4.1 billion to their GDP by 2030 and generate an additional US\$6.1 billion by 2040.

Full presentation can be accessed [here](#).



## V. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q: What is the criteria for presenting projects?**

A: Projects showcased at the Fair must significantly contribute to one or more SDGs. They should have a defined impact narrative and no potential for material social or environmental harm. Additionally, projects must demonstrate commercial viability and a high level of investment readiness.

### **Q: Is there a minimum project ticket size?**

A: Experience has shown limited investor appetite in smaller-sized projects. Ideally, individual project ticket sizes should be USD 30 million or more. Participating countries, particularly LDC, LLDCs, and SIDS, are encouraged to present portfolio instruments or programmatic approaches capable of aggregating smaller investments. While not excluded in all cases, individual projects with small ticket sizes are highly discouraged.

### **Q: Who attends the Fair?**

A: The Fair is a public event promoted to a broad audience. Typically, representatives from both large and small private investors, intermediaries, multilateral development banks, public development banks, UN system and civil society are present. An indicative [list](#) is provided low:

|                                     |  |                              |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Alecta                              | Johannesburg Stock Exchange                            | Swedfund                     |
| Allianz Group                       | J.P. Morgan  | Standard Chartered           |
| APG                                 | Infralinks Capital Partners                            | State Street Global Advisors |
| Bank of America                     | International Finance Corporation                      | S & P Global                 |
| Bancolombia                         | International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) | UBS                          |
| BlackRock                           | Mastercard   | UN Capital Development Fund  |
| CalPERS                             | M&G Investments  | UN Development Programme     |
| Citi                                | Nuveen   | UN Joint SDG Fund            |
| Development Bank of Southern Africa | PIMCO  | Visa                         |
| DWS                                 | Rand Merchant Bank                                     | Wells Fargo                  |
| ENEL                                | SEB Investment   | World Bank                   |
| GIIN                                |  |                              |

**Q: What is the role of the UN Country Team (CT) and/or UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)?**

A: UNCTs and RCOs facilitate the effective participation of country delegates in the Fair by supporting the coordination and preparation of teams at all stages. An RCO staff or other designate from the UN Country Team (e.g., sector or relevant UN Joint Programme lead) can serve as a primary FP, convening and interfacing between designated officials and DESA throughout the process. They also play a role in identifying project sponsors ready to present, assisting officials with the SDG impact analysis of projects, and coordinating the preparation, delivery, and follow-up of presentations at the Fair.

**Q: How will DESA support the countries?**

A: The Secretariat located in DESA provides support to countries to participate effectively in the Fair which includes: (i) providing resources and tools to help qualify and screen bankable investment opportunities; (ii) assessing the readiness of project sponsors to pitch to investors; (iii) providing technical inputs and independent review of SDG impact analysis and other aspects of viability, and (iv) widely promoting country participation particularly among investors and development finance institutions.

**Q: Who can deliver the presentation at the Fair?**

A: The total number of speakers per country presentation is restricted to three. Presentations can be delivered by senior-level government officials, state-owned company representatives, private investors with government endorsement, or local financial intermediaries. Most commonly, projects are presented by national investment agencies or boards, ministries of finance/economy, investment, or infrastructure, or diplomatic officials or trade officers based in the USA.

## **VI. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- SDG Investment Fair [website](#)
- SOURCE – [The Multilateral Platform for Sustainable Infrastructure](#)
- SDG Investment Fair: [Introductory Presentation](#)
- Self-Assessment Tool for Appraising the Investment Readiness of Sustainable Infrastructure (STAIRS) Tool: [Introductory Presentation](#)
- The 4th International [Conference](#) on Financing for Development
- 2024 UN Financing for Sustainable Development [Report](#)
- SDG Global [Database](#): Indicators on all SDGs and by country
- UNDP [SDG Investor Platform](#)
- Force For Good [Report](#) 2024
- Global Impact Investors Network: Sizing the Impact Investment Market 2024 [Report](#)
- Global [Database](#) of Development Finance Institutions and Public Development Banks
- Convergence: [Primer](#) on blended finance projects
- UNDP SDG [Impact Standards](#) for Bonds, Private Equity, and Enterprises
- Duke University: Impact Measurement and Management for the SDGs [Course](#)
- UNDOCO and Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. [Unlocking SDG Financing: Findings from Early Adopters.](#)