



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

2020 High Level Political Forum exhibitions

1. Name of the approach/ tool/project

SDG Interlinkages Analysis & Visualisation Tool

(The online tool is available for free at <https://sdginterlinkages.iges.jp/visualisationtool.html>)

2. Description of the approach/tool/project description (methodology, techniques and strategies used)

The SDGs, including 17 goals, 169 targets and 231 indicators, forms an indivisible system. Achieving one goal or target will impact on achieving others, either positively or negatively, through their intrinsic relationships. Understanding the important interlinkages among the goals and between the targets can help achieve the SDGs in a holistic way which avoids the trade-offs and maintains policy coherence.

The SDG Interlinkages Tool, developed by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in 2017 and updated in 2019 (V3.0), aims to provide a practical tool to support integrated policy-making through an interlinkage perspective. It was built on an established methodology based on four components to identify, quantify, visualise and analyse the interlinkages between the SDG targets.

- Identification of the interlinkages is based on multi-stakeholder consultations, expert opinions and literature review.
- Quantification is based on the Global SDG indicators and other proxy indicators and their time-series data by using relevant statistical methods.
- For visualisation, we developed a free online tool, covering 27 countries in Asia and Africa, to enable the visualisation of the synergies and trade-offs between relevant SDG targets.
- Using the network analysis technique, the structure and the characteristics of the SDG interlinkages network can be analysed.

Originally the tool was developed for the visualisation and analysis of the SDG interlinkages at the national level. Now it has been extended to address sub-national SDGs planning and implementation, as well as the cross-border issues in achieving the SDGs at the river-basin level.



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3. Implementation methodologies

The SDG Interlinkages Tool has been used in various ways and through multiple channels to support SDG integrated policy-making. There are five major approaches for its applications.

- i) The Tool, through its free online platform, has been widely accessed by the users from 167 countries as well as from the UN and other international organisations, national and local governments, universities, NGOs, the business sectors and the media since its launch in 2017.
- ii) Supported by IGES own initiatives and funding, the Tool has been applied to support integrated SDG planning and implementation at the national, sub-national and sectoral levels through the collaborations with relevant national and local governments in a couple of countries in Asia including Bangladesh, Indonesia and Viet Nam. For example, IGES provided a two-day capacity training workshop in Indonesia (Oct. 2018) on the application of the Tool to the audience from the BAPPENAS (the national planning commission), other governmental organisations, local governments and universities which connected to the development of an interlinkage chapter for Indonesia's national SDGs roadmap.
- iii) Through the collaborations with UN and other international organisations, the Tool has been used to support priority setting in national development planning and SDG integration. For example, through the collaboration with UNDESA (2019), the Tool was used to conduct detailed country studies in Lao PDR, Ethiopia and Tanzania to support DESA's capacity building activities on the integrated approach for priority setting through SDG interlinkages.
- iv) Supported by relevant scientific grants or other types of funding, the Tool has been used in the implementation of a couple of projects addressing various issues in achieving sustainable development in developing countries. For example, supported by the funding from the UK's Natural Environment Research Council, the National Natural Science Foundation of China and the Japan Science and Technology Agency under the Belmont Forum, IGES, in collaborations with the University of Glasgow (UK), Nankai University (China) and Loughborough University, has been developing an extended SDG interlinkages analysis tool at the river basin level to support integrated



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water resource management by addressing the upstream-downstream implications of achieving relevant SDGs at the river basin level using China's Luanhe River Basin as a case study.

- v) Through the websites or documents of relevant UN organisations, including the UNESCAP's SDG Help Desk, the Toolboxes (<http://sdghelpdesk.unescap.org/>), and the UNDESA's 2020 edition of the handbook for the preparation of voluntary national reviews (VNRs) related to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, the SDG Interlinkages Tool has been outreached to wider users.

4. How does this approach/tool/project directly relate to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development embracing broadly 17 SDGs sets out a wide range of economic, social and environmental objectives with the promise of achieving a well-balanced and inclusive development for all. The 17 goals and their targets are interacting with each other by nature. The importance of understanding the SDG interlinkages and making use of the knowledge to support national policy-making by integrating the three dimensions has been highly recognised by many national governments and reflected in their VNRs.

Aiming to inform on the SDG interactions, the SDG Interlinkages Tool supports practical policy-making to ensure achieving one goal or target without jeopardising achieving others through effective planning and institutional arrangement.

For example, consulted by the Government of Bangladesh, the SDG Interlinkages Tool was used to support the country's integrated priority setting and institutional arrangement. Based on the network analysis of the SDG interlinkages in Bangladesh, a list of key SDG targets were identified. Furthermore, through the synergies and trade-offs analysis of the identified key SDG targets, relevant recommendations on effective institutional arrangement were provided. The IGES list was used to complement the Government's existing exercise on priority setting from an interlinkage perspective.

5. Evidence of results and impact

The Tool was applied to support practical policy-making at the national, sub-national and sectoral levels and in various thematic areas in a couple countries in Asia and Africa. If being



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approved, the results and related impacts through the application of the SDG Interlinkages Tool will be presented at the HLPF Exhibition section.

- i) At the national level, the Tool was applied to inform relevant national governments on priority setting in national development planning and SDG integration in Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Ethiopia and Tanzania. For each of the countries, a list of key SDG targets were identified based on the network analysis of the SDG interlinkages in the specific country. Furthermore, through the synergies and trade-offs analysis of the identified key targets, relevant recommendations on effective institutional arrangement were provided. The IGES list can be used to complement the Government's existing exercise on priority setting from an interlinkage perspective.
- ii) At the sub-national levels, IGES has been collaborated with relevant academic institutions in China, Korea and Indonesia on the study of relevant SDG indicators at the city and provincial levels and collection of relevant data. Particularly, by collaborating with the Center for Sustainable Development Goals Studies at the Universitas Padjadjaran in Indonesia, IGES is now working on the application of the SDG Interlinkages Tool for conducting a case study in West Java aiming for supporting SDG planning at the provincial level.
- iii) At the sectoral level, in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Viet Nam, under the SWITCH Asia project, IGES applied the SDG Interlinkages Tool together with other technical assistance to support the development of the 2030 National Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production in Viet Nam (NAP-SCP). By using the Tool, the proposed major areas of the NAP-SCP and associated targets were assessed in terms of potential synergistic areas and conflicting areas from an interlinkage perspective in the context of the SDGs. The NAP-SCP will be launched soon.
- iv) At the river-basin level for addressing the cross-border issues related to the development in the upstream and downstream regions, the Tool was extended to assess the synergies and trade-offs related to the policy implementation in one region and the implications in other regions. China's Luanhe River Basin was used for the case study (2019-2020). Through extensive consultations with relevant stakeholders in the upper, middle and the downstream areas of the Luanhe River Basin and the water resource management bodies at various levels, major development issues and policy implications related to the upstream-downstream relationships were identified (such as fishing cages in the reservoirs in the middle stream and implications for safe drinking water in the downstream, etc.). Based on the consultation results and the literature review, a prototype of the SDG interlinkages model for the Luanhe River Basin was



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established. The results will be communicated with relevant water resource management bodies in the Luanhe River Basin.

- v) For thematic areas, the Tool was applied to inform relevant policy makers in Ghana, Malawi and South Africa on the interlinkages of sustainable infrastructure development (Goal 9) and sustainable cities (Goal 11). The urban-rural linkages, water and sanitation and sustainable transport were selected as the focused topics in Ghana, Malawi and South African, respectively. For each of the topics, a solutions scanning approach was used to identify the key issues and major solutions through a systematic literature review and extensive multi-stakeholder consultations. By using the SDG Interlinkages Tool, the synergies and trade-offs of the proposed major solutions were assessed and relevant policy recommendations for achieving Goals 9 and 11 in the three countries were proposed through an interlinkage perspective.

6. Costs associated with the development of the approach/ tool/project and/or its implementation

The development of the SDG Interlinkages Tool was funded by IGES' Strategic Research Fund (2015-2019). The latest Version 3.0 of the Web Tool covering 27 countries can be accessed for free at <https://sdginterlinkages.iges.jp/visualisationtool.html>. The users can select a country, the SDG goals and relevant targets. The selected targets and their interlinkages with other targets, in terms of both the directions and the strength, can be visualised immediately on the screen. Furthermore, the users can edit the links based on their specific needs. IGES also provides relevant technical support to the national governments in developing countries on the application of the Tool at the national and sub-national levels.

7. Contacts and links to the approach/ tool/project

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Links to the SDG Interlinkages Tool: <https://sdginterlinkages.iges.jp/visualisationtool.html>



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