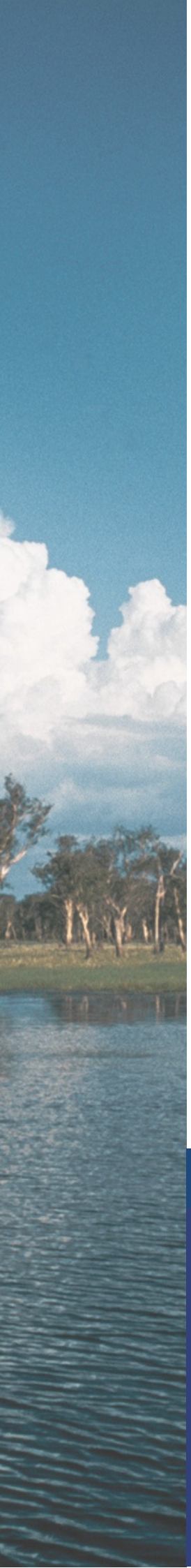

ACCELERATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WATER-RELATED SDGS IN COSTA RICA

Under increasing urgency to respond to water-related sustainable development, national governments need to accelerate progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 to assure “sustainable management of water and sanitation for all". Since 2017, a consortium of partners (UNU-INWEH, UNOSD, the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, and the Korea Environment Corporation(1)) has implemented the project “Water in the World We Want” to investigate how countries can address critical evidence gaps and deliver better policies to achieve SDG 6. The consortium collaborated with the experts and policymakers from the project partner countries to develop SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS), the key output of this project, to help create evidence for the enabling environment of SDG 6 in countries with limited or missing data.

Implementing SDG-PSS in Costa Rica

In the project’s first phase (2017–2018), a national workshop in Costa Rica (22–23 May 2017, San José) received priority and high-level political support from the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN) and the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE). Representatives from lead ministries, universities, UN organizations based in Costa Rica, NGOs, donor agencies and public institutions involved in SDG 6 gathered to discuss the needs and challenges of the country.

In the second phase (2019–2020), Costa Rica acted as the regional-hub in Latin America and the Caribbean region. The regional workshop (4–5 March 2020, San José) received participants from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago, and UN, international and regional organizations. This regional workshop provided a perspective on global mechanisms for monitoring SDG 6 and regional issues on water and sanitation, with a focus on Costa Rica’s progress on SDG 6 and the implementation and use of the SDG-PSS in the country in the first phase.

MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTING SDG-PSS IN COSTA RICA

The SDG-PSS , was jointly adopted and developed by water experts and policymakers from partnering institutions, including the MIDEPLAN, MINAE, the Instituto Costarricense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AyA), all based in Costa Rica, to help gather evidence on the enabling environment for SDG 6 at the national level in countries with limited or missing data.

While Costa Rica was still in the early stages of SDG implementation, an Inter-Institutional Technical Committee for Water Statistics (CTIE-Agua) was set up to help establish national priorities and collect data for SDG 6 Targets and Indicators. Following up on the national workshop and other consultations held at the local level, CTIE-Agua helped develop and revise the first version of the SDG-PSS. AyA and MINAE held regular meetings during the first phase, using information from national and international databases to pilot the tool.

[1] UNU-INWEH: United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health; UNOSD: the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

The use of SDG-PSS in Costa Rica helped strengthen the inter-institutional coordination mechanisms by enabling the translation of technical information into evidence for SDG 6 and engaging local stakeholders. During the implementation, water experts identified several challenges, such as the lack of clarity in the definitions of national indicators and targets and national institutions with overlapping responsibilities for SDG 6.

Strengthening institutional leadership and building technical capacity were major elements in the successful implementation of SDG-PSS in Costa Rica. According to national partners, identifying national focal points to champion the implementation of the tool and its integration into national reporting mechanisms for SDG 6 was a critical first step. Identifying the sectors most likely to benefit from using the tool was another important step in engaging national partners.

The potential use of SDG-PSS in Costa Rica has demonstrated that the country will need to reduce the servicing gap between rural and urban areas. Rural areas still lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation to a much larger degree than urban areas. As such, the tool has been used by local administrations and municipalities to compare progress across regions with different levels of progress towards achieving SDG 6 goals.

CONTACT

Zeineb Bouhlel, UNU-IWEH (zeineb.bouhlel@unu.edu; e)
Chaela Shin, UNOSD (chae.shin@un.org; UNOSD@un.org)
Zaida Ulate Gutierrez, AyA (zulate@aya.go.cr)

https://sdgpss.net/