

ACCELERATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WATER-RELATED SDGS

Under increasing urgency to respond to water-related sustainable development, the national governments need to accelerate progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 to assure a *sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*. Too often, however, governments are faced with competing priorities, limited budgets, and inadequate skilled human capacity. In such cases, systematic evidence provides a strong foundation for countries to build action plans for the achievement of SDG 6. However, deciding on which evidence is needed to support SDG 6 can be difficult, especially when there may be missing or even conflicting evidence.



Figure 1. Interface of SDG-PSS showing its main features.

Since 2017, a consortium of partners has implemented the project *Accelerating the Implementation of Water-related SDGs* to investigate how countries can address critical evidence gaps and deliver better policies to achieve SDG 6. The United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD/DSDG/UNDESA), the Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea (MOE), the Korea Environment Corporation (K-eco) and national governments of Costa Rica, Pakistan, and Tunisia partnered in a collaborative approach of experts and policymakers to address these challenges. In 2021, the UNESCO International Centre for Water Security & Sustainable Management (i-WSSM) also joined the project to support its activities.

BRIDGING THE EVIDENCE GAP WITH THE SDG-PSS

The **SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS)** is developed to help create evidence on the enabling environment of SDG 6 at the national level in countries with limited or missing data. This tool aims to help countries produce evidence on SDG 6 systematically. It is made up of six policy components – Capacity Assessment, Finance Assessment, Policy and Institutional Assessment, Gender Mainstreaming, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience, and Integrity Assessment – to capture critical dimensions of the enabling environment of SDG 6 (Figure 1). Access to the online SDG-PSS in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Korean is free for all potential users of the tool. The SDG-PSS can be accessed online in the link: <https://sdgpss.net/>

KEY FEATURES OF THE SDG-PSS

When using this tool, countries may choose different approaches according to their available human capacity and resources. The approach adopted by countries needs to be discussed and decided between national partners interested in using the tool. However, it is anticipated that experts from different organizations will have to gather the required data. To facilitate working with the tool, each policy critical component of the SDG-PSS is organized around two main features: Questionnaire and Reporting.

The SDG-PSS uses questionnaires to make data entry easier and systematic. Some questions may be easily answered, while others may take some time and discussions with experts from specific areas. It is possible to use the SDG-PSS without having all the data available – a specific question can be left blank when the answer is unknown, or no data is available. The reporting page consists of a series of graphics developed with the data entered for each policy critical component. These graphics can be used in official reporting mechanisms to inform international donors, national authorities, and decision-making processes.

CREATING AN EVIDENCE FRAMEWORK

SDG-PSS provides countries with a collaborative platform where experts from different sectors and organizations work together to create an authoritative evidence framework on the enabling environment of SDG 6. As experts enter the data for each component of the SDG-PSS, the Summary View presents all the evidence generated for each SDG 6 target, indicator, and each policy critical component of the tool (Figure 2).

This evidence framework allows users to identify strengths and weaknesses, and data gaps across the policy critical components, and can be used for multi-sectoral collaborative planning to develop and implement water-related policies across key dimensions of the enabling environment of SDG 6. Ultimately, the SDG-PSS aims to support evidence-based decision making for timely achievement of SDG 6 even with limited or missing data. Experts can establish priorities and action plans based on the pieces of evidence already available in the Summary View.

Indicator		Capacity		
		Overall current capacity	Strengthening mechanisms	Overall Progress
6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services	No evidence	Adequate	Adequate
6.2.1	Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water	Inadequate	Adequate	In progress
6.3.1	Proportion of wastewater safely treated	In progress	No evidence	Adequate

Figure 2. The Summary View shows the evidence framework produced by the SDG-PSS, where experts can identify where progress is adequate (green), in development (blue), inadequate (red) or evidence is missing (black) for all SDG 6 indicators and policy critical components.

PROJECT TIMELINE

In the **first phase (2017–2018)**, project partners organized national workshops to discuss their needs and challenges in the early stages of SDG 6 implementation. National water experts and policymakers from trial countries (Costa Rica, Ghana, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, and Tunisia) participated in the conception of the SDG-PSS and its policy critical components.

The **second phase (2019–2020)** led to the launch of the online and free tool. Regional workshops in Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean were organized to engage with more than 30 countries in the use of the tool for the assessment of national enabling environment of SDG 6.

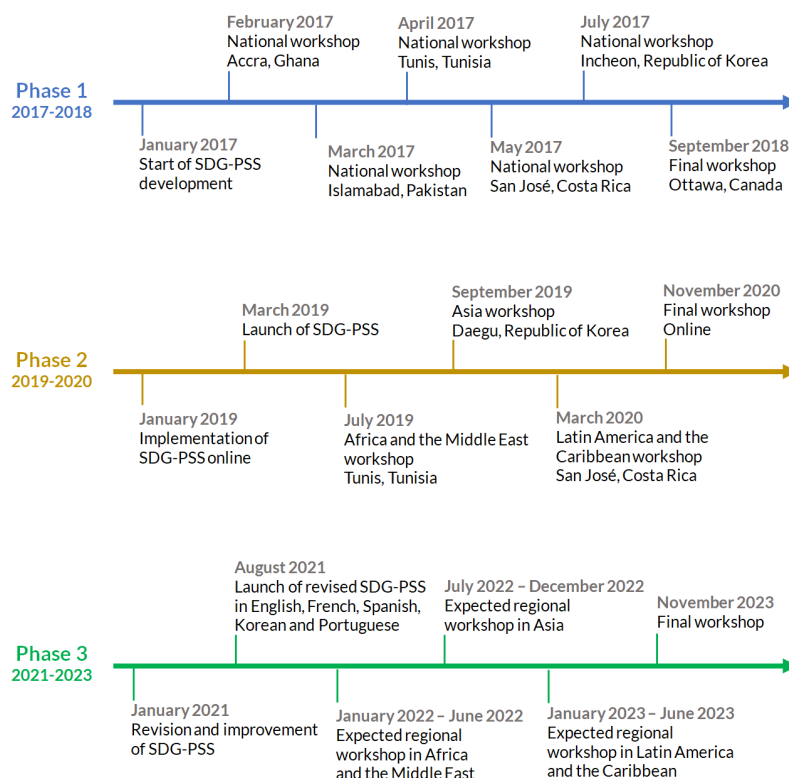


Figure 3. Project timeline with significant milestones (2017-2020) and expected activities during 2021-2023.

In the project's third phase (2021–2023), the improved version of the SDG-PSS aims to align the tool with feedback received from the regional workshops (Figure 3). This phase targets the strengthening of regional partnerships in the last decade of the SDG campaign. Three regional workshops and a global workshop are expected during this phase of the project to scale up the use of the tool in up to 50 countries.

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTPUTS OF THE PROJECT

As the SDG-PSS has been adopted through different approaches to address the needs of national contexts, project partners have led important discussions on the enabling environment of SDG 6. In Tunisia, the national partners have created a multi-sectoral working group to gather experts from critical sectors to discuss the water-related data gaps and evidence generated by the SDG-PSS. Brazil's National Water and Sanitation Agency has led an extensive consultation with experts from more than 20 organizations in the country to discuss the policy critical dimensions of the tool to be used to expedite the implementation of SDG 6 at the national level. They also intend to share results of such consultation with the countries of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP).

In Pakistan, the SDG-PSS has contributed to the discussions led by the federal government aiming at transforming 'international SDGs' into 'national SDGs' and identifying realistic aspirations for SDG 6 targets in the country. Such discussions have helped the country to undertake on-the-ground actions in their journey to achieve SDG 6. Water experts from the Republic of Korea built on strong national coordination to address the challenge of collecting data on the national enabling environment of SDG 6 and proposed a mechanism to validate the evidence produced while using SDG-PSS. In Costa Rica, the use of SDG-PSS helped in strengthening inter-institutional coordination in the national water sector and supported technical groups and local stakeholders working on SDG 6 achievement at the national level.

The SDG-PSS is designed as an online user-friendly tool. Users are encouraged to quickly learn how to use the main features of the tool. However, filling the SDG-PSS with data may be complex for those not familiar with online tools like SDG-PSS. An online course is available to provide training on how to use the tool in a systematic and effective way. The course can be accessed via the **Water Learning Centre** hosted by UNU-INWEH.



SDG 6 Policy Support System

In order to address capacity building for effective use of the SDG-PSS, this online course provides training and teaching on how to use this tool to produce evidence and data on the enabling environment of the SDG 6.

Enroll Now



Course Start
Mar 01, 2019



Course End
Sep 30, 2022



Duration
03:00 hours



Certificate
Yes

The course is also available in  French and  Spanish

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