

## **IGES Recommendations and Main Messages on SDG Implementation**

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### **SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation**

#### **Key Messages and Recommendations**

- Clean water and sanitation are fundamental to the health of the planet and its people. Their central role is reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Rapid growth, urbanization, and changing lifestyles have nonetheless led to sharp increases in wastewater and pollution loads in Asia.
- To achieve SDG 6, Asia's policymakers will need to focus on the following:
  - Strengthen water monitoring software and hardware and make monitoring results widely available and accessible.
  - Adopt a circular approach that balances economic development and environmental sustainability, prevents pollution at the source, and supports water's reuse and recycling.
  - Improve wastewater treatment efficiency to reduce pollutant loads and increase water reuse and recovery of useful by-products.
  - Create enabling environments consisting of water management legislation, enhanced human and institutional capacity, and strong political will to enforce regulations and penalties.
  - Select wastewater treatment technologies based on socioeconomic conditions and local contexts. Simple low-cost, nature-based and socially acceptable technologies will often be preferable to high-cost, energy intensive wastewater treatment approaches.
  - Build evidence-based knowledge of effective policies and regulations, including the promotion of dialogue among policymakers and researchers, to improve water environmental management.
  - Ensure the financial sustainability of wastewater and sludge management through innovative financing and incentive mechanisms, as well as appropriate business models, such as public-private partnerships (PPP).
  - Promote the involvement and coordination of different stakeholders in water environmental management, including the private sector and local communities.

### **SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy**

#### **Key Messages and Recommendations**

- Energy plays an instrumental role in the three dimensions of sustainable development. Energy access can close equity gaps and lift disadvantaged communities out of poverty (social dimension); clean energy can protect vulnerable ecosystems and avert dangerous climate change (environmental dimension); and dependable energy supplies and transparent pricing structures can preserve macro-economic stability (economic dimension).
- By mirroring the structure of the United Nations Secretary's Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) program, SDG 7 lends credibility to a decade-long drive to place the social and environmental dimensions of energy on equal footing with its economic dimensions.
- International cooperation programs such as the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) can also deliver on multiple dimensions by expanding access to clean energy while mitigating greenhouse gases (GHGs).
- Incorporating sustainability criteria in the rules and guidelines of international cooperation schemes can help ensure funded activities deliver social, environmental and economic co-benefits beyond mitigating GHGs.

- International cooperation mechanisms should seek to strategically engage with the private sector to stimulate investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- Capacity building workshops and trainings are essential to the transfer of knowledge on innovative energy technologies.

## **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**

### **Key Messages and Recommendations**

- With over half the world's population, cities will play a pivotal role in determining whether the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) realize their transformational potential. Many transformative solutions to water, energy, mobility, housing, employment and other core sustainability challenges lie in cities (SDG 6, 7, 8, 9 15).
- IGES's strategic research in the region revealed significant gaps in data for SDG 11, especially time-series data.
- National governments should create platforms that enhance intercity learning, together with strengthened support from national statistical agencies for standardized reporting of key data over multiple years. National statistical agencies should provide targeted support for smaller cities especially for air quality and housing data.
- Overall, national governments will need to provide more capacity building; cities will also need to rely more on taxes and fees for services to build their own capacity.

## **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**

### **Key Messages and Recommendations**

- Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) is not only about sustainable resource management or reduce, reuse, recycle (3Rs) but changing lifestyles and infrastructures that influences how we move, what we eat, and where we reside. Such changes can reduce dependencies on non-renewable resources and improve social well-being.
- An IGES-supported 10 Year Framework Program on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) global survey revealed the necessity of the following:
  - broadening SCP's focus beyond conventional environmental issues to include lifestyle and consumption issues;
  - design policies targeting both production and consumption;
  - establish coordination mechanisms and ensure stakeholder participation;
  - developing comprehensive national indicators; and
  - monitoring national policy strategies in line with the 10YFP (the first indicator for SDG12).
- To help strengthen support for stronger measures to achieve human well-being within planetary boundaries, more effort is needed to challenge the following common misperceptions:
  - there is a dichotomy between poverty and sustainable consumption;
  - there are linear linkages between well-being/quality of life and economic growth/consumption levels; and
  - there is a need for only small pro-environmental actions.
- To change these misperceptions, more research on the following sustainability impacts will be important: 1) decarbonization; 2) circularity/circular economy; 3) servicizing/sharing economy (less dependence on product ownership); and 4) digitalization (including artificial intelligence, blockchain and internet of things).
- Strengthening support for environmental dimensions of the SDGs requires sharing responsibilities across environmental and non-environmental ministries, especially for SDG 12 given its cross-sectoral nature.

## SDG 15 : Life on Land

### IGES Recommendations

- New modalities of collaboration between the public and private sector should be developed to conserve and restore natural forests for climate change mitigation in line with the goals in the Paris Agreement. Such schemes should seek to mobilize financial resources and strengthen forest management regulatory regimes (Target 13.a, 15.1, 15.b, 17.3, and 17.17).
- Efforts should be made to promote community management practices and local technologies that support livelihood generation and contribute to the conservation of natural ecosystems (Target 15.2, 15.b, and 17.3).
- Knowledge and information platforms as well as other relevant tools should be utilized to better visualize the environmental and social impacts of timber and agricultural supply chains, especially with regard to deforestation and forest degradation. Such instruments and methodologies are critical in assisting governments and businesses with measuring progress on forest related SDGs (Target 15.2, and 17.19).

## Cross Cutting Issues

### Key Messages and Recommendations

#### ***Integrated Approaches***

- A greater focus on interlinkages, including synergies and trade-offs, could reduce costs and enhance the effectiveness of SDG implementation.
- Prioritizing some SDGs while neglecting others could unnecessarily raise costs and reduce effectiveness. Evidence-based policymaking tools that can help decision makers take an integrated approach to the SDGs are much needed. Reliable and updated data is critical to operationalizing this integrated approach.
- There are many existing integrated approaches such as the food-water energy nexus, integrated solid waste management, sustainable low carbon transport, and co-benefits that can offer lessons for policymakers pursuing integration across or within the SDGs.
- The co-benefits from air pollution and climate change offers a particularly cost-effective way to capture synergies.
- It is important to recognize most SDGs and targets are themselves means of achieving other SDGs and targets, particularly those under review at this year's High Level Political Forum (HLPF) (i.e., water, energy, SCP).  
Research, data collection and indicator development, while important, need to effectively inform policy making in order for the SDGs to be successful. Too much focus on narrow indicators may reinforce silos rather than promote integrated approaches.

#### ***Governments and Governance***

- National governments should play a key role in formulating policies and providing means of implementation for the SDGs. Only national governments have the authority (which can be delegated) to tax, regulate, or enforce. These powers are often not used sufficiently.
- National governments need to enable and sometimes direct efforts of other actors (cities, businesses, individual consumers).
- National governments further need to provide a basic institutional framework for collaboration between/within sectors/levels: this is critical to the implementation of integrated approaches but requires leadership to work.

#### ***Business***

- Top management leadership, dialogues and partnerships inside and outside the company, and linking SDGs with corporate philosophy are critical to strengthening corporate efforts to mainstream the SDGs.
- For sustainability activities to be seen as investment not a cost, SDGs need to be incorporated in mid- and long-term business plans/strategies.
- Companies can aim to expand existing and/or develop new businesses by understanding

SDGs as an opportunity, such as providing incentives to their employees (awards, remuneration, new evaluation criteria).

- Company-led SDG measures can also raise awareness of mid-level managers whose lack of awareness is a major obstacle to businesses' SDGs implementation.
- Mechanisms (e.g. stakeholders meetings, peer learning events, and awards) either voluntary private sector led initiatives, or set up by government, are needed to guide and promote business actions on the SDGs.
- Governments can guide improvements in the market environment through regulatory and non-regulatory approaches, as well as support projects that contribute to society as a means of incubating new business models and opportunities.

## **Finance**

- There is no shortage of resources for implementing the SDGs. The issue is how to re-allocate these from unsustainable development to sustainable development.
- The total value of global ecosystem services has been estimated to be USD 125 trillion.<sup>1</sup> These services should be protected, and modest investments to maintain them are important.
- The normative commitments set out by the SDGs need to be backed by stronger incentives for government and private sector for effective action to take place.
- Governments should use finance-based incentives to make policies and the activities of other stakeholders more sustainable.
- Governments need to use regulation and investment from government budgets to steer investment towards more sustainable activities and away from unsustainable ones. For instance, budgets and programs should be evaluated in terms of their environmental and sustainability impacts before they are adopted (i.e, green budgeting).
- The role of environment ministries and their capacities should be strengthened. Environmental ministries also need to increase their understanding of financial and planning issues to more effectively persuade finance and planning ministries about the importance and economic benefits of environmental actions.
- Some countries have experience from climate finance with budget tagging based on greenhouse gas mitigation or adaptation criteria. Other countries use specific policy screening tools with scoring systems to assess the feasibility of policy proposals. These tools could be employed more widely for the SDGs.

## **Technology**

- The adoption and transfer of appropriate technology transfer and facilitation is not happening at sufficient scale to achieve the SDGs. One major reason is the difficulty in appropriately matching available technological "seeds" with country "needs." The gaps between needs and seeds are often due to the lack of comprehensive database of technologies, insufficient facilitating policies/regulations, and miscommunication.
- Collaborative partnership between stakeholders can help accelerate technology transfer and facilitation, especially bilateral stakeholder matchmaking platforms that link both the supply and demand sides.

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<sup>1</sup> Costanza, Robert, Rudolf de Groot, Paul Sutton, Sander van der Ploeg, Sharolyn J Anderson, Ida Kubiszewski, Stephen Farber, and R Kerry Turner. 2014. "Changes in the Global Value of Ecosystem Services." *Global Environmental Change - Human and Policy Dimensions* 26: 152–58. doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2014.04.002.