

Implementing the Environmental Sustainability Dimension of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Framework

Possible contribution by the Environment Management Group

1. Background

Feedback from EMG Focal Points on the EMG Task Team concerning the environmental sustainability dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), suggests that EMG work in this area should focus on providing analytical support for the implementation of the SDGs from an environmental sustainability perspective, rather than seeking to inform the international negotiations on this matter (except perhaps for the development of SDGs indicators which will carry in 2016). The EMG could for example, provide analytical contributions to specific areas under the SDGs where mainstreaming of environment is an essential element, such as the SDGs on poverty, food security, SCP, cities, and development planning.

A focus on implementation could facilitate to get a better understanding on how the existing international environmental goals and objectives can support implementation of SDGs and, vice versa, how implementation of SDGs can help to advance environmental sustainability objectives and the national and international level. Reviewing these two related issues from both angles can help in the process of exploring synergies and opportunities for integrated implementation.

2. Key Questions for Analysis

An implementation focus of the EMG work could be guided and supported through an analysis of the following questions:

1. Which of the draft SDGs and targets have a specific environmental focus?
2. What thematic environmental areas (e.g. biodiversity) do the environmental SDGs/targets relate to?
3. Which SDGs are crucial from the point of view of environmental mainstreaming and which of them would benefit from system-wide collective action?
4. What are important relevant existing international environmental goals and targets?
5. How can the SDGs and targets support /strengthen the implementation of existing international goals and objectives?
6. Which national implementation processes (e.g. National Biodiversity Strategies) are relevant for the implementing SDGs?

3. Review of Existing Initiatives and Documentation

Initial research suggests that a number of organizations and bodies have already prepared documentation or have initiated activities to explore the interface SDGs and environmental sustainability. For example, the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions has started to analyze the draft SDGs from a chemicals and waste management perspective and UNDP presented some of the most obvious linkages between Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes and the SDGs in its recent publication. Similar analysis has been prepared in the areas of biodiversity by CBD and UNEP and the SCP by UNDSA. Annex II includes an indicative list of these documents. Additional materials could be collected with the assistance of EMG focal points.

4. Proposed Outline of the Analysis

A draft outline of the Analysis is provided in annex 1 for consideration and comments of the EMG focal points to be prepared after approval of the 21st meeting of the EMG Senior Officials.

ANNEX I

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An Analysis to Support Synergies in the Implementation of SDGs, MEAs, and Internationally Agreed Environmental Goals

1 Background and Context

- 1.1 Introduction to the Post-2015 Development Framework and SDGs
- 1.2 The Environmental Dimension of the Post-2015 Development Framework and SDGs
- 1.3 Multilateral Environmental Agreements and International Agreed Environmental Goals
- 1.4 Opportunities for Linkages and Synergies at the National Level
- 1.5 Purpose, Objectives and Target Audience of the Document

2 How Can SDGs Support the Implementation of International Environmental Agreements?

This chapter analyses and provides examples and suggestions how SDGs and specific targets can support the implementation of environmental objectives at the national level under various international environmental agreements. The following table would provide an overview of SDGs with an environmental implementation dimension and link the SDGs with specific thematic environmental areas and their respective international environmental agreements.

SDG/Target	Relevant Thematic Environmental Area	Relevant International Environmental Goals and Objectives	Opportunities for Synergies and Integrated Implementation

By doing the analysis it is proposed to use the thematic environmental areas featured in the UNEP 2012 publication “Compilation of Internationally Agreed Environmental Goals and Objectives” (supplemented with the category on Sustainable Consumption and Production).

1. Air pollution and air quality
2. Biodiversity
3. Chemicals and waste
4. Climate change
5. Energy
6. Environmental governance
7. Forests
8. Freshwater
9. Land
10. Oceans and seas
11. Sustainable Consumption and Production

3 How Can International Environmental Agreements Support Implementation of SDGs?

This chapter examines and provides examples on how the implementation of environmental agreements at the national level can support the implementation of specific SDGs. For each environmental thematic it is proposed to provide the following analysis:

- What are key relevant international environmental goals
- What are the SDGs/Targets which these agreement would contribute to
- What are opportunities and examples for synergies and integrated implementation

- 3.1 Air pollution and air quality
- 3.2 Biodiversity
- 3.3 Chemicals and waste
- 3.4 Climate change
- 3.5 Energy
- 3.6 Environmental governance
- 3.7 Forests
- 3.8 Freshwater
- 3.9 Land
- 3.10 Oceans and seas
- 3.11 Sustainable Consumption and Production

4 Governance Consideration for Creating Linkages and Effective Implementation

- 4.1 National Processes to Implement SDGs
- 4.2 National Processes to Implement International Environmental Agreements
- 4.3 Opportunities for Institutional Linkages and Synergies

Annex II

Indicative List of Documents Relevant for Examining Linkages of Environmental Sustainability Indicators and the draft Sustainable Development Goals.

I. Publications by UN Organizations and IGOs

Green Growth Knowledge Platform. 2013. Moving towards a Common Approach on Green Growth Indicators

<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/partnerships/GGKP%20Moving%20towards%20a%20Common%20Approach%20on%20Green%20Growth%20Indicators.pdf>

UNEP. 2014. Using indicators for green economy policymaking

<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/PAGE/IndicatorsWorkingPaper.pdf>

UNEP & UNDP. 2013. Breaking Down the Silos: Integrating Environmental Sustainability in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

<https://www.worldwewant2015.org/sustainability2015report>

UNEP. 2013. Embedding the Environment in Sustainable Development Goals

<http://www.unep.org/pdf/embedding-environments-in-SDGs-v2.pdf>

UN System Task Team. 2013. Statistics and indicators for the post-2015 development agenda

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/UNTT_MonitoringReport_WEB.pdf

UNEP. 2012. Compilation of Internationally Agreed Environmental Goals and Objectives

<http://geg.informea.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/GEG-Booklet-Jan-2013.pdf>

UNDP. 2015. Chemicals and Waste Management for Sustainable Development available at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Chemicals%20and%20Waste%20Management/UNDP%E2%80%99sChemicals%20and%20Waste%20Management%20for%20Sustainable%20Development_April17_FINAL.pdf

II. Other Relevant Publications

Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development, Volume 47, Number 3, What is Sustainable Development: Goals Indicators and Practise

http://www.hks.harvard.edu/sustsci/ists/docs/whatisSD_env_kates_0504.pdf

German Advisory Council on Global Change. 2104. Human Progress with Planetary Guard Rails: A Contribution to the SDG Debate

http://www.wbgu.de/fileadmin/templates/dateien/veroeffentlichungen/politikpapiere/pp2014-pp8/wbgu_pp8_en.pdf

Measure what Matters Project. 2015. Measure What Matters Project

Stakeholder Forum. 2014. Sustainable Development Goals and Integration: Achieving a better balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions

<http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/Balancing%20the%20dimensions%20in%20the%20SDGs%20FINAL.pdf>