



Concept Note

Project “Water in the World We Want” Phase 3: Accelerating the achievement of water-related SDGs

Final Workshop
20-22 February 2024, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Using SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS) to support countries for water-related sustainable development

Background

Water plays a vital role throughout the United Nations' sustainable development initiative. Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) is intricately interconnected and synergizes with all other SDGs outlined in the 2030 Agenda. The effective management of water and sanitation stands as a fundamental solution to addressing urgent global challenges, including but not limited to climate change, the pursuit of affordable and clean energy, combatting biodiversity loss, mitigating food insecurity, countering the spread of diseases through pandemics and epidemics, managing natural disaster risks, fostering peace and stability amidst conflict, reducing extreme poverty, and addressing gender inequality. Shortcomings in achieving SDG 6 have far-reaching consequences, undermining the integrity of sustainable development's societal, economic, and environmental facets. Furthermore, these deficiencies erode human rights and imperil peace and security.

Although achieving SDG 6 is a formidable challenge for many countries, such challenges come with great opportunities. Effective planning and policy implementation through strengthening and realigning enabling environments are critical to driving success in achieving water-related sustainable development at the national level. However, evidence and appropriate data for policymakers and development actors to make this happen are fragmented, overlapping, or even missing in most countries in the Global South. If the nations are to achieve SDG 6, they need to assess their current national progress effectively. This means defining gaps and weaknesses and addressing them with workable policies and action plans to promote robust enabling environments for achieving SDG 6. These countries also need to set their national baselines, targets, and

priorities in the general SDG process and focus on the ones that can be realistically achieved by 2030.

Since 2016, a consortium of partners (United Nations Office for Sustainable Development, UNOSD; United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health, UNU-INWEH; the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, MOE; and the Korea Environment Corporation, K-eco) has been implementing 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. Two additional partners (UNESCO International Centre for Water Security and Sustainable Management, UNESCO i-WSSM; and the Korea Water Resources Corporation, K-water) joined the project in 2022 and the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP joined in 2023.

SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS) – Key Product of the SDG Project

The [SDG 6 Policy Support System \(SDG-PSS\)](#), the key output of this project, was developed during its first phase (2016-2018) to help create evidence on the enabling environment of SDG 6 at the national level in countries with limited or missing data. Five countries – Ghana, Tunisia, Pakistan, Costa Rica, and the Republic of Korea – implemented the first stones of the project in a 'champion system', in which one water-related policymaker and one water professional in each country were responsible for promoting the project and providing coordination for the development of the SDG-PSS, a web-based tool to help navigate limited data conditions, relying on trends, information, and broader estimates.

SDG-PSS consists of the following components: *Capacity Assessment, Finance, Policy and Institutional Assessment, Gender Mainstreaming, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)/Resilience Mainstreaming, and Integrity*. These components were chosen as they allow a better understanding of the enabling environment where water and sanitation policies are developed and implemented for achieving SDG 6. They were based on more than 20 well-established tools, processes, and practices already used by many countries. The questions proposed in the tool were discussed in the national workshops organized in five countries and went through discussions, resulting in a comprehensive revision process.

During the project's second phase (2018-2020), the tool was officially launched as an online platform and promoted during project-led workshops. Regional workshops were organized to extend the use of SDG-PSS in countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean regions through broader cooperation and continuous learning, resulting in further refinement of the SDG-PSS. In its final version, SDG-PSS permits answering the challenge of bringing data and information from multiple international and national tools and translating them into a 'fit-for-policy' evidence framework. With the SDG-PSS available in six languages (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic, and Korean), 53 countries are using or considering the tool.

In the third phase (2021-2023), the project partners promoted the SDG-PSS by organizing three regional workshops in Asia (23-24 November 2022, Daegu, Republic of Korea), Africa (5-7 July 2023, Nairobi, Kenya), and Latin America and the Caribbean (20-22 September 2023, Brasilia, Brazil).

More than 50 countries have been engaged through project-led workshops on using SDG-PSS within their national contexts.

There is an e-course on SDG-PSS to address capacity building for systematic and practical use of the tool. [The course](#) provides training and teaching on using this system to produce evidence and data on the enabling environment for achieving SDG 6. The effort required by the SDG-PSS to get all the evidence together is an essential step for countries to evaluate better which data is missing and where gaps in policymaking exist.

Final Workshop for Third Phase

The extended use of SDG-PSS requires the engagement of more water professionals, managers, policymakers, and more countries. The experience of organizing project-led workshops in the second and third phases of the project showed that strengthening regional partnerships and cooperation has been critical for the project's success. Thus, engaging more countries in using SDG-PSS is crucial to promote multinational collaboration and ensure knowledge exchange for effective use of the tool while informing policy and decision-makers on the enabling environments of SDG 6. Parallel to introducing SDG-PSS to more countries, it is taking stock of the work undertaken by the project and lessons learned to ensure a more significant impact of the project as it enters its fourth phase in 2024. While the final workshop of the third phase will address such aspects, it will also set the scene for the project's fourth phase.

The event will gather representatives from the regional hub countries – Brazil, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, and Tunisia – and some selected countries based on their level of interest in participating in the project, geographic location with respect to the regional hub country, variation in the availability of annual renewable water resources per capita, and level of awareness within the public policy arena on water resources management.

Timeline and Venue

This 3-day workshop will be organized during 20-22 February 2024 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Meeting Language

This event will be conducted in English.

Participants

Around 20 water professionals and policymakers from the regional hub countries – Brazil, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, and Tunisia – and some selected countries will participate in the workshop. Following the project strategy in the first and second phases, up to three policymakers or expert scientists from each regional hub country, while one to two policymakers and expert scientists from each of the selected countries will join the workshop. Other participants in the workshop will be from the project implementing partners – UNOSD, UNU-INWEH, UNESCO iWSSM, K-water and UNEP.

Objectives

The final workshop of the third phase will contribute to

- (1) taking stock of the work undertaken by the project and lessons learned to ensure a more significant impact of the project in its fourth phase. It will
- (2) discuss ways to improve SDG-PSS for its extended use while addressing challenges in accelerating the achievement of SDG 6.
- (3) develop a strategy and activity plan for the fourth phase of the project.

Afterward, a workshop report with contributions from all participants and partners will be produced.

Organizers

This regional workshop is co-organized by UNOSD, UNU-INWEH, UNESCO-iWSSM, K-water and UNEP.