



Concept Note

Project “Water in the World We Want”

Phase 4: Accelerating the achievement of water-related SDGs.

Africa Region Workshop

Senegal, Dakar, 28-30 April 2025

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

Background

The world is now at a defining moment in its commitment to manage, save, and preserve water as water is integral to the United Nations' sustainable development endeavor. Since 2015, over 687 million people have gained access to safely managed services. However, 2.2 billion people still lack access to safely managed water services, including 1.5 billion with “basic services,” 292 million with “limited” water, 296 million use unimproved sources, and 115 million still collect drinking water directly from rivers, lakes, and other surface water sources. The data trends reveal pronounced disparities, with the poorest and those living in rural areas least likely to use a basic service. In most countries, the burden of water collection continues to fall, mainly to women and girls. Despite strong commitment by the United Nations Member States, there is an urgent need to increase the pace of progress six times faster to meet the global target of universal access to safely managed drinking water by 2030.

Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) is intricately linked and aligns synergistically with all other SDGs laid out in the 2030 Agenda. SDG 6 seeks to ensure safe drinking water and sanitation for all, focusing on the sustainable management of water resources, wastewater and ecosystems, and acknowledging the importance of an enabling environment. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, countries have committed to engage in systematic follow-up and review of progress towards the Goals and targets, using a set of global indicators.

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 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 missing, overlapping, or even fragmented 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.

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. SDG-PSS available in six languages (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic, and Korean).

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), and a final workshop of the project (20-22 February 2024, Phnom Penh, Cambodia). At the end of the third phase, 68 countries have been engaged through project-led workshops on using SDG-PSS within their national contexts. With the start of the fourth phase (2024-2025), the project partners promoted the SDG-PSS by organizing the regional workshop in Asia (11-12 June 2024, Dushanbe, Tajikistan).

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 on enabling the 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.

Africa Workshop of the Project's Fourth 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 Africa region workshop of the fourth phase will address such aspects, it will set the scene for the efforts to the extended use of SDG-PSS while addressing challenges in accelerating the achievement of SDG 6. In addition, the project's fourth phase will embark on a project continuation strategy.

Timeline and Venue

The workshop is scheduled for 28-30April in Dakar, Senegal.

Meeting Language

This event will be conducted in English and French (translation)

Participants

Around 20-25 water professionals and policymakers from selected countries from Africa will participate in the workshop. Africa region hub country of the project, Tunisia, will also participate to share their experience and journey of collaboration since the beginning of this project. Other participants in the workshop are expected to be from the project implementing partners – UNOSD, UNU-INWEH, UNESCO iWSSM, K-water – along with the workshop collaboration institution, African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW).

Objectives

The Africa region workshop of the fourth 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.
- (2) discussing ways to the extended use of SDG-PSS while addressing challenges in accelerating the achievement of SDG 6.
- (3) developing a project continuation strategy 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 to be co-organized by UNOSD, UNU-INWEH, UNESCO-iWSSM, K-water, along with the workshop collaboration institution, AMCOW (TBC).