



Concept Note

Using SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS) to facilitate countries in Africa and Middle East for water-related sustainable development

3-4 July 2019, Tunis
Mövenpick Hotel Du Lac Tunis

Background

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) by 2030 is expected to allow countries to reach an important milestone in their journey towards sustainability, as successful water and sanitation management will be a foundation for the achievement of many other water-related SDGs directly or indirectly. Indeed, “*Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*” – SDG 6 – is a formidable challenge for many countries. Nevertheless, with challenges come also great opportunities.

Effective planning and policy implementation through strengthening and realigning enabling environments are critical to driving success in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly water-related SDGs at the national level. However, evidence and appropriate data for policymakers and development actors to make this happen is missing, overlapping or even fragmented in most countries in Africa and Middle East region. If the countries 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 strong enabling environments for the achievement of SDG 6. These countries also need to set their own national baselines, targets and priorities in the general SDG process and focus on the ones that can be realistically achieved by 2030.

From 2016 to 2018, the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) and the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of Republic of Korea (MOE) and the Korea Environment Corporation (K-eco) investigated options to support policy and decision making to achieve SDG 6 under data-poor conditions. During this phase (phase 1) of the project “Water in the World We Want”, the partners

developed a system to enable cross-sectorial evidence-based collaboration between experts and decision makers and to promote the strengthening of the enabling environment of SDG 6. Five countries – Ghana, Tunisia, Pakistan, Costa Rica and the Republic of Korea – implemented the first phase of the project in a ‘champion system’, in which one policymaker and one expert or scientist in each country were responsible for promoting the project and providing coordination for the development of the SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS)¹, a web-based tool to help navigate limited data conditions, relying on trends, information and broader estimates. Through this system, policymakers, scientists and development actors are empowered to gather the critical information, evidence and data (where available) to define and develop national policies to address water-related issues.

The SDG-PSS is an answer to the challenge of bringing data and information from multiple international and national tools and translating them into a ‘fit-for-policy’ evidence framework. The system 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, and were based on more than 20 well-established tools, processes and practices already used by many countries. SDG-PSS also monitors and evaluates another component of SDG 6, ‘Status’ – which refers to data and trends for targets and indicators of the goal.

The continual development and enrichment of SDG-PSS require the engagement of more water professionals, managers and policy makers, and more countries. Over the first phase, Tunisia has been actively committed to the successful progress of SDG-PSS. The country has also been playing a critical role promoting the engagement of more countries in the region in the use and improvement of the SDG-PSS. For this reason, Tunisia is considered as a regional hub for the second phase of the project.

As part of the second phase, the project aims to undertake regional workshops to promote the use of SDG-PSS while receiving feedback the improvement of the tool. Therefore, the regional workshop in Tunisia aims to extend the use of SDG-PSS in countries in Africa and Middle East through broader cooperation and continuous learning resulting in further refinement of the SDG-PSS.

Timeline, duration, and venue

This 2-day workshop will be organized during 3-4 July 2019 in Tunis, Tunisia.

Meeting language

This event will be conducted in English and French with simultaneous translation facilities.

¹ SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS) Available at <https://sdgpss.net/en/>

Participants

Around 50 participants are expected to join this regional workshop. The participants from the Africa and the Middle East region will be from the following countries: Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Kuwait and Bahrain. Following the project strategy in first phase, one policymaker and one expert or scientist from each of these countries will join the workshop. These countries were selected based on specific criteria, such as regional diversity in the Africa and the Middle East region; variation in the availability of annual renewable water resources per capita; proportion of population using safely-managed water supplies; proportion of population using at least basic sanitation facilities; economic levels of these countries; and recommendations from the regional hub country – Tunisia – and suggestions from UN and international organizations working in the region, such as UN Environment and Nairobi Convention Secretariat. There will be around 20 participants from these countries.

Since several researchers and policymakers have been involved in the use and promotion of SDG-PSS in Tunisia as the regional hub country, around 20 participants will join the workshop from Tunisia.

The participants from UN, international, and regional organizations will include: UNOSD, UNU-INWEH, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO), UN Environment, Korea Environment Corporation (K-eco), and International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). The number of participants from these organizations is expected to be around 10.

Outputs

This regional workshop will contribute to 1) sharing and discussing experiences, challenges and possibilities on achieving SDG 6 in Africa and Middle East; 2) informing participants on the SDG-PSS, and promoting a discussion on how SDG-PSS can be used to produce evidence on water-related policymaking to strengthen the enabling environment of SDG 6 in Africa and Middle East; and 3) discussing ways to improve SDG-PSS through regional cooperation.

A workshop report with contributions from all participants and partners will be produced afterwards.

Organizers

This regional workshop is co-organized by UNOSD, UNU-INWEH, UNDP, Tunisian Government, MOE and K-eco.