



# SDG PROJECT

## Water in the World We Want

---

Phase 2 ♦ 2019-2020 ♦ Final Report



## About UNU-INWEH

UNU-INWEH's mission is to help resolve pressing water challenges that are of concern to the United Nations, its Member States, and their people, through critical analysis and synthesis of existing bodies of scientific discovery; targeted research that identifies emerging policy issues; application of on-the-ground scalable science-based solutions to water issues; and global outreach. UNU-INWEH carries out its work in cooperation with the network of other research institutions, international organisations and individual scholars throughout the world.

UNU-INWEH is an integral part of the United Nations University (UNU) – an academic arm of the UN, which includes 13 institutes and programmes located in 12 countries around the world, and dealing with various issues of development. UNU-INWEH was established, as a public service agency and a subsidiary body of the UNU, in 1996. Its operations are secured through long-term host-country and core-funding agreements with the Government of Canada. The Institute is located in Hamilton, Canada, and its facilities are supported by McMaster University.



© United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) and United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), 2021

Suggested Citation: Water in the World We Want. 2021. SDG 6 Project Final Report. United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health; United Nations Office for Sustainable Development; Korea Environment Corporation; Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea.

Design: Kelsey Anderson (UNU-INWEH)

Download at: <http://inweh.unu.edu/publications/>

ISBN: 978-92-808-6106-8

UNU-INWEH is supported by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.



Global Affairs Canada  
Affaires mondiales Canada

# CONTENTS

Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
<b>1 Introduction and Background.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 The project and its partners.....	7
1.2 Renewing the discussions on the enabling environments of SDG 6.....	7
<b>2 The SDG 6 Policy Support System.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Features of the SDG-PSS.....	8
2.2 Building capacity for using the tool.....	8
<b>3 Project Workshops.....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Regional Workshops.....	10
3.1.1 Africa and the Middle East.....	10
3.1.2 Asia.....	11
3.1.3 Latin America and the Caribbean.....	12
3.2 Final Workshop.....	12
<b>4 Project Sessions at International Events.....</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Stockholm World Water Week, Sweden.....	13
4.2 International Symposium on Knowledge and Capacity for the Water Sector, Netherlands.....	13
4.3 Dresden Nexus Conference, Germany.....	14
4.4 Gender Summit, Kenya.....	14
4.4 International Water Colloquium, Germany.....	14
<b>5 Lessons Learned and Perspectives.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>6 Way Forward.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix A: List of Contributors from SDG-PSS Regional Hubs and Project Partners.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>18</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AyA	Instituto Costarricense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados
BPEH	Bureau de Planification et des Équilibres Hydrauliques
DSDG	Division for Sustainable Development Goals
GLAAS	Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
INRGREF	Institut National de Recherche en Génie Rural, Eaux et Forêts
IWMR	Integrated Water Resources Management
K-eco	Korea Environment Corporation
MARHP	Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Hydrauliques et de la Pêche
MIDEPLAN	Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica
MINAE	Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía
MOE	Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea
Mol	Means of Implementation
ONAGRI	Observatoire National de l'Agriculture, Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Hydrauliques et de la Pêche
PCRWR	Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDG-PSS	SDG 6 Policy Support System
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNOSD	United Nations Office for Sustainable Development
UNU-INWEH	United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 2019 and 2020, the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD/DSDG/UNDESA), the Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea (MOE), the Korea Environment Corporation (K-eco) and national partners from Costa Rica, Pakistan, and Tunisia delivered the second phase of the project “*Water in the World We Want*”. During this phase, project partners launched the SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS) online in four languages (English, French, Spanish, and Korean), developed an online course to address capacity building, and engaged with more countries from Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean through regional workshops. At total, 34 countries have now used the SDG-PSS in different capacities and contributed to its improvement by sharing their experiences and challenges.

Lessons learned during the second phase suggest that **missing data and evidence on the enabling environments of SDG 6 may undermine progress needed to achieve this ambitious goal by 2030**. If countries aim to assure a sustainable future, water experts and development actors need to work with the evidence already available while addressing those gaps to ensure policy and decision makers are equipped with coherent action plans. The SDG-PSS is a tool developed to tackle this challenge by allowing countries producing multisectoral evidence and highlighting the missing evidence on key dimensions of the enabling environments of all SDG 6 targets and indicators. During this phase, the SDG-PSS has helped project partners recognize the significance of discussions around the enabling environments of SDG 6 and make advancements in the understanding of challenges to achieve SDG 6 targets and indicators.

The continual development of SDG-PSS, however, will require the engagement of more countries in the project and strong collaboration between new countries and those already using the tool. In the next phase, project partners should aim to improve the support given to countries currently committed to the use of the tool while expanding its implementation to new countries. Regional workshops can be organized in the next phase to engage with more water experts and development actors to promote collaboration and ensure knowledge exchange and effective use of the tool to inform policy and decision makers on the enabling environments of SDG 6.

Experience gained by project partners throughout the regional workshops also indicates that the SDG-PSS must be improved in the next phase. Users of the tool have provided their feedback and suggestions, highlighting challenges and opportunities. New features can be added to improve the reporting segment, while the questionnaires can be revised for refinement. User accessibility can be enhanced through the inclusion of additional languages as new countries partake in the project. The tool will have the potential to integrate multi-dimensional understanding and knowledge surrounding SDG 6 to streamline progress. More opportunities for capacity building and advanced training can be developed to guide users through the tool and to lead the discussions within the community of SDG-PSS partners. In other words, the project advancement must continue capturing countries’ needs and challenges and addressing them with improvements for assuring that the SDG-PSS remains effective and reliable.

According to the latest assessment on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the world is off track to achieve many goals. As we move into the last decade to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, despite stronger commitment and alignment of efforts by global leaders, countries are still struggling to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDGs (UN, 2020). Furthermore, countries are now adjusting to renewed challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Measures taken by governments to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic have led to the shutdown of businesses and schools, and restricted millions of adults and children to their homes, leaving the society's most vulnerable groups exposed to weakened support and uncertainty. In this context, the achievement of SDG 6 without leaving no one behind has become a critical objective to most countries to ensure the delivery of socio-economic and health benefits of SDG 6 to society.

Accompanied by the staggering urgency, 2.2 billion people worldwide are still lacking safely managed drinking water and 4.2 billion people do not have access to safely managed sanitation, while 673 million people still practise open defecation according to the latest assessment of SDGs (UN, 2020). Approximately one third of countries show medium to high levels of water stress, mostly in North Africa and Central and Southern regions of Asia. About 60% of countries are unlikely to reach full implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWMR) by 2030, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean and Central and Southern Asia (UN, 2018). Moreover, data and evidence needed for delivering on water-related SDGs may still be unavailable for many goals and targets, undermining efforts of policy and decision makers to monitor progress, identify trends and address issues with workable plans.

Furthermore, as national governments aim to achieve SDG 6, they are also faced with competing priorities and limited budgets. Too often, national governments need to demonstrate to their citizens and funders that they are doing more than simply measuring and assessing the status of SDG 6 while water-related development falls behind other priorities. There is a strong need to assess current national enabling environments if countries aim to realistically achieve SDG 6 by 2030. Actions must be taken to reveal gaps and weaknesses and address them with policy implementation and action plans to strengthen and foster enabling environments for SDG 6.

Credible and systematic evidence might provide a strong foundation for countries to inform their decision and policy processes to meet SDG 6. This is not to say that making the right policy decisions during the SDG campaign is simple. Policy makers and development actors are tasked with combining pieces of evidence from multiple agencies and sectors making sound policy choices complex and interdisciplinary. Deciding on which pieces of evidence are needed to support policy development can be difficult, especially when there may be conflicting evidence. To mitigate these challenges, collaborative evidence-based approaches need to be prioritized while engaging with water experts and development actors to collect critical data and evidence on the enabling environments of SDG 6.

## 1.1 The Project and its Partners

In order to tackle challenges experienced by countries, the SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS) – the main output of the project “Water in the World We Want” – was developed to help the creation of evidence on the enabling environments of SDG 6 under limited data. This tool aims to provide countries with a systematic approach to produce evidence on the enabling environments of SDG 6 to inform policy- and decision-making processes at the national level. Under renewed commitments towards solving these challenges, the project's second phase took place between January 2019 and December 2020, and aimed at strengthening and expanding the implementation and use of the SDG-PSS in Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, while gaining feedback from regional hub countries on the possibilities and difficulties experienced during the SDG contextualization campaign.

The second phase is marked by important milestones: the launch of SDG-PSS online in English, French, Spanish and Korean followed by an online course to address capacity building for effective use of the tool; the organization of regional workshops in Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean; and a final workshop to engage with water experts and development actors from different countries in the use of the tool under different national contexts (Figure 1). To lead the implementation and use of the tool during the second phase, key partners in Costa Rica, Pakistan, Republic of Korea and Tunisia became ‘Regional Hubs’ of the SDG-PSS by bringing their experience and supporting the discussions on the use of SDG-PSS to the achievement of SDG 6.



**Figure 1** Timeline of project related workshops and outputs (January 2019 to December 2020).

In total, 34 countries participated in the project regional workshops and engaged in the use of SDG-PSS (Figure 2): Armenia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, and Vietnam.

The project's second phase partners are (see Appendix 1 for complete list of representatives from Regional Hubs and project partners):

1. United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)
2. United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD/DSDG/UNDESA)
3. Ministry of Environment (MOE), Republic of Korea
4. Korea Environment Corporation (K-eco), Republic of Korea
5. Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica (MIDEPLAN), Costa Rica
6. Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía (MINAE), Costa Rica

7. Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), Pakistan
8. Institut National de la Recherche en Génie Rural, Eaux et Forêts (INRGREF), Tunisia
9. Observatoire National de l'Agriculture, Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Hydrauliques et de la Pêche (ONAGRI), Tunisia.
10. Bureau de Planification et des Équilibres Hydrauliques (BPEH), Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Hydrauliques et de la Pêche (MARHP), Tunisia.

## 1.2 Renewing the discussions on the enabling environments of SDG 6

The adoption of SDG 6 with six Outcome targets (SDG 6.1 – 6.6) and two targets (SDG 6.a and 6.b) related to the Means of Implementation (Mol) represents an improvement in the attention given to water issues in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While Outcome targets translate concerns on universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation, water quality, efficiency and scarcity, resources management and protection, Mol targets aim to address the enabling environments for achieving SDG 6. However,



**Figure 2** SDG-PSS Regional Hubs and participating countries during the project's second phase.

important gaps were observed in the formulation of Mol targets (Bartram et al., 2018). UN (2018), for instance, highlighted limitations and suggested defining additional indicators and modifications to current indicators to take into account the gaps in SDG 6 Mol targets. UN-Water (2017) suggested that “systematic effort will be required in order to generate the means (economic, social, human and environmental resources) needed to support the implementation of SDG 6”.

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of SDGs indicate that competing priorities, limited budgets and a low capacity to achieve multi-sectoral and multi-scale results are limiting factors for governments struggling to build strong enabling environments for achieving SDGs (Weitz et al. 2017). Comprehensive legislation and policy implementation for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) are missing in SDG 6 Mol targets (WHO, 2017). Traditional Mol, such as laws and regulations, are generally not mentioned in discussions around SDG 6, and should be considered for all SDG 6 targets and indicators (Elder et al., 2016). Data on key dimensions of the enabling environments of SDG targets 6.1 (drinking water) and 6.2 (sanitation) also reveal missing opportunities for countries to enhance the means available for reaching their aspirations. According to the 2018/2019 UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) report, only 6 out of 104 countries reported having enough financial resources and human capacity in place to ensure proper plans for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. This indicates a significant barrier caused by financial insufficiency and lack of human capacity (WHO, 2019).

In such a context, project partners have worked together to build an evidence framework that addresses the challenge of limited data and information on key dimensions of enabling environments of all SDG 6 targets and indicators. During the project’s second phase, experience from Regional Hubs and countries participating in the regional workshops allowed project partners to advance the discussion around enabling environments and to investigate emerging options for producing evidence critically needed for achieving SDG 6.

## 2 THE SDG 6 POLICY SUPPORT SYSTEM

### 2.1 Features of the SDG-PSS

The SDG-PSS is a free tool available online in English, French, Spanish and Korean designed to support countries in producing evidence on the enabling environments of SDG 6. The tool is organized around

six policy critical components: Capacity Assessment; Finance Assessment; Policy and Institutional Assessment; Gender Mainstreaming; Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Resilience Mainstreaming; and Integrity. The policy critical components of SDG-PSS were defined during the first phase’s consultations with government representatives and water experts from the Regional Hubs. Two criteria were used for the selection of these components: first, their ability to encourage the creation of national enabling environments to achieve SDG 6, and, second, the support of the component by at least one tool, system or framework developed by an authoritative body. In addition to the six policy critical components, the SDG-PSS has a component ‘Status’ to present data trends on different targets and indicators of SDG 6. This component helps the users of the tool in visualizing water-related datasets, running simple scenarios, and presenting different aspirational outcomes for SDG 6 targets and indicators.

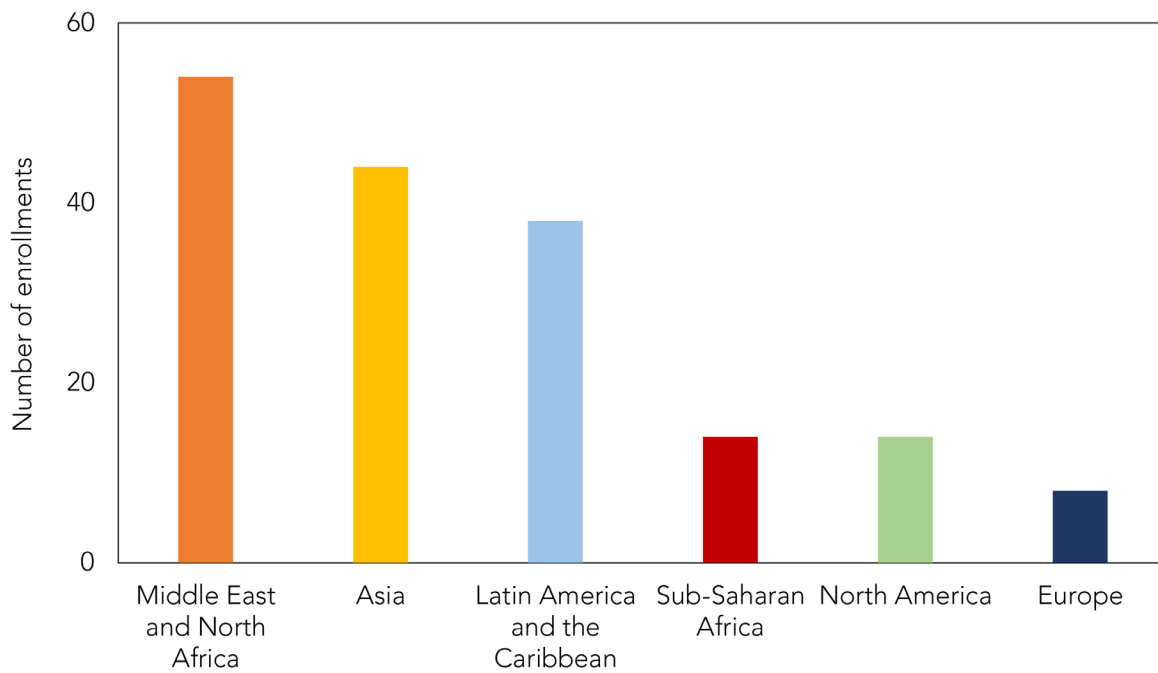
Overall, the SDG-PSS provides countries with a collaborative tool where professionals from different sectors, agencies and institutions can work together to generate evidence on SDG 6. As water experts and policy makers enter data and information required for each component of the SDG-PSS through a set of questionnaires, the main outcome of the tool – the Summary View – is filled in with evidence generated by the tool. Thus, the Summary View consists of all the evidence generated for each SDG 6 target and indicator and each policy critical component of the tool from the data entered by the user. This evidence framework allows users to identify strengths and weaknesses, missing data and gaps across the tool’s components, and can then be used for multi-sectoral collaborative planning to develop and implement water-related policies across key dimensions of the enabling environments of SDG 6.

Ultimately, the SDG-PSS aims to support evidence-based policy- and decision-making for SDG 6 under limited data circumstances. As data gaps may be potentially narrowed over the next years, experience from Regional Hubs suggests that critical evidence will still be missing at the same time as new policies are implemented and decisions are taken to deliver on SDG 6. To overcome these limitations, the SDG-PSS allows water experts and development actors to visualize gaps across SDG 6 targets and indicators, while allowing establishing priorities and action plans based on the pieces of evidence already available.

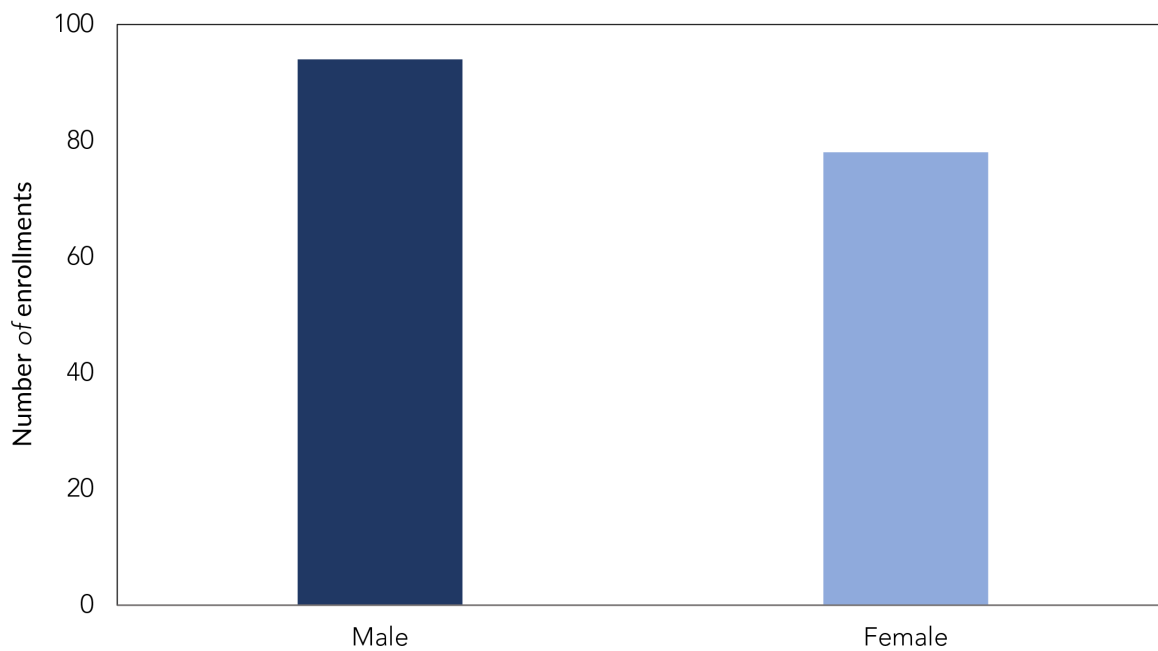
### 2.2 Building capacity for using the tool

While the SDG-PSS provides a systematic approach for countries to produce evidence on the enabling environments of SDG 6, users often need to gather data from different sources to fill in the tool’s questionnaires.





**Figure 3** Number of enrollments in the SDG-PSS online course by global region



**Figure 4** Number of enrollments in the SDG-PSS online course by gender

Without proper training, the use of the SDG-PSS might be less effective or even misunderstood, resulting in limited use and compromising the expected outcomes. To circumvent this challenge, the development of an online course produced by project partners was necessary to provide training on how to effectively use the tool. Users receive hands-on instructions to learn how to navigate through the tool's main features following the same workflow expected from someone using the SDG-PSS.

The SDG-PSS online course consists of 5 modules taking 2 hours in length, and is available in English, French and Spanish and issues a certificate upon completion of all modules. During the project's second phase, the online course had a total of 172 enrolments (Figure 3), from which 45% of learners were female (Figure 4).

# 3

## PROJECT WORKSHOPS

### 3.1 Regional Workshops

During 2019 and 2020, project partners and Regional Hubs organized three regional workshops to engage with countries from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean regions on the implementation and use of SDG-PSS. Water experts and development actors from 34 countries gathered to discuss regional and national water-related issues, while sharing the possibilities of using the SDG-PSS to produce critical evidence needed for strengthening national enabling environments. Participants indicated that while championing the implementation and use of the SDG-PSS, finding support from national stakeholders and collecting data needed for the tool were the main challenges in the early stages of the SDG-PSS implementation process.

#### 3.1.1 Africa and the Middle East

The regional workshop held in Tunis, Tunisia, 3-4 July 2019, was attended by participants from Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, and the host country, Tunisia, and several UN, international and regional organizations (UNU-INWEH, UNOSD, UN-Water, UNDP, FAO, UNEP, and ICARDA). Countries from Africa and the Middle East gathered to learn from Tunisia's experience in developing and implementing the SDG-PSS and discuss how the tool can be used to produce critical evidence on the enabling environment of SDG 6 reflecting on regional and national challenges.

According to Tunisia's experience in the implementation and use of SDG-PSS, securing the support of policy and decision makers and identifying suitable institutions to

collect data and carry out the project were the main challenges experienced. To mitigate these challenges, a multi-sectoral workgroup was established to ensure the continuity of the project implementation; evaluation of the relevance of the components of SDG-PSS; contextualization of the tool to address national needs; identification of relevant expertise for the implementation of the project; and identification of funding opportunities for national activities including building capacities of the members in topics related to the project. The effort of this workgroup allowed partners from Tunisia to collect data and use the SDG-PSS to produce evidence on the critical components and align SDG 6 targets with national challenges.

Progress against SDG 6 targets and indicators in Africa and Middle East has been uneven, and several differences can be found across the region. Two thirds of countries in Africa are still classified with low human development, and most of the progress towards the SDGs in the region can be related to the goals and targets that were also included in the MDGs, such as SDG 6.1 and 6.2. Significant data gaps can be identified in countries of the region, mainly because of the targets and indicators introduced by the 2030 Agenda. Participants highlighted that strengthening institutional leadership, raising awareness to engage political will, and building technical capacity are key aspects needed to support the implementation and use of the SDG-PSS in the Africa and the Middle East. Participants also stressed the need to further explore the opportunities of utilizing other regional organizations and initiatives to promote the implementation and use of SDG-PSS.



Photo 1 Participants of the Regional Workshop held in Tunis, Tunisia.



**Photo 2** Participants of the Regional Workshop held in Daegu, Republic of Korea.

### 3.1.2 Asia

Participants from Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkey, Vietnam, the host country, Republic of Korea, and UN organizations (UNU-INWEH, UNOSD, UN-Water) attended the regional workshop held in Daegu, Republic of Korea, 4-5 September 2019. Water professionals from Asian countries had the opportunity to learn from the experience of two Regional Hubs – Republic of Korea and Pakistan – in the implementation and use of SDG-PSS, while discussing how the tool can be used to produce critical evidence on the enabling environment of SDG 6.

In 2018, Republic of Korea’s Commission on Sustainable Development created its own nationally-adapted framework on SDGs dedicated to contextualizing the SDGs to the country’s challenges (MOE, 2019). In this context of national discussions around SDGs, the country has played an important role in the development and implementation of SDG-PSS. During the regional workshop, water experts from the Republic of Korea pointed out that national coordination was a key factor to create shared knowledge for effective use of the SDG-PSS, and third-party verification of data entered in tool was critical to ensure the quality of evidence generated. While this verification was done by national statistics authorities, the challenge of collecting and producing data on the national enabling environment for SDG 6 had to be mitigated by revising data from existing policies and programs to adapt them to the questionnaires of the SDG-PSS.

In Pakistan, Federal SDGs Support Units were established at the national level with the aim to

ensure early institutionalization of SDGs and provide coordination of lead ministries and institutions in the country (UNEP, 2017). The support units developed a national SDG framework aimed at transforming ‘international SDGs’ into ‘national SDGs’ by identifying and prioritizing national aspirations. In this context, the SDG-PSS has helped in promoting discussions around reporting mechanisms for SDG 6, analysing realistic aspirations for achieving targets by 2030 and preparing reports for different forums, while providing water experts with a tool to consider other dimensions for decision and policy making, such as integrity. Moreover, the SDG-PSS has been adapted to the SDG reporting mechanisms established in Pakistan at the provincial level, and consultations on the tool were held by provincial authorities to reflect on the challenges and gather the data needed to generate evidence on the enabling environments of SDG 6.

During the workshop, participants highlighted the importance of nominating a focal point for national implementation of the tool and strengthening regional cooperation. As the SDG-PSS is often associated to new approaches for creating evidence on the enabling environment of SDG 6, national focal points should be capable of championing the tool by engaging with different stakeholders from relevant areas. Countries from Asia can learn from the ‘champion system’ approach used during the project’s first phase, in which one policy maker and one expert or scientist in each Regional Hub were responsible for coordinating and promoting the implementation and use of the tool. Participants also recognized that, although many countries have already started mapping resources to deliver on SDG 6, data on the enabling environments of SDG 6 remains a key challenge. Some countries are still in the early



**Photo 3** Participants of the Regional Workshop held in San José, Costa Rica.

stages of identifying critical targets and indicators, which can add burdens on the implementation of SDG-PSS, while others already have reported on several targets and indicators.

### 3.1.3 Latin America and the Caribbean

On 4-5 March, 2020, participants from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago, the host country, Costa Rica, and UN, international and regional organizations (UNU-INWEH, UNOSD, UN-Water, UNDP and ECLAC) gathered in San José, Costa Rica. This regional workshop provided a perspective of global mechanisms for monitoring SDG 6 and regional issues on water and sanitation, with a focus on Costa Rica's progress on SDG 6 and the implementation and use of the SDG-PSS in the country.

In 2017, Costa Rica established an organizational structure to implement and monitor all the SDGs allowing the country to define SDG governance and establish inter-institutional coordination mechanisms (CEPAL, 2017). While the country was still in its early stages of SDG implementation, the technical group in charge of water statistics and data in Costa Rica – the Inter-Institutional Technical Committee for Water Statistics – was leading the production of data for defining priorities and aspirations on SDG 6 (Dirección de Agua, 2018). The ongoing use of SDG-PSS in Costa Rica is expected to support the strengthening of inter-institutional coordination in the water sector, translation of technical information, support of specialized technical groups and of local stakeholders in achieving SDG 6 targets. Nevertheless, the Regional Hub identified several challenges during the implementation of SDG-PSS, such as the lack of clarity in the definition of national indicators and targets, involvement of national institutions with

overlapping responsibilities around SDG 6, and requests from many international organizations for information. Strengthening institutional leadership and building technical capacity are key to ensure successful implementation of SDG-PSS. According to the experience of partners in Costa Rica, implementing and using the SDG-PSS at the national level should not be a burden to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this context, identifying national focal points to champion the implementation of the tool and its integration (as mentioned during the workshop, the “*internalization*” of the tool) in national reporting mechanisms for SDG 6 is a first important step. Identifying critical sectors, which are more likely to benefit from the use of the tool, is also an important step to engage key national partners into the implementation and use of the tool.

### 3.2 Final Workshop

The final workshop was hosted online by the UNOSD, UNU-INWEH, MOE and K-eco (10-11 November 2020), and attended by representatives of Regional Hubs (Costa Rica, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, and Tunisia) and participants from Brazil, Chile, Madagascar, Mexico, Panama, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Tajikistan, and Turkey. It was held in a hybrid form (combination of face-to-face meetings for participants in Republic of Korea, and online meetings for global participants) due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

During the final workshop, all Regional Hubs had opportunities to present on the experience gained during the second phase, highlighting important steps taken and future plans regarding their utilization of the SDG-PSS. Tunisia has emphasised the ongoing work with the multi-sectoral workgroup in collecting data for



**Photo 4** Partners in Republic of Korea of the Final Workshop held in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

the tool, while Republic of Korea has showcased the evidence generated by the tool’s Summary View, contextualizing the results of their national reality. Pakistan has pointed out their continuous efforts to engage with provincial level stakeholders to raise awareness on the use of the tool, and Costa Rica has shared important challenges in establishing priorities for the achievement of SDG 6. Brazil, Madagascar, and Turkey were also invited to share their recent engagement with the tool and potential involvement over the next phase. They accumulated experience with the use of the tool along with initial usage and efforts which acted as a guideline to acknowledge and identify water issues.

Discussions held during the final workshop allowed projects partners, Regional Hubs and participating countries to reflect on the needs for the next phase: strengthening support given by project partners to countries already engaged in the project; expanding the implementation and use of the SDG-PSS to more countries, and improving the tool after consultation with countries. According to a survey conducted with participants of the online final workshop, countries that engaged with the SDG-PSS needed more support for assuring the implementation of the tool at the national level and its effective use. This support often expresses broader national challenges, such as the need for funding and technical aid to implement a project within government institutions and organizations. Countries have also expressed their needs for improving capacity building initiatives in the next phase to assure effective use of the tool.

## 4 PROJECT SESSIONS AT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

During the second phase, project partners and Regional Hubs showcased the project and its approach in a series of international events by engaging with broader audiences of water experts, researchers and professionals to discuss the progress and challenges experienced by countries in their way to produce evidence on the enabling environments of SDG 6.

### 4.1 Stockholm World Water Week, Sweden

An SDG-PSS panel at The Stockholm World Water Week (Sweden, August 2019) presented the critical components of the platform, and demonstrated how they are measured and used to enable national evidence-based policy making and to accelerate progress towards water related SDG targets. Project partners and Regional Hubs shared their learnings with the use and implementation of the SDG-PSS, highlighting the importance of collaborative planning for producing evidence on the enabling environments of SDG 6 under limited water-related data and information. This panel provided insights into means of implementation and collaboration through water-related capacity needs assessment, financial arrangements, policy and institutional aspects, gender mainstreaming, disaster risk reduction, and integrity.

## 4.2 International Symposium on Knowledge and Capacity for the Water Sector, Netherlands

UNU-INWEH's presentation during the International Symposium on Knowledge and Capacity for the Water Sector (May, 2020) emphasized the approach used by project partners and Regional Hubs for building capacity for effective use of the tool. Early experience from using the SDG-PSS indicate that, without proper training, potential users of SDG-PSS might be overwhelmed by the tool's features, resulting in limited use. For this reason, project partners developed an online course to provide training to facilitate proper use of the tool. Providing effective capacity building and training was critical during the second phase's regional workshops, and online learning was the appropriate option to reach learners from different countries in a timely manner.

## 4.3 Dresden Nexus Conference, Germany

The SDG-PSS presentation held during the Dresden Nexus Conference (June, 2020) gave an overview of the tool's main features and the approach used by project partners and Regional Hubs to build the tool around six policy critical components to produce evidence on the enable environment of SDG 6. The presentation held during the online event was an opportunity to engage with researchers and experts from different countries wanting to know more about how the SDG-PSS can contribute to improving evidence-based policy making through its use.

## 4.4 Gender Summit, Kenya

Partners from Tunisia and UNU-INWEH presented at the Gender Summit (November, 2020) on the latest results produced by the multi-sectoral workshop in Tunisia for the gender component of SDG-PSS. The presentation highlighted that evidence generated by the SDG-PSS showed inadequate progress and lack of evidence for gender mainstreaming in the water sector. While national and regional initiatives for gender mainstreaming were undertaken to provide disaggregated data and indicators, the analysis allowed water professionals and policy makers in Tunisia to identify several gaps requiring concrete actions.

## 4.4 International Water Colloquium, Germany

UNU-INWEH and partners from Pakistan and Tunisia presented a lecture during the International Water Colloquium (December, 2020) hosted by United Nations University Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (UNU-FLORES), Dresden University of Technology and the University of Bonn. During the lecture, project partners presented

key aspects of the implementation and use of SDG-PSS in Regional Hubs. Highlighted elements from Tunisia's experience indicated the success in engaging national stakeholders through a multi-sectoral workgroup to discuss the relevance of tool's critical components in their national context and the critical data needed to assess the enabling environments of SDG 6 targets and indicators. The presentation shared learnings from the identification of gaps, weaknesses, trends and progress at various levels facilitated by the use of the SDG-PSS. Pakistan's contributions to the discussion pointed out the importance of provincial level consultations to build awareness around the use of the tool and the necessity to collect data needed to produce evidence. Overall, the SDG-PSS is an enabling tool for such developing countries stepping into the process of producing evidence on SDGs, particularly for SDG 6, as the tool has allowed water experts in Pakistan to consider other dimensions of water-related issues.

# 5 LESSONS LEARNED AND PERSPECTIVES

Throughout the implementation and use of SDG-PSS by Regional Hubs and new countries participating in the project, experience has shown that important steps can be taken to advance and strengthen the implementation and use of the tool. The second phase has allowed project partners and Regional Hubs to reflect on learnings to ensure effectiveness of the tool and project success:

- During the second phase, project partners committed to expand and improve the use of SDG-PSS in Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean by engaging with new countries around the Regional Hubs. This approach has allowed countries to learn from the experience of implementing and using the tool in Costa Rica, Pakistan, Republic of Korea and Tunisia, while promoting knowledge and technical exchange between water experts and development actors from different countries. The experience of organizing regional workshops shows that **strengthening regional partnership and cooperation** has been critical for the project's success. It has allowed project partners to promote discussions on the enabling environments in support of SDG 6 achievement, while learning from the challenges and possibilities encountered by countries during the first years of the SDG campaign.
- According to the experience of Regional Hubs, guaranteeing support from government actors to pursue the implementation and use of the SDG-PSS

is a challenge in the early stages. The participation of more countries from Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean regions has helped project partners to understand the difficulties encountered by water experts in raising awareness for the implementation of SDG-PSS. **Strengthening institutional leadership within countries** by mapping potential national partners and identifying resources available for the implementation and use of the tool are critical steps. Experience from Tunisian partners, for instance, shows that this can be achieved by defining a national SDG-PSS focal point responsible for leading discussions and promoting the tool among key stakeholders. National focal points can prioritize SDG 6 indicators and policy critical components that best address the needs of the country to showcase the use of the tool to potential partners.

- The SDG-PSS is built upon six policy critical components aiming at capturing key dimensions of the enabling environments of SDG 6. However, data required by the tool might be unavailable or fragmented across multiple databases and monitoring mechanisms. **Supporting and facilitating data collection** for the critical components is a challenge experienced by Regional Hubs. Users have reported difficulties in gathering the data needed, which might undermine the potential use of the tool. In this context, SDG-PSS users have provided significant feedback, suggesting improvements and updates in the questionnaires, adding new reporting features and revising the Summary View as the main output of the tool.
- In addition to the six policy critical components, the SDG-PSS has a component 'Status' to present data trends on SDG 6. This component was first conceptualized to allow users to visualize water-related datasets, running simple scenarios and presenting different aspirational outcomes for SDG 6 targets and indicators. However, some countries engaging with the SDG-PSS during the regional workshops struggled to identify the purpose of the component 'Status'. As reported by Regional Hubs, **advancing the understanding of enabling environments of SDG 6** will require contributions from national stakeholders involved in the implementation of the tool. For instance, the institutionalization of the tool in Tunisia supported by a multisectoral workgroup has led to important gains in knowledge among water experts and the civil society engaged in the project.

- The organization of regional workshops have shown that participants are often overwhelmed by the tool's main features, such as questionnaires, reporting pages and Summary View. The online course currently available in English, French and Spanish was developed to address these concerns while providing capacity building for new countries engaging with the tool. **Building technical capacity** for the effective use of the SDG-PSS is an important step for countries aiming to implement and use the tool. However, participants have identified gaps in the online course currently available. According to a survey conducted with participants of the final workshop, more training activities and hybrid learning opportunities (webinars and in-person training) should be promoted in the next phase of the project, providing advanced information on the tool's policy critical components and showcasing successful experiences from other Regional Hubs.

## 6 WAY FORWARD

Accelerating progress on SDG 6 for its successful achievement by 2030 is a global challenge. Many countries may still be lacking the critical evidence needed to support policy- and decision-making processes. Data on the enabling environment of SDG 6 may not be promptly available as the urgency for action grows over the next decade. Project partners and Regional Hubs have been able to capture these concerns and difficulties by engaging with countries from Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean regions during the regional workshops, while promoting the implementation and use of SDG-PSS as an emerging tool. Notwithstanding the results attained during the project's second phase, key gaps need to be addressed in the project's third phase:

- Building on the learnings from the second phase, project partners and Regional Hubs need to strengthen the engagement and participation of more countries in the project. This can be done by building on the interest of countries from Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean regions. For instance, the third phase might be supported by new Regional Hubs. Regional workshops might be organized to improve cooperation and exchange, and address gaps highlighted by participants in the second phase. Support given to current Regional Hubs – Costa Rica, Pakistan, Republic of Korea and Tunisia – might also be improved, as the effective use of the tool in these countries allows showcasing project success.

- The SDG-PSS has helped bridging a gap in the discussions around SDG 6 and many dimensions of enabling environments, but renewed challenges might allow project partners to improve the tool. Feedback gathered during the second phase shows that the tool must be improved in the next phase: the questionnaires can be revisited and updated; new features can be added to the reporting pages; and improvements can be made to the Summary View – the main output of the tool. Providing the SDG-PSS in new languages can also be considered over the next phase as more countries engage with the project and expand on linkages between the SDG-PSS and national initiatives to accelerate the achievement of SDG 6. Project partners might also explore interlinkages of SDG-PSS with other SDGs, such as SDG 13 (climate action).
- Improving capacity building will be critical during the third phase. More webinars and in-person training will be needed, and advanced courses might be developed to showcase experience of Regional Hubs and expand the discussions on the enabling environments of SDG 6. New online and in-person opportunities for engaging with water experts and learning from their experience in using the tool might be explored by project partners and Regional Hubs. Collaboration with other international organizations for capacity building might be promoted.



## APPENDIX A: LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS FROM SDG-PSS REGIONAL HUBS AND PROJECT PARTNERS

Title	Name	Country	Affiliation
Mr	Guillaume Baggio Ferla	Canada	UNU-INWEH
Mr	Hamid Mehmood	Canada	UNU-INWEH
Mr	Manzoor Qadir	Canada	UNU-INWEH
Mr	Vladimir Smakhtin	Canada	UNU-INWEH
Mr	Adrián Moreira Muñoz	Costa Rica	MIDEPLAN
Mr	Hugo Murillo Castro	Costa Rica	MIDEPLAN
Ms	Vivian Gonzalez	Costa Rica	MINAE
Ms	Bareerah Fatima	Pakistan	PCRWR
Mr	Faizan ul Hasan	Pakistan	PCRWR
Mr	Muhammad Ashraf	Pakistan	PCRWR
Mr	Chun Kyoo Park	Republic of Korea	UNOSD
Ms	Eun Hae Jeong	Republic of Korea	UNOSD
Ms	Yujeong Kim	Republic of Korea	UNOSD
Ms	Sara Castro De Hallgren	Republic of Korea	UNOSD
Mr	Okhyun Yang	Republic of Korea	UNOSD
Ms	Youngeun Choi	Republic of Korea	UNOSD
Ms	Jiyeon Kang	Republic of Korea	MOE
Mr	Sanghoon Lee	Republic of Korea	MOE
Mr	Jaechon You	Republic of Korea	K-eco
Mr	Ickhoon Choi	Republic of Korea	K-eco
Mr	Young-Gwon Yoo	Republic of Korea	K-eco
Ms	Jinah Park	Republic of Korea	K-eco
Mr	Yongjae Choi	Republic of Korea	K-eco
Ms	Hannah Jeong	Republic of Korea	K-eco
Mr	Hankyeol Kim	Republic of Korea	K-eco
Ms	Olfa Mahjoub	Tunisia	INRGRID
Mr	Ouasli Abderrahman	Tunisia	BPEH, MARHP
Mr	Hamed Daly Hassen	Tunisia	ONAGRI, MARHP
Ms	Noura Ferjani	Tunisia	ONAGRI, MARHP

## REFERENCES

Bartram, J., Brocklehurst, C., Bradley, D., Muller, M., Evans, B. 2018. Policy review of the means of implementation targets and indicators for the sustainable development goal for water and sanitation. *Npj Clean Water*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41545-018-0003-0>

CEPAL. 2017. Decree No. 40203. Governance and implementation of the SDGs in Costa Rica. Observatorio Regional de Planificación para el Desarrollo de América Latina y el Caribe. Available at: <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/es/marcos-regulatorios/decreto-no-40203-gobernanza-e-implementacion-de-los-ods-en-costa-rica>

Dirección de Agua. 2018. Reglamento Interno Comité Técnico Interinstitucional Para Estadísticas Del Agua. Available at: <http://www.da.go.cr/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Reglamento-CTI-Estadisticas-Agua-2018.pdf>

Elder, M., Bengtsson, M., Akenji, L. 2016. An Optimistic Analysis of the Means of Implementation for Sustainable Development Goals: Thinking about Goals as Means. *Sustainability*, 8(9), 962. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8090962>

MOE (Ministry of Environment – Commission on Sustainable Development). 2019. A report on Korean-Sustainable Development Goals (K-SDGs) 2019. Available at: [http://ncsd.go.kr/pdf/K-SDGs\\_report\\_eng.pdf](http://ncsd.go.kr/pdf/K-SDGs_report_eng.pdf)

UN (United Nations). 2018. Sustainable Development Goal 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation. New York: UN. Available at: [https://www.unwater.org/publication\\_categories/sdg-6-synthesis-report-2018-on-water-and-sanitation/](https://www.unwater.org/publication_categories/sdg-6-synthesis-report-2018-on-water-and-sanitation/)

UN (United Nations). 2020. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020. New York: UN. Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2020.pdf>

UN-Water. 2017. Means of Implementation: A focus on Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 17. Available at: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/means-implementation-focus-sustainable-development-goals-6-17/>

UNEP. 2017. Pakistan's Annual Report 2017. Available at: [https://www.sdgpkakistan.pk/uploads/pub/SDGs\\_Annual\\_Progress\\_Report\\_2017.pdf](https://www.sdgpkakistan.pk/uploads/pub/SDGs_Annual_Progress_Report_2017.pdf)  
Weitz, N., Carlsen, H., Nilsson, M., Skånberg, K. 2017. Towards systemic and contextual priority setting for implementing the 2030 Agenda. *Sustainability Science*, 13(2), 531–548. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-017-0470-0>

WHO. 2017. Financing universal water, sanitation and hygiene under the sustainable development goals. UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water. Geneva: WHO. Available at: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-glaas-2017-financing-universal-water-sanitation-higiene-sustainable-development-goals/>

WHO. 2019. National systems to support drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene: global status report 2019. UN-Water global analysis and assessment of sanitation and drinking-water (GLAAS) 2019 report. Geneva: World Health Organization (WHO). Available at: [https://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/publications/glaas-report-2019/en/](https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/glaas-report-2019/en/)





UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-INWEH**

Institute for Water,  
Environment and Health

204-175 Longwood Road South  
Hamilton, ON Canada L8P 0A1

1-905-667-5511  
[www.inweh.unu.edu](http://www.inweh.unu.edu)