

SDG Synergies: a tool to support decision making in implementing the 2030 Agenda

In the framework of the 2023 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)
2023 SDGs Learning, Training and Practice



Date — Wednesday, 12 July 2023 8:30am – 10:00am EDT

Time and place: virtual ZOOM, session 5 8:30am – 10:00am EDT.

Background:

In the second half of SDG implementation, evidence-based solutions and science partnerships will be crucial to ensure that acceleration happens and is effective. Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda must support SDG policy and budget decisions that are backed by science and expertise.

This is why the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) developed SDG Synergies, an open-source and web-based tool that can help policymakers, academia, and civil society to promote science-based SDG implementation and acceleration efforts. SDG Synergies shows interactions in any policy agenda, and how they produce synergies and trade-offs. For policymakers, this means that different development sectors cannot be addressed individually – rather, they must be treated as a system, since every policy outcome affects all the others. SDG Synergies aims to support governments in implementing the SDGs, using customized analysis.

About SEI:

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) is an international non-profit research and policy organization that tackles environment and development challenges. SEI has offices on five continents and works locally, regionally, and globally. SEI has seven centers around the world in the UK (SEI York), the US (SEI US), Thailand (SEI Asia), Kenya (SEI Africa), Estonia (SEI Tallinn), and Colombia (SEI Latin America). Our headquarters is located in Sweden (SEI HQ).

We connect science and decision-making to develop solutions for a sustainable future for all. Our work spans climate, water, air and land-use issues, governance, the economy, gender and health. Stakeholder involvement is at the heart of our efforts to build capacity, strengthen institutions and equip partners for long-term change. Our knowledge and findings are accessible to decision-makers and civil society. We develop projects and tools to predict better results and conduct effective planning.

About SDG Synergies:

SDG Synergies is a practical tool for understanding how groups of policy areas and targets interact, using systems thinking. Designed by researchers at Stockholm Environment Institute originally to support governments in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, SDG Synergies could be invaluable within and beyond the field of sustainability.

An external evaluation of SDG Synergies by the Swedish National Coordinator for Agenda 2030¹, concludes that the approach generates useful insights for municipalities when taking on the challenge to implement the 2030 Agenda. It adds value in sub-national contexts for identifying and assessing synergies and trade-offs, and several municipalities saw broader applications of the method beyond sustainability planning. It has been applied in many countries and with many focus topics, for instance, in Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Mexico, Sweden, the EU, amounts others.

We aim to enhance the pertinence of the tool for decision-making in the second half of SDG implementation by improving existing features, software robustness and exploring integration of features in demand. The idea is to ensure that the tool is up to date and well-positioned as a decision-making support tool in the second half of implementation of the SDGs promoting uptake through improved user experience, training and capacity-building.

Objectives:

This session aims to enhance uptake and capacity to use SDG Synergies, targeting specifically potential users from governments, academia, and civil society worldwide. The HLPF is an

¹ <https://agenda2030samordnaren.se/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/utvardering-sdg-synergies-samordnaren.pdf>

opportunity to showcase SDG Synergies at key policy events to advance knowledge in cross-impact interactions for the SDGs. From SEI, we want to advance skills acquisition for using the tool, supporting peer-to-peer collaboration, and networking.

SEI will host a training session focused on SDG Synergies. The session will be a workshop to present the features of the tool: how to use it, some examples of national and regional case studies that used the tool and giving instructions to access to the tool.

Agenda

8:30 am – 8:40 am (10min)	Opening – welcome words Supporting governments and decision makers in the mid-term implementation of the SDGs through science-based tools such as SDG Synergies by Åsa Persson – SEI Research Director, member of the Independent Group of Scientists to prepare the 2023 UN Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR).
8:40 am – 9:10 am (30min)	Methodology: technical briefing by SEI scientists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting cross impact analysis and network analysis • Introduction to the online tool and its features • Presenting some examples of national and regional case studies
9:10 am – 9:50 am (40min)	Training by SEI scientists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions to access the tool • Tutorial on its use and demo • Q&A
9:50am – 10:00 am (10 min)	Closing remarks by Ivonne Lobos – SEI Senior Expert