

**SDGs Learning, Training and Practice 2023**

**Informal Summary Template**

***Summary of the*** ***SDGs Learning Session:* Session 5. SDG Synergies: a tool to support decision making in implementing the 2030 Agenda**

12 July 2023, 8:30 am – 10:00 am EDT

*Virtual Session*

**Background Information**

SDGs Learning Session 5 *SDG Synergies: a tool to support decision making in implementing the 2030 Agenda* webpage and webcast can be founded at: <https://sdgs.un.org/events/session-5-sdg-synergies-tool-support-decision-making-implementing-2030-agenda-52866>

This session aimed to enhance uptake and capacity to use SDG Synergies, targeting specifically potential users from governments, academia, and civil society worldwide. The HLPF was an opportunity to showcase SDG Synergies at key policy events to advance knowledge in cross-impact interactions for the SDGs. • The Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) has developed SDG Synergies, an open-source and web-based tool that can help policymakers, academia, and civil society promote science-based SDG implementation and acceleration efforts.

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) wants to advance skills acquisition for using the tool, supporting peer-to-peer collaboration, and networking. SEI hosted a training session focused on SDG Synergies. The session was 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 the tool.

**Main Partners**

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI):

* Dr. Åsa Persson, SEI Research Director, member of the Independent Group of Scientists to prepare the 2023 UN Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR).
* Ms. Ivonne Lobos – SEI Senior Expert
* Mr. Efraim Hernández – SEI Research Associate
* Ms. Daniela Maestre – SEI Research Assistant

Centre for Poverty Analysis, Sri Lanka (CEPA)

* Ms. Karin Fernando, Senior Professional.

Former SDG and development policy planning focal point in the Government of Mongolia:

* Ms. Suzanna Sumkhuu

**Short summary of session and key topics discussed:**

Please provide a short summary of the session and the key topics discussed, with a bulleted list of the key issues discussed during your SDGs Learning Session. (Maximum 700 words)

* Session 5 of the SDG Learning Session series focused on training for government, academia, and other interested stakeholders.
* SDG Synergies is a practical tool for understanding how groups of policy areas and targets interact, using systems thinking. Originally developed by researchers at the Stockholm Environment Institute to help governments implement the Sustainable Development Goals, SDG Synergies could be invaluable within and beyond the field of sustainability.
* SDG Synergies is an online and open access tool. Users request access by sending an email to info@sdgsynergies.org with some institutional information and/or the type of analysis they expect to conduct in the tool. The features of the tool provide flexibility to set up different policies and SDGs, depending on their relevance. Despite the fact that the selection of variables for the analysis and the scoring process is time consuming, SDG Synergies is easy to use, and the results and visualizations are comprehensive and complex.
* The session discussed the role of science-based tools and solutions in bridging the gap between research, policy and practice to achieve the global goals of the 2030 Agenda.
* In the second half of the SDG implementation, evidence-based solutions and scientific partnerships will be crucial to ensure that acceleration happens and is effective. To accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, SDG policy and budget decisions must be underpinned by science and expertise.
* In order to realize the full potential of the promise of the SDG framework, it is important to use tools to support decision-making in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. SDG Synergies is useful to achieve this through different objectives. SDG Synergies helps to look at synergies and trade-offs between SDGs, as well as synergies and trade-offs between a group of policies. This demonstrates the flexibility of the tool.
* Science-based tools are available for policymakers to use to foster partnerships and advance the analysis of interactions. The first step is to select the policies, goals, targets or SDGs and develop them in a cross-impact matrix in the online tool. The second step is to score the matrices and use the results of the interactions. The results of the analysis are a guide to help the user make an informed decision on which areas to prioritize, what synergies are possible and what trade-offs may arise, supported by expertise. Finally, the analysis of synergies and trade-offs can be taken up at the national or local government level to prioritize and inform progress through Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) or Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), to assess transboundary policy coherence, and so on.
* The tool allows for the visualization of these interactions in the system and provides a rationalization of how to cluster or group SDGs to successfully score policy interactions.
* The assessment process is subjective. The people who score it come with the rationalization of the score. It is very important that the scoring is documented and that relevant stakeholders are involved. Asking different groups to answer the same interactions across SDGs and across different policies is valuable to have more meaningful discussions.
* SDG Synergies shows the interactions in any policy agenda, and how they create synergies and trade-offs. For policymakers, this means that different development sectors cannot be addressed in isolation, but must be treated as a system, as each policy outcome affects all the others.

Relevant links:

* [SDG Synergies website](https://www.sdgsynergies.org/)
* [Login in to the SDG Synergies tool](https://tool.sdgsynergies.org/admin/login)
* [SEI projects and tools: SDG Synergies](https://www.sei.org/projects-and-tools/tools/sdg-synergies/)
* [weaADAPT: knowledge base SDG Synergies tool](https://www.weadapt.org/knowledge-base/sei-urban-toolbox-for-liveable-cities/sdg-synergies-tool)

**Key recommendations for action**

In this section, please summarize the 3-5 key recommendations and main takeaways from your session (maximum 300 words).

1. SDG Synergies aims to support governments in the practical implementation of the SDGs through customized analysis of the interactions between the SDGs, or between the SDGs and other agendas.
2. SDG Synergies targets governments and policymakers who want to localize the SDGs and align them with the country's national development goals.
3. SDG Synergies is useful for conducting policy coherence research not only on the SDGs, but also on any other policy agenda, national or local development plans, specific economic or environmental sectors, etc.
4. SDG Synergies is available to develop cross-impact analyses and scenario interactions at different geographical scales, based on the knowledge of local experts and stakeholders.
5. SDG Synergies is available to governments or policy makers who expect to present SDG interactions between national or local policies, as part of their Voluntary National Review (VNR) or Voluntary Local Review (VLR).