UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY
UNU-INWEH
Institute for Water, Environment and Health

Korea Environment Corporation

Ministry of Environment

United Nations Office for Sustainable Development
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SDG 6 Policy Support System User Guide

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Introduction

From 2016-2018, the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) in partnership with the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD/DSDG/UNDESA), the Korea Environment Corporation (K-eco) and the Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea and national partners from Ghana, Tunisia, Pakistan and Costa Rica, developed and delivered the project "*Water in the World We Want*", by investigating options to support policy and decision making under situations with limited data on water and sanitation.

The key product developed in this project is the SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS). 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. Having one agreed, fit-for-policy water-related evidence base will allow more a comprehensive and integrated evidence-based policy, and more effective and informed decision-making around water-related SDGs.

The SDG-PSS

The SDG-PSS is designed to enable government actors and stakeholders to collaborate and create an agreed, authoritative national-level evidence around SDG 6. In the language of the 2030 Agenda, strengthening and re-aligning enabling environments to drive successful implementation of SDGs will become a critical step for many countries. However, evidence and pertinent data for policy makers and development actors to make this happen may still be missing, overlapping – or even fragmented as the urgency for actions is set to grow in the initial years of the SDG era.

For this reason, SDG-PSS builds upon several years of work around water and sanitation issues and draws on more than 20 well-established tools, frameworks, and resources that are commonly used for water-related policy making at the national and international levels. In this way, the countries that are used to report data while using such international tools should be able to easily adopt and adapt the SDG-PSS for their national reporting on SDG 6.

There are six critical components of SDG-PSS designed around an Evidence Framework. Each critical component presents a perspective of related priorities, needs and gaps to assist policy makers on decision making:

1. Capacity Assessment
2. Finance Assessment
3. Policy and Institutional Assessment
4. Gender Mainstreaming
5. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)/Resilience Mainstreaming
6. Integrity

The SDG-PSS has also a generic 'Status' component to present data and information related to each SDG 6 target and indicator while considering aspiration in 2030. This generic component can be used to set up national targets for SDG 6 for international monitoring mechanisms.

The four elements within each SDG-PSS component

Each **component** is made up of 4 **elements**: Resources; Questionnaire; Data; and Reporting. Figure 1 illustrates how the components and elements of the SDG-PSS fit together.

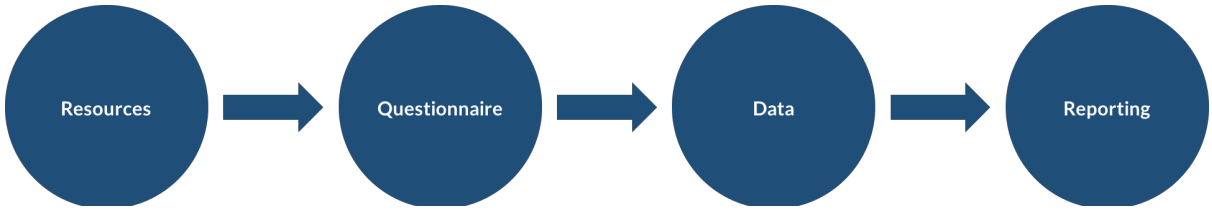

Figure 1: SDG-PSS workflow

- Each component is made up of four elements: resources, questionnaire, data and reporting. When you select a component, you will be automatically taken to the resource element of that component to start.
- To get to any of these elements, you can click on those buttons which will show at the top of the page for each component of the SDG-PSS.

1. Resources

- The resources element is the first element that appears after selecting a component.
- This element lists existing tools that can be used to build evidence for that component. There were specific criteria used to choose whether a tool would be included or not:
    - All tools included were developed at an international level, or were developed at a national level and have been adapted to enable their use in different countries. This means that Government actors from many countries could use this component of the Framework and gain useful evidence.
    - All tools were developed by experts from an authoritative organisation – a national Government agency, a UN agency, or an international NGO, for example.
- The name of the tool, each indicator or measure in the tool, and a link to the tool online (if available) are all listed.
- The Resources element also marks which indicators have been used in the SDG-PSS, and which have not. There were specific criteria used to choose whether an indicator or measure would be included:
    - Many of the tools developed for water-related work focus on water and sanitation supply services. The indicator was only included if it could address ALL SDG 6 targets.
    - Only indicators that could be used for national-level understanding were adopted. This Framework does not address, in general, sub-national or local processes, though it can be adapted for sub-national use.

    - If a tool had draft indicators, or indicators that had not been fully agreed on, these indicators were not included. This occurred most often when the developers of the tool did not have any guidelines on how data for the indicator could be collected.
- Users are welcome to browse the resources element to see if the tools and the indicators chosen for the SDG-PSS suit their context.
- After the resources element and the inventory have been understood, the questionnaire element should be viewed.

2. Questionnaire

- The goal of the SDG-PSS is to bring together data and evidence that are collected from many different tools, frameworks, and resources. However, data entry can be prone to error, time consuming and difficult for people not used to the task. Therefore, the SDG-PSS uses a systematic approach to make data entry easier and more accurate.
- It is anticipated that some questions might be easily answered, and some may take more time to monitor and report on accurately. It is possible to use the SDG-PSS with answers left blank, as the system is designed to work with limited data.
- The questionnaires are repetitive since the same questions are asked for each SDG 6 indicator. However, because the SDG 6 indicators cover many different water management fields, it is anticipated that different professionals from different agencies and institutions will answer different questions; or that one person tasked with filling in the questionnaire for a particular component will need to collaborate with many different professionals in order to find and enter the answers needed. These work processes need to be discussed and decided on between all partners who are interested in using the SDG PSS at a national level.
- Whenever the user is filling a questionnaire with data, the questionnaire can be saved at any time. For this, a button 'Save' is available at the bottom of the page. Once the user returns to that specific questionnaire, all data previously entered will be saved. Moreover, in order to update the data and reporting elements, the user must click on the button 'Save'

3. Data

- This element is the worksheet that holds all of the data – the measures, values, and responses that have been entered into the questionnaire.
- The data element is automatically updated from the questionnaire. The user does not have to enter data into the data element. In order to update the data element, the user must click on the button 'Save' at the bottom of the questionnaire.
- This element often contains calculations and formulas that are provided automatically once the user enters data in the questionnaire. To change a value in the data element, the user must go back to the questionnaire.

4. Reporting

- Every component has a reporting element. This element shows graphics that may be useful for country-level and ad-hoc reports.
- The graphics available here can be cut and pasted into other software – for example, PowerPoint or Word- to be shared as needed.

Summary View

The Summary View is the highest-level overview of all components of SDG-PSS where data and information provided into different components becomes useable evidence. In the Summary View, the datasets are synthesised and analysed to present key evidence that best presents the progress against each SDG 6 target and indicator at the national level. The six critical components are presented in the following sequence: Capacity Assessment; Finance Assessment; Policy and Institutional Assessment; Gender Mainstreaming; DRR/Resilience Mainstreaming; and Integrity.

Reading across the Summary View, each component is summarised under sub-components where red colour represents inadequate progress that needs attention towards achieving the specific target; dark green colour represents significant progress suggesting good progress towards the achievement of the specific target; light green colour shows an area of adequate progress that needs to be maintained; and white colour shows no data available for the specific target or indicator.

Accessing the SDG-PSS

The SDG-PSS is an online and free system. The system is designed as a collaborative resource that can be used by water professionals and policy makers either working on national teams or independently. The SDG-PSS can be accessed through the system's website: http://sdgpss.net/en/.

First and foremost, any user interested in using the SGD-PSS needs to create an account, and the registration is done easily following the instructions on the system's website. However, users need to pay attention to some details to assure proper access and use of the system. The SDG-PSS allows **two types** of users: National team member and Generic user.

National team member

Since the SDG-PSS is designed to allow countries to assemble national teams to work on the system, members of a specific national team share the same version of the SDG-PSS. In this way, when a member of a specific national team is creating an account, the user must select the role 'National team member' in the registration form available on the system's website.

After completing the registration, an email is sent automatically to the national focal point to be approved. This procedure assures that national teams are made up only by approved members. Once the national focal point approves the registration, the user can access the SDG-PSS and share the system with all the other members of the specific national team. All data entered in the system is shared among these members.

Generic user

Generic users - those who are not part of a specific national team - can also use the SDG-PSS. For this, in the registration form available on the system's website, the user must select the role 'Generic user'. After registration, the user can access the SDG-PSS, and the system is not shared with any other user. Data is kept confidential to that user only.

SDG-PSS e-course

The SDG-PSS is designed as a web-based user-friendly system. Users are expected to learn quickly how the system operates. However, filling the SDG-PSS with data may be time-consuming and complex. In order to address capacity building for systematic and effective use of the SDG-PSS, a free web-based course was designed to provide training and teaching on how to use the system.

On completion of this self-paced e-course, participants should be able to: access the SDG-PSS online; navigate through the SDG-PSS pages and its critical components, and to use the SDG-PSS to generate and analyse evidence on the national progress and the enabling environment of the achievement of

SDG 6. The SDG-PSS e-course is designed to water-focused policy makers, practitioners, and researchers from all countries. However, as the SDG-PSS is built upon six critical components, any water professional and or policy maker working on SDGs can make good use of the system to better understand and work with SDGs.

Components of the SDG-PSS

The SDG-PSS consists of the following components: Capacity Assessment; Finance Assessment; Policy and Institutional Assessment; Gender Mainstreaming; DRR/Resilience Mainstreaming; and Integrity. The critical components of SDG-PSS were identified using two main criteria:

1. Its ability to encourage creation of national enabling environments to implement SDG 6, as supported by available literature and by the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda;
2. Whether the component is supported by at least one tool, system or framework developed by an authoritative body, which is relevant to all SDG 6 targets (not only 6.1 and 6.2) and which can be or has already been adapted to an SDG context for use at the national level.

Key existing tools, systems and frameworks that were considered first included those developed by UN agencies and related to the Water Governance Principles of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). But the SDG-PSS did not adopt a single existing framework or tool exclusively, as none was seen as specifically developed to assess and monitor the means of implementation for the water related SDGs.

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. Through this system, policy makers, scientists and development actors are empowered to gather the critical information, evidence and data (where available) needed to define and develop national policies and policy action to address water-related issues.

Status

The 'Status' component aims to present water related data and information to allow the assessment of each SDG 6 target and indicator while considering aspiration in 2030. This component is expected to present SDG-PSS as a collaboration tool, allowing different government partners to visualize all water-related datasets together, run simple scenarios, and present different aspirational outcomes. The 'Status' component can also contribute to setting up national targets for SDG 6 for reporting through international monitoring mechanisms and processes.

SDG 6 is monitored through national and international mechanisms and processes, such as national level monitoring and reporting and international level assessment, for example, SDG 6 Synthesis Report on Water and Sanitation (UN, 2018). The practices and tools for SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2 may be more easily available compared to other SDG targets, i.e. SDG 6.3 to 6.6, based on the following:

- At an international level, SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2 are being monitored by the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP).
- For SDG targets 6.3 to 6.6, a new global monitoring initiative, GEMI – Global Environmental Management Initiative – provides integrated monitoring of these SDG targets. GEMI focuses on the development of monitoring methodologies and other support tools as well as the establishment of a global baseline for SDG targets 6.3 to 6.6. GEMI is an integral part of SDG

6 monitoring, and its implementation will be harmonized with that of JMP and GLAAS, as a part of the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative (IMI) for SDG 6.

- The monitoring of the means of implementation (SDG targets 6.a and 6.b) can build on the UN-Water led GLAAS and GEMI reporting towards target 6.5 on integrated water resources management (IWRM).

The key tools and documents used to develop the Status component of SDG-PSS included:

- WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (WHO and UNICEF, 2018): https://washdata.org/monitoring
- Metadata on Suggested Indicators for Global Monitoring of SDG 6 on Water and Sanitation (UN-Water, 2018): http://www.sdg6monitoring.org/indicators/
- IWRM surveys available through the IWRM data portal (UNEP-DHI, 2018): http://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/iwrmmonitoring.html

Capacity Assessment

As water-related SDGs have expanded the water agenda developed over the MDG era, the capacity of countries to develop and implement evidence-based policies and build effective enabling environments in the early years of the SDGs is critical. According to UN-Water, there is a need to invest in capacity-building as this is a major challenge many countries are facing to progress with SDG 6 achievement (UN-Water, 2015). Therefore, assessing capacity needs and planning and implementing need-specific capacity development is crucial for many countries.

To meet national capacity assessment challenges, policy makers must identify the key capacities they have and the additional capacities they need to reach SDG 6 targets. The SDG-PSS Capacity Assessment component is designed to guide decision makers and managers through this process. A capacity assessment analysis is desired as this would generate a new understanding of capacity assets, needs and gaps. UNDP perceives capacity assessment not as a single action but as a continuous cycle (UNDP, 2008), and one that requires political support to enable an ongoing interface between building evidence and using the evidence. This understanding informs capacity development policies, strategies and plans that will guide lead agencies and development actors.

The key tools and documents used to develop the Capacity Assessment component included:

i. Capacity Assessment Methodology User's Guide (UNDP, 2008): http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/undp-capacity-assessment-methodology/UNDP%20Capacity%20Assessment%20Users%20Guide.pdf
ii. UN-Water global analysis and assessment of sanitation and drinking-water (GLAAS, 2014): http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/139735/1/9789241508087_eng.pdf
iii. Toolkit for Capacity Development (European Commission, 2010):

https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/guidelines-toolkit-capacity-development-2010_en.pdf

Finance Assessment

As the 2030 Development Agenda brings a new understanding of sustainability with its array of goals, targets and a higher level of ambition for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, financial assessments now play a critical role in informing governments on the gaps and weakness in their funding mechanisms for the water sector. Providing enough funds to achieve SDGs is often regarded as a key barrier between governments and sustainable development. This holds true for countries across low-, middle- and high-income economies. For example, estimates on the total capital cost of meeting targets 6.1 and 6.2 by 2030 are $114 billion per year (GLAAS, 2017), while 77% of countries involved in GLAAS reporting have public funding levels that are insufficient to meet WASH targets (GLAAS, 2014). Still, the governments in middle- and low-income countries, UN agencies and other water-related international organizations may have more experience and capacity to work with and plan for funding mechanisms for SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2, as these targets inherit decades of discussions and accomplishments from the MDGs, compared to the capital required to achieve SDG targets 6.3 to 6.6.

The GLAAS report in 2017 emphasized that most countries have financial mechanisms for water and sanitation and national budgets for WASH are increasing by an average of 4.9% above inflation annually. However, two-thirds of countries reported that financial plans are not consistently followed, and 80% of the countries surveyed reported inadequate funding to meet their national targets, a gap that can deepen among vulnerable regions and its population, such as rural areas (GLAAS, 2017). Moreover, national funding needs to meet only WASH related SDG targets continue to outweigh available resources (World Bank Group and UNICEF, 2017).

Although funding is allocated for SDG 6.1 and 6.2, there is a need for clear and realistic evidence-based financing mechanisms to fill the funding gaps for SDG 6.1 and 6.2, and for funding for SDG targets 6.3 to 6.6. Several internationally developed toolkits exist to measure and monitor requirements and flows in the water sector. Almost all of them are targeted at WASH and relevant to SDG 6.1 and 6.2, such as the GLAAS and Tracking Financing to WASH (TrackFin).

It is currently difficult to find tools to create evidence for financial decision making around SDG targets 6.3 to 6.6. The SDG-PSS does this. It allows countries to track financial mechanisms' strengths and weaknesses and provides evidence to policy makers to help them see what adjustments are needed to financial resources for water-related sustainable development.

The key tools and documents used to develop the Finance Assessment component included:

- Toolkit for Integrity (OECD, 2014): http://www.oecd.org/cleangovbiz/CGB-Toolkit-2014.pdf
- UN-Water global analysis and assessment of sanitation and drinking-water (GLAAS, 2014): http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/139735/1/9789241508087_eng.pdf

Policy and Institutional Assessment

In recent years, the international water community has focused on governance as "the most important challenge" to improve service provision and broader water management (UNDP, 2013). Assessments of the governance of water resources can guide the design of policies and strengthen institutional power by helping to identify weakness, strengths and gaps. These assessments are particularly critical for achieving SDGs, as the 2030 Development Agenda emphasizes links and interactions among SDGs, and the importance of implementing it as an indivisible whole (Nilsson, 2016). Indeed, if countries try to achieve targets individually or do not understand interlinkages, they risk producing perverse outcomes. So, increased policy coherence and evidence-based policy-making are critical in achieving SDG 6.

In addition to the importance of strong evidence-based policy-making for the SDG framework – specifically for SDG 6 – the water-related policies need to be practical enough to deliver on these targets in many countries. In this way, business as usual policies and institutional power are not enough. Also, weak policy implementation in low- and middle-income countries is an opportunity for SDG-PSS to provide an evidence framework that allows countries to measure their progress against water policies and identify their weaknesses and strengths, to improve SDG 6 implementation. Comprehensive water related policy and institutional assessments can also guide the design of effective evidence-based policy interventions by identifying areas where changes are needed, and the actions needed to make them happen. Without institutions that are fully empowered and able to implement policies and national strategies for water and sanitation, policies will not result in progress in the SDG timeframe.

The key tools and documents used to develop the Policy and Institutional Assessment component included:

- User's Guide to Assessing Water Governance (UNDP, 2013): http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/oslo_governance_centre/user-s-guide-on-assessing-water-governance.html
- Water Governance in OECD Countries: A multi-level approach (OECD, 2011): http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264119284-en

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is an important aspect of achieving water and sanitation-related targets. As early as 1992, Principle 3 of the Dublin Principles stated that women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water (UN, 1992). More recently, UNESCO has highlighted that although policy makers and development actors may be committed to promoting equity and non-discrimination, this commitment must be enshrined and codified in policy and plans (Seager, 2015), as no water assessment can be realistic without a gender perspective, and no decision making is inclusive unless both women and men participate in the process.

Gender aspects must be considered as a core element of all water-related policy at national and international levels. It is now widely understood that the gendered dynamics of water and sanitation

reinforce the linkages between poverty, gender and sustainable development. Looking at SDG-oriented policies on gender and water, there is general agreement that women and men express different priorities, uses and needs for water and sanitation, for water-related ecosystem use and water security.

SDG-PSS supports gender mainstreaming into SDG water and sanitation-related targets by providing planners and decision makers with an evidence framework to measure the status of water and sanitation through a gender lens and create an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming in the water sector. A clear picture of the gender situation is only possible with sex-disaggregated data. A lack of this data means that policy-oriented information cannot be corroborated, that comparative analysis of countries and regions cannot be done and that strategies for tackling gender and water cannot be formulated on based ion credible evidence.

The SDG-PSS draws its Gender Mainstreaming component from the World Water Assessment Report Gender Toolkit – an output of the UN-WWAP-UNESCO Project on Gender Sensitive Water Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting (Seager, 2015). The toolkit proposes five priority areas for gender mainstreaming: water governance; safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene; decision-making and knowledge production; transboundary water resource management; and water for income generation.

The key tools and documents used to develop the Gender Mainstreaming component included:

- Sex-disaggregated indicators for water assessment, monitoring and reporting (Seager, 2015): http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/Sex_disaggregated_indicatorsfor_water_assessment_monito.pdf
- Gender in Water and Sanitation (WSP, 2010): https://www.wsp.org/sites/wsp.org/files/publications/WSP-gender-water-sanitation.pdf

DRR/Resilience Mainstreaming

Under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), disaster risk reduction and resilience building are identified as mechanisms to anticipate, plan for and reduce disaster risk to protect people, communities and countries. From 2005-2015, over 700,000 people have lost their lives, and some 1.4 million have been injured because of disasters. More than 1.5 billion people were affected by disasters, with women, children and people in vulnerable situations disproportionately affected (UNISDR, 2015). Climate change and extreme weather events mean that countries will face massive economic losses from the damage or destruction of assets. Total economic losses over this period total more than $1.3 trillion (UNISDR, 2015).

The relationship between risk, resilience and water requires a multi-dimensional approach. Water-related policies must assure sufficient funds to reduce risks and mitigate their impacts, protect critical water infrastructure, strengthen policies on water and critical infrastructure, and empower institutions to act effectively. This can only be done if sufficient evidence is available and shared among agencies so that disaster risk governance and coordination among relevant stakeholders happens. Indeed, decision-making must be based on the open exchange of data that is disaggregated

by sex, age and disability. Risk information needs to be easily accessible, up-to-date, easy to digest, science-based – and as relevant complemented by traditional knowledge (UNISDR, 2015).

SDG-PSS engages with the planning, policy and preparedness objectives of the Sendai Framework. While Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is broader than water, many of its indicators can be adapted to the water sector. The key framework used to develop the DRR/Resilience component of SDG-PSS was Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction:

- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (UNISDR, 2015): http://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf

Integrity

Water governance is rules, practices and processes that guide decisions for the management of water resources and services are and used to hold governments accountable. Mainstreaming integrity and transparency practices across water policies, water institutions and water governance frameworks is critical to achieve greater accountability and trust in water related policy-making (OECD, 2015). Corruption is one of the main obstacles to sustainable economic, political and social progress, for both low, middle and high-income economies. Bribery, nepotism, fraud, theft and extortion impose costs on business and undermine transparent policy-making. This is costly, especially in the water sector whose effective management relies on empowered institutions and adequate funding.

Despite the widespread recognition that integrity in governance and operational structures is a prerequisite for effective water management, corruption in public water institutions remains one a chronic and challenging issue that many countries need to address (UN, 2006). Increased efforts are needed to improve international and national water governance and eliminate corruption in the sector. Recent reports indicate that there is *no evidence that corruption has declined i*n the water sector globally (WIN, 2016). This points to an urgent need to take stock of recent experiences, identify good practices and develop practical tools to assist different levels of government and other stakeholders to ensure effective, fair and sustainable water policies. To address these challenges, the SDG-PSS allows producing evidence on transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation in the water sector based on indicators that enable the collection of data at the national level on issues from whistle-blower protection to lobbying with integrity and transparency (OECD, 2014).

The international tool used to develop the Integrity component was the OECD Toolkit for Integrity:

- Toolkit for Integrity (OECD, 2014): http://www.oecd.org/cleangovbiz/CGB-Toolkit-2014.pdf

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