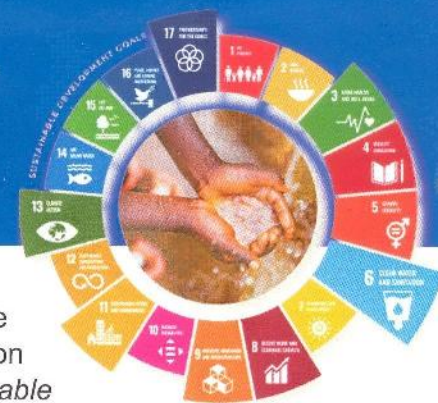


Accelerating the Implementation of Water-related SDGs in Pakistan



Under increasing urgency to respond to water-related sustainable development, national governments need to accelerate progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 to assure a *sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*. Since 2017, a consortium of partners has implemented the project *Accelerating the Implementation of Water-related SDGs* to investigate how countries can address critical evidence gaps and deliver better policies to achieve SDG 6 even under data limited conditions. 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 and Tunisia along with Pakistan partnered in a collaborative approach of experts and policymakers to address these challenges.

Bridging the evidence gap with the SDG-PSS

The *SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS)* – the main output of the project – was jointly developed by water experts and policymakers from partnering institutions, including the Pakistan Council of Research In Water Resources, to help create evidence on the enabling environment of SDG 6 at the national level in countries with limited or missing data.

This tool aims to help countries produce evidence on SDG 6 systematically. It is made up of six critical components – Capacity Assessment, Finance Assessment, Policy and Institutional Assessment, Gender Mainstreaming, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience, and Integrity Assessment – to capture critical dimensions of the enabling environment of SDG 6. Access to the online SDG-PSS in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Korean is free and can be accessed online in the link: <https://sdgpss.net/>

Implementation of SDG-PSS in Pakistan

Pakistan was the first country to adopt the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in a unanimous parliamentary resolution, followed by the adoption of the country's long-term development roadmap – *Pakistan 2025, One Nation - One vision* – closely aligned with SDG targets. Provinces were empowered to lead the implementation of SDGs in Pakistan – especially those related to social sectors. Localization and ownership of SDGs at the lowest administrative tier were constitutive elements of Pakistan's sustainable development strategy.

In this context of important discussions at the national and provincial level, water experts and policymakers from Pakistan joined the - *first phase (2017-2018)* of the project to address the creation of strong enabling environment for the achievement of SDG 6 in the country. The national workshop (14-15 March 2017, Islamabad) gathered experts to discuss interlinkages between SDG 6 targets and indicators and policy components of SDG-PSS – a first effort to understand the national priorities through the lens of the tool. As a result of local ownership approach for SDGs, partners in Pakistan decided to implement the SDG-PSS at the provincial level.

In the *second phase (2019-2020)*, Pakistan shared its experience with the implementation of SDG-PSS as Regional Hub in Asia region. Experts from Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Iran,

Mongolia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkey, Vietnam, and UN organizations (UNU-INWEH, UNOSD, UN-Water) gathered in the regional workshop for Asia (4-5 September 2019, Daegu) to learn from two Regional Hubs – Republic of Korea and Pakistan – in the implementation of SDG-PSS. In Pakistan, the SDG-PSS contributed to set national priorities and define areas of critical action for the achievement of SDG 6. As monitoring and accountability mechanisms for SDG 6 were in its early stages in the country, the tool was used to support capacity building activities and foster discussion with water-related local authorities.

In the project's **third phase (2021–2023)**, Pakistan remains a regional hub in the implementation of SDG-PSS as the country strengthens its national mechanisms for the achievement of SDG 6. In this phase, the regional workshop in Asia will rely on Pakistan's implementation of SDG-PSS at the provincial level to showcase how the tool can be potentially used by local authorities to address evidence gaps of the enabling environment of SDG 6.

Achievements and outputs of the project in Pakistan

As the SDG-PSS has been implemented and used in Pakistan, it has the potential to address critical challenges in the country. According to recent assessments, the country has **more than 140 million people** without safely managed water and sanitation services. Lack of basic hygiene facilities reaches more than **40 million people**. Water scarcity is also a growing concern – with water availability of less than 1100 cubic meters per person annually – with impacts across many water-related SDGs.

To provide coordination of lead ministries and institutions in the country at the national and provincial level, SDG Support Units were established with the aim to ensure early localization and institutionalization of SDGs in Pakistan. The initiative led by these support units aims at transforming the internationally agreed SDGs into “national SDGs” by the identification of national aspirations and development priorities.

In this context, the SDG-PSS contributed to the work of SDG Support Units in the creation of realistic baselines and national aspirations for SDG 6 targets and indicators by 2030. The tool supported capacity building activities at the provincial level and played a key role in solidification of a shared understanding among local and national SDG 6 stakeholders. The evidence produced during these activities served as input from local and provincial reporting to the national government and contributed to the **Pakistan's Perspective Data Reporting Gap** – a critical overview of data gaps for all SDGs.

Contact

Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, PCRWR
E-mail: muhammad_ashraf63@yahoo.com

Bareerah Fatima, PCRWR
E-mail: breerahftm@gmail.com

Youngeun Choi, UNOSD
E-mail: youngeun.choi@un.org;
UNSOD@un.org

Zeineb Bouhlel, UNU-INWEH
E-mail: zeineb.bouhlel@unu.edu
contact.inweh@unu.edu



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