



INTEGRATED SDG INSIGHTS THE GAMBIA

This initiative supports the articulation of national commitments to SDG transformation, towards accelerated SDG action in the second half of the 2030 Agenda.



HOW TO READ THIS REPORT



Integrated SDG Insights provides an overview of a country's economic growth trajectory, highlighting potential conflicts between growth, environmental concerns, and societal well-being (referred to as the **SDG Moment**).



It builds from the foundation of national SDG progress through the lens of the 5Ps and uses machine learning to analyse national development ambition with an SDG lens (**SDG Trends & Priorities**).



Combined, these insights are mapped against SDG interlinkages to define policy choices that accelerate SDG progress, tailored to national context (**SDG Interlinkages**).



These policy choices are made against fiscal constraints and opportunities for stimulus to ensure choices translate to development impact and leave no one behind (**Finance & Stimulus**).

SDG MOMENT: THE GAMBIA

While economic growth is a key element in achieving the SDGs, many countries are intent on moving beyond growth as a yardstick for progress. In the short run, growth enables the SDGs; but in the long run, the SDGs aim to transform the pattern of growth itself.

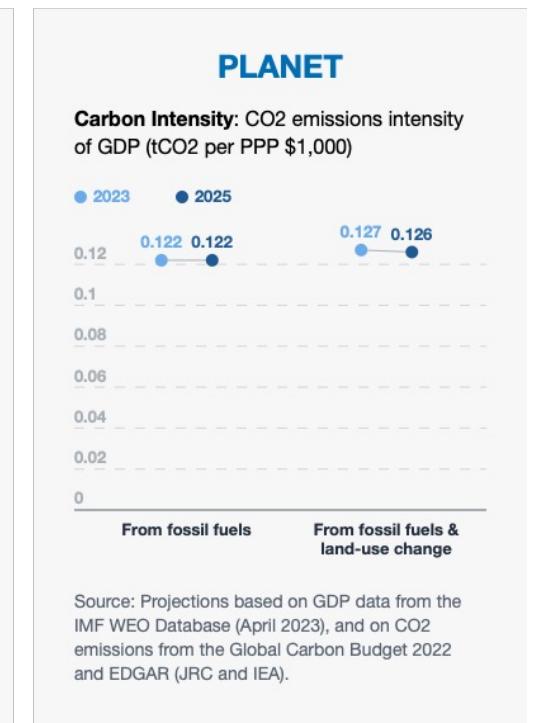
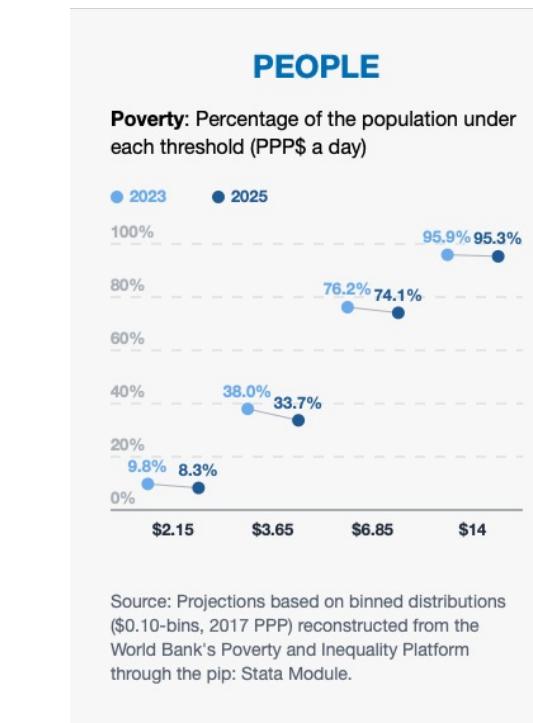
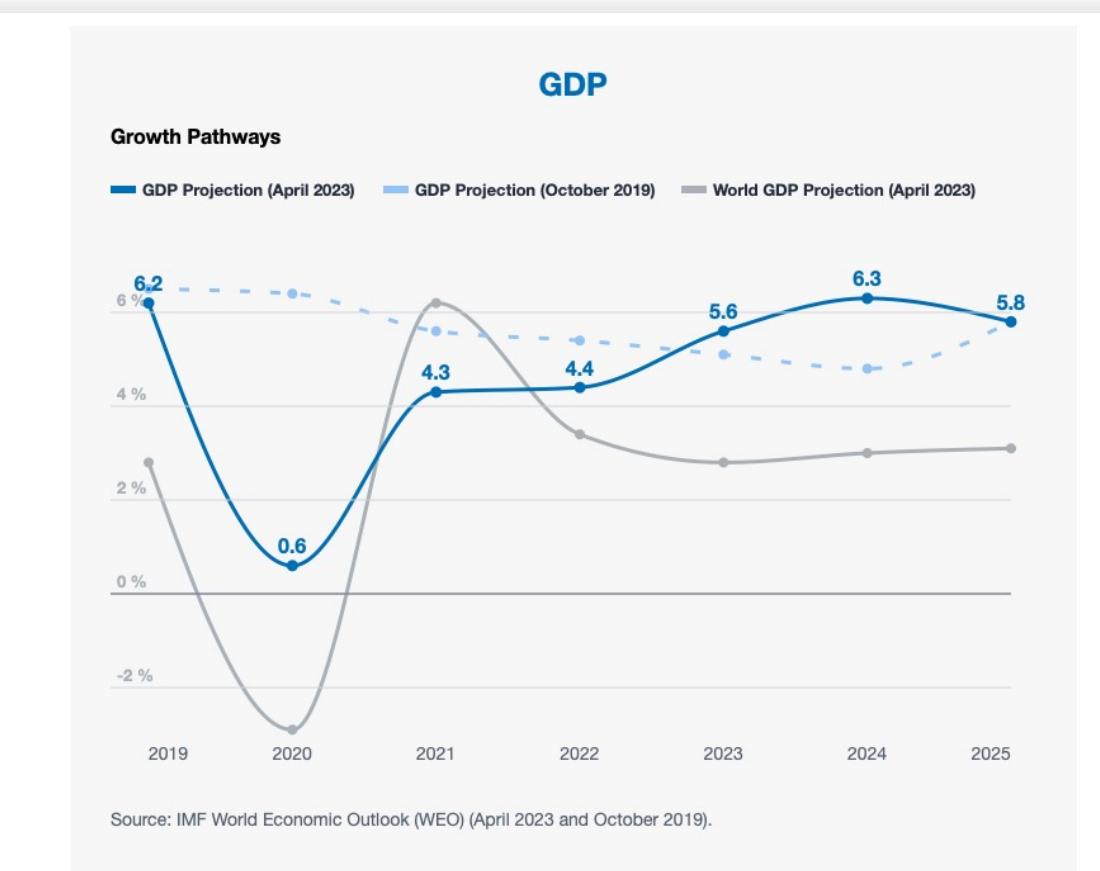
Gambia's pace of growth during the cycle 2023-2025 is in acceleration, characterized by being twice that projected for the world, and already above the country's growth trajectory forecast before the pandemic.¹ While this pace of growth is expected to push the incidence of poverty downwards, currently \$3.65 a day, Gambia remains committed to consolidating the gains in its democratic governance, to accelerating green economic and social transformation and to building resilience to shocks and crisis.

On the positive front, this growth cycle is not projected to depend increasingly on carbon emissions as the country's fossil carbon emissions intensity of GDP would remain virtually unchanged, with the intensity projected to follow a downward trend at an annual rate of decline of 0.5%, a figure that also takes land-use change into account.²

This report provides an integrated analysis of SDGs trends and national priorities and explores critical SDG interlinkages to inform policy pathways and development choices. The insights support the Government's preparation for the SDG Summit and builds towards effective policy implementation in the second half of the 2030 Agenda.

¹ The economic cycle is determined by adjusting the country's current GDP growth forecasts (April 2023) by their gap relative to the forecasts made before the pandemic and subsequent crises (October 2019). If the adjusted rates (not shown) are below 2%, the economy is considered in mitigation; it is coping if the adjusted rates range between 2%-4%, and it is in acceleration if they are above 4%.

² CO2 emissions intensity of GDP is computed as tonnes of CO2 per \$1,000 (2017 PPP).



SDG TRENDS

Understanding how Gambia performs against the SDG targets provides a baseline landscape against which to build integrated SDG pathways. SDG progress tracking follows [UN Stats](#) standards and [methodology](#), and is aligned with country profiles.



SDG PRIORITIES

The Gambia's national priorities are analysed using machine learning to reveal the most prominent SDGs referenced in national policy documents. This analysis uses a custom-built model for SDG classification. It considers 100k+ terms, including phrases and expressions.



Key documents for analysis:

1. Gambia National Development Plan (NDP) 2023 – 2027
2. Voluntary National Review 2020 and 2022
3. The Gambia Common Country Analysis Report 2021
4. United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2017-2021
5. National Voluntary Review Report on the status of implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
6. The Gambia Poverty and Gender Assessment 2022: Securing a Robust and Inclusive Recovery

SDG INTERLINKAGES

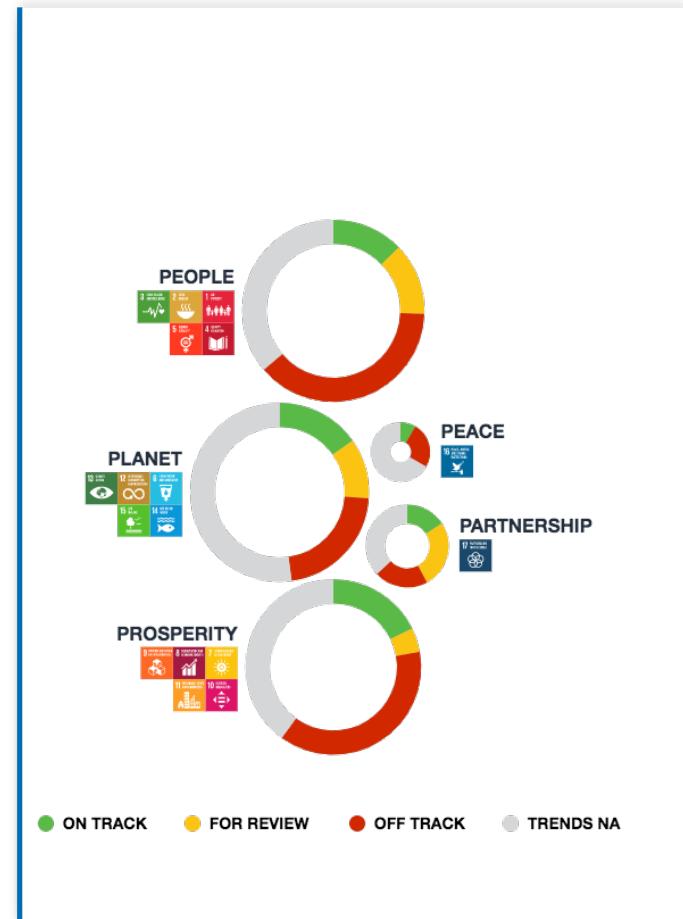
SDG interlinkages reveal how actions directed towards one SDG can impact others. Uncovering and understanding these interactions can help the Gambia to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to mitigate trade-offs.

Based on a global framework for interlinkages, the Gambia's SDG progress is colour-coded at the target level.

Building from national trends and priorities, the following integrated SDG pathways reflect policy choices with the most potential to accelerate the SDGs for the Gambia:

- SDG 1.5: Build resilience to environmental, economic and social disasters
- SDG 8.5: Full employment and decent work with equal pay
- SDG 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions

Note that the guidance for Member States is to identify a set of priority areas for investment and policy change that will help secure maximum progress across the SDGs. The three targets above form a basis for this in the Gambia. The other two that require additional work include setting a national benchmark for reducing poverty and inequality, and an overview of planned adjustments in national planning and institutional frameworks that will better support the SDGs' achievement. The Government will commence work, notably on the second target, before the Summit in September.



TRANSFORMATIVE PATHWAYS

SYNERGIES

TRADE-OFFS

SDG INTERLINKAGES

1.5: Build resilience of the poor to reduce exposure to environmental, economic and social disasters

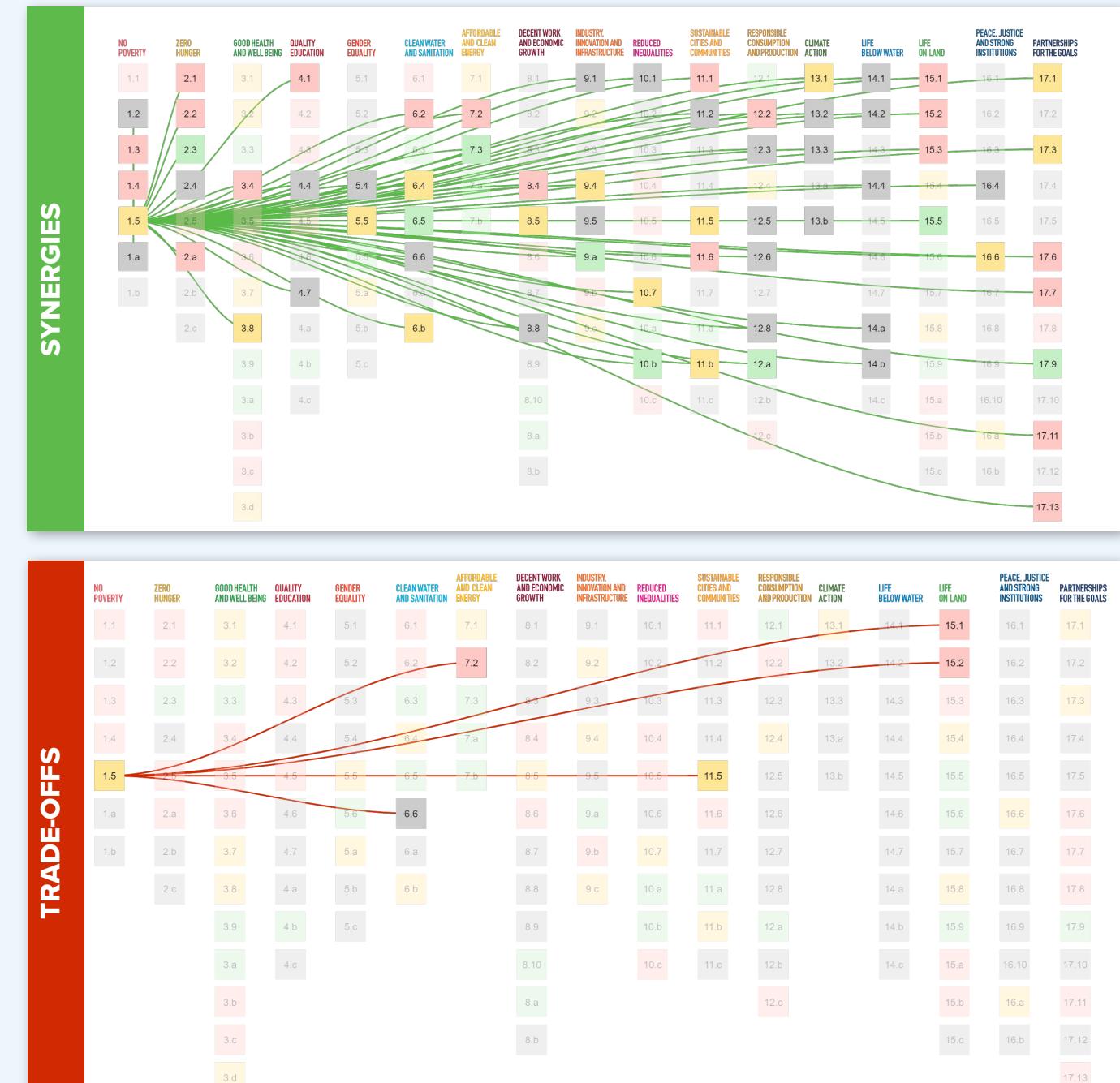
Some outcomes of the NDP are to attain the following by 2027: sustainable environmental and natural resources management, disaster risk reduction and minimizing the adverse impacts of climate change.

Persons affected by disasters per 100,000 increased from 1,569.2 to 4,115.8 from 2016 to 2019. The direct economic losses and damages of the two-day July 2022 flood event were estimated at \$82.8 million, including \$81.5 million in buildings and contents and \$1.3 million in agricultural land. The total damages were estimated to exceed 6.5% of the Gambia's national GDP in 2020.

To respond to the increasing frequency and severity of disasters, the Government developed strategic documents. These include contingency plans, hazard profiles and disaster risk reduction strategies. The Government also implemented response and resilience building measures, such as the identification of disaster hotspots and addressing some fundamental challenges of the most vulnerable communities. In addition, the Government used drones for early warning in pre- and post-flood disaster management. The hope is to reverse these trends and to minimize and avert the number of people affected by disasters.

The Government and its partners will therefore foster land conservation processes, ensure sustainable waste management, green the energy and transport sectors and enhance integrated water resources management. They will strengthen the resilience of local economies as a basis for reducing the economic losses and the number of people affected by natural disasters. This will also build the capacities of local economies to create jobs and for the local authorities to provide the transformative services needed where people live.

● ON TRACK ● FOR REVIEW ● OFF TRACK ● TRENDS NA



Explore the interlinkages at:

<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/GMB/sdg-trends>

SDG INTERLINKAGES

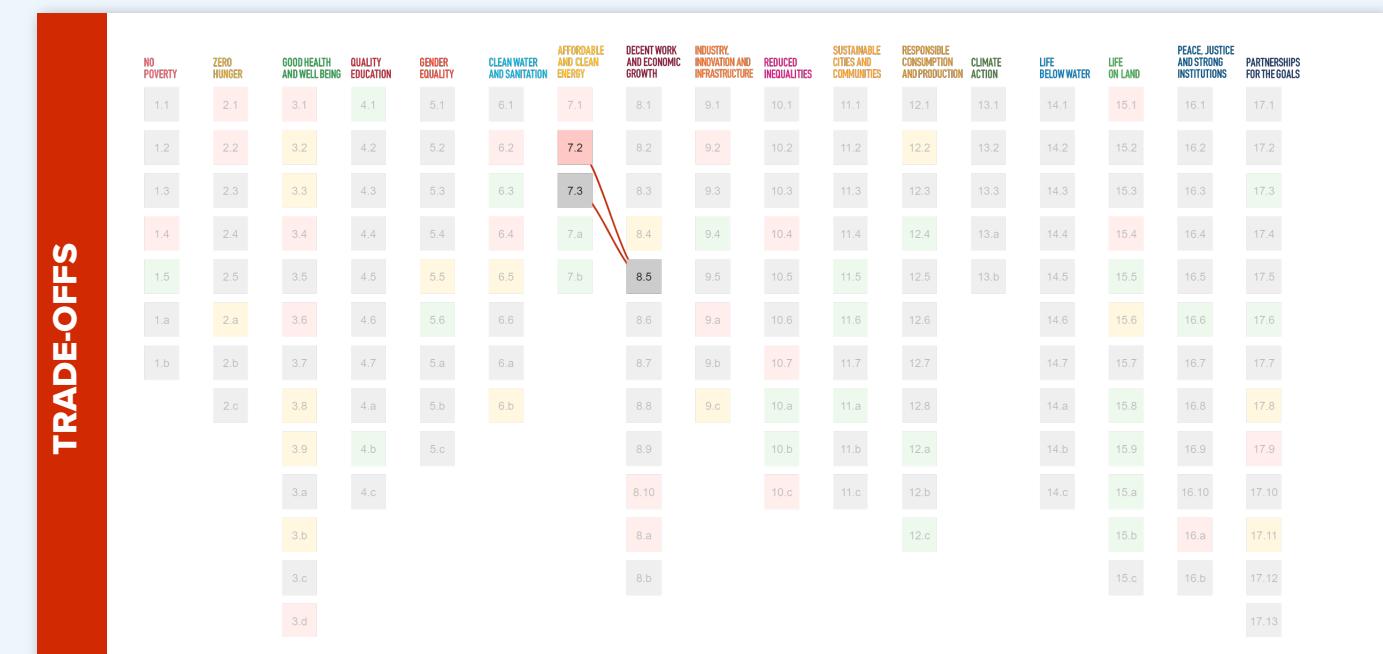
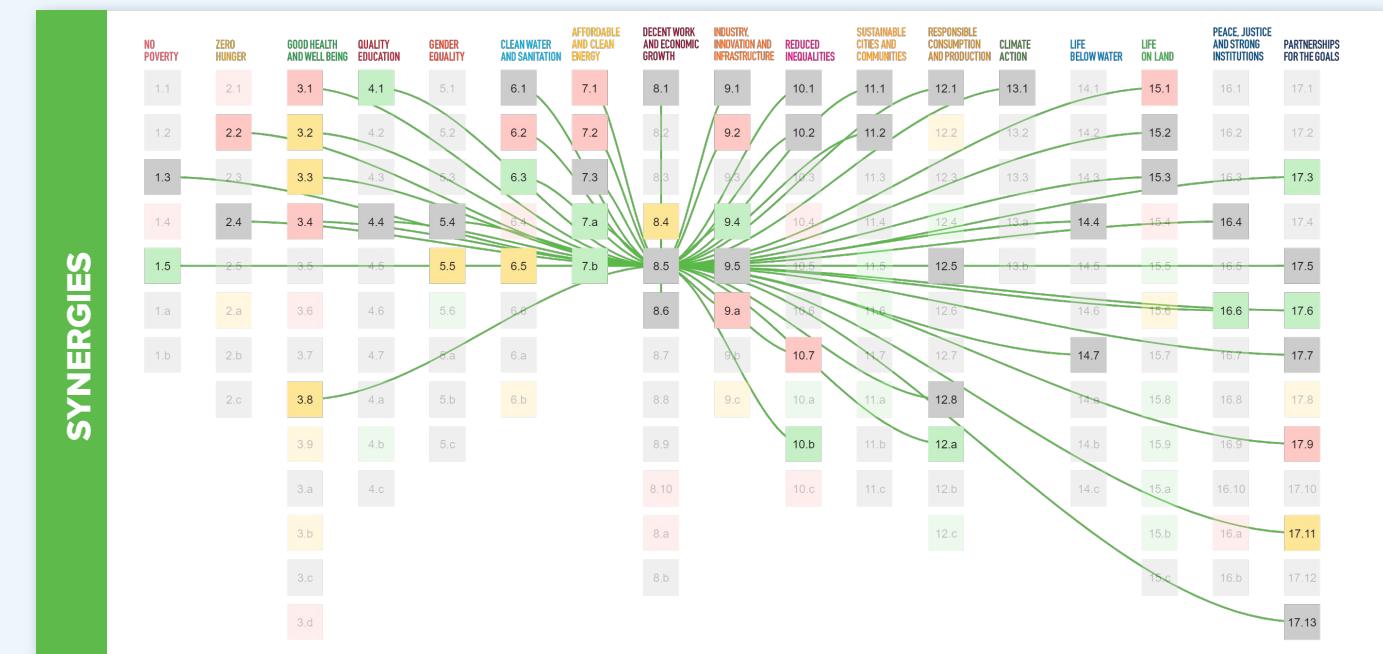
8.5: Full employment and decent work with equal pay

The national unemployment rate for the working age population is 31.6 percent, but is highest among women, youth and the rural population. Youth unemployment stands at 38.1%. Considering that the Gambia has a very young population, with about 70 percent under the age of 30, and 44 percent under the age of 15 (Integrated Household Survey 2015/16), there is a huge bulge of unemployed youth. Lack of economic opportunities for youth results in domestic (rural-urban) and international migration.

Therefore, addressing unemployment is a critical challenge for achieving the SDGs. The micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) sector is a significant contributor to reducing unemployment and is said to account for 62 percent of employment in urban Gambia contributing about 20 percent of GDP (Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2019). Several efforts are being made by the Government and its partners to support the growth of the MSME sector. Also, the country has developed an employment strategy with the target of creating 150,000 jobs by 2026.

However, no data exists on earnings across categories of jobs, nor mechanisms to track their creation on a regular basis. The Government and its partners may consider exploring efforts to track job creation, analyse performance and make the necessary adjustments. Based on the synergies in the chart on the right, jobs will come from all sectors – including from industry, investment in eco-tourism, health, transport, housing, waste management and others – but achieving 8.5 will also help attain targets across multiple goals. One government commitment is to work with the local authorities, partners and other stakeholders to revitalize local economies and to build resilience.

● ON TRACK ● FOR REVIEW ● OFF TRACK ● TRENDS NA



Explore the interlinkages at:

<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/GMB/sdg-trends>

SDG INTERLINKAGES

16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions

SDG target 16.6 underscores the kind of public services needed for the required transformation to take place in the Gambia. For instance, Gambia's overall goal by 2027 (NDP 2023-2027) is to consolidate gains in democratic governance, accelerate green economic and social transformation and build resilience to shocks and crises.

The critical question is what public services must be availed and what investments are needed for the above goal to be met? The chart on synergies suggests that these services could emerge from anywhere from – health, education, industry, transport, housing, internet, water and electricity, among others.

In the Gambia, 45.3 percent of the population are satisfied with the last public service received. In addition to expanding the transformative services, the Government is setting a target of a 70 percent population satisfaction rate. These services need to be delivered with broad-based objectives to drive meaningful progress.

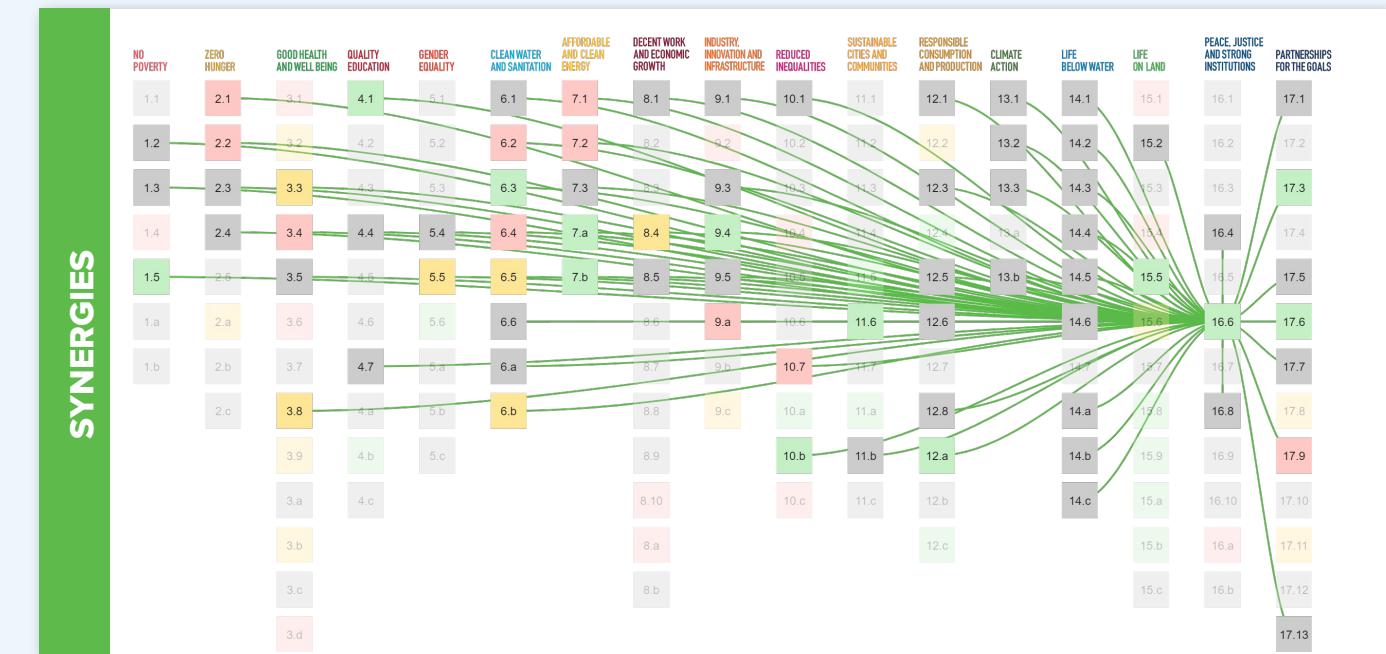
To do this, the Government and its partners, as articulated in the 2023-2027 NDP, will aim for full coverage and affordable access to electricity by 2030, addressing the quality and relevance of education services; promoting research and innovation in tertiary education by establishing research boards, a council and a national research fund; improving maternal health, neonatal, infant and child health care; and consolidating efforts and implement strategic infrastructure projects in the areas of energy, transport and ICT in order to catalyze growth.

● ON TRACK

● FOR REVIEW

● OFF TRACK

● TRENDS NA



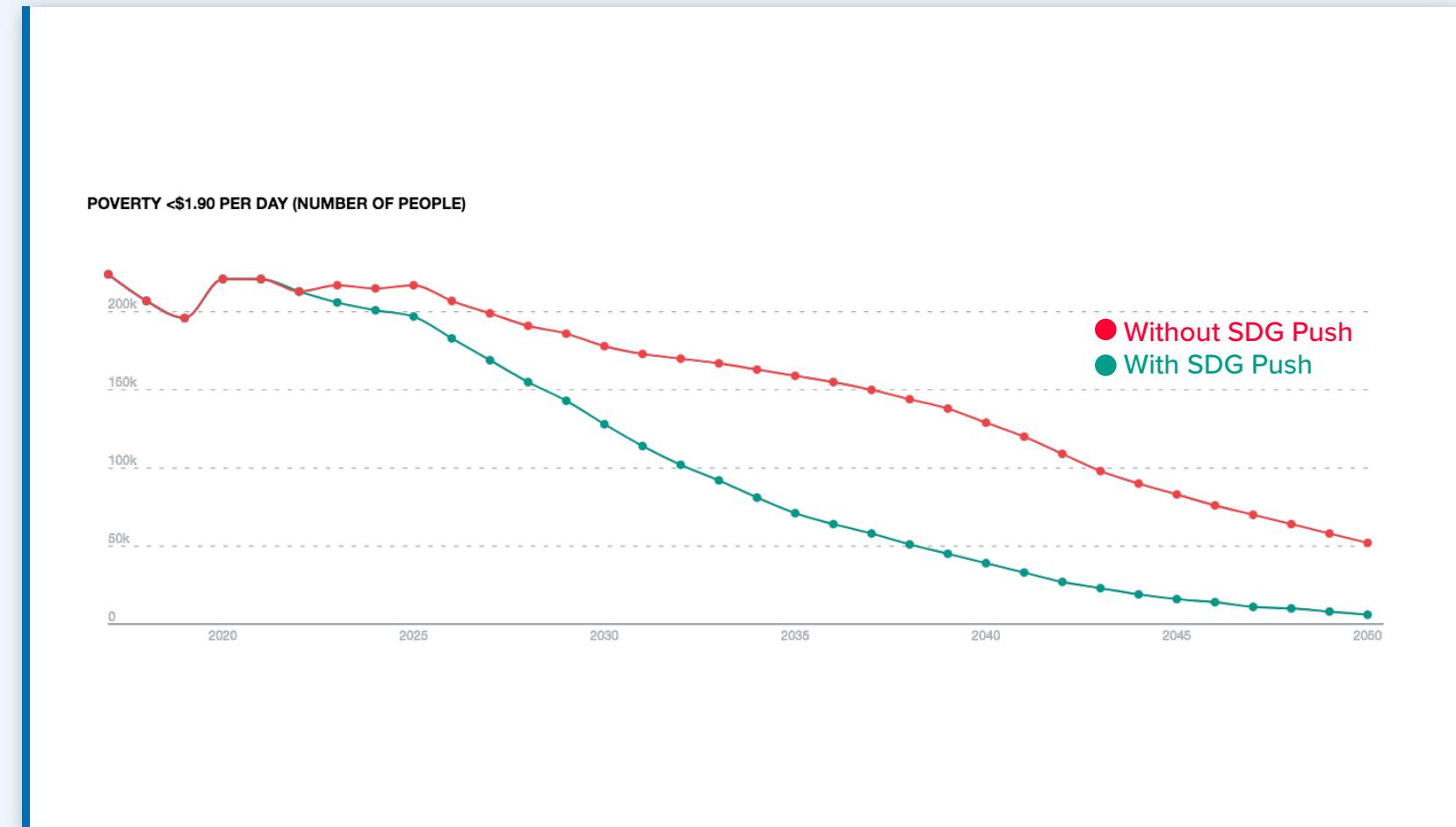
FUTURES SCENARIOS

Achieving the SDGs is possible.

The ‘SDG Push’ is a futures scenario based on 48 integrated accelerators in the areas of Governance, Social Protection, Green Economy and Digital Disruption. It uses national data to explore the impact on human development by 2030 and by 2050 across key SDG indicators.

Incorporating ‘SDG Push’ accelerators into development interventions in the Gambia can reduce the number of people living in poverty over time.

People living in poverty	By 2030	By 2050
Without the SDG Push	180,000	52,000
With the SDG Push	130,000	6,000



Explore SDG Futures Scenarios at:
<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/GMB/future-scenarios>

FINANCE & STIMULUS

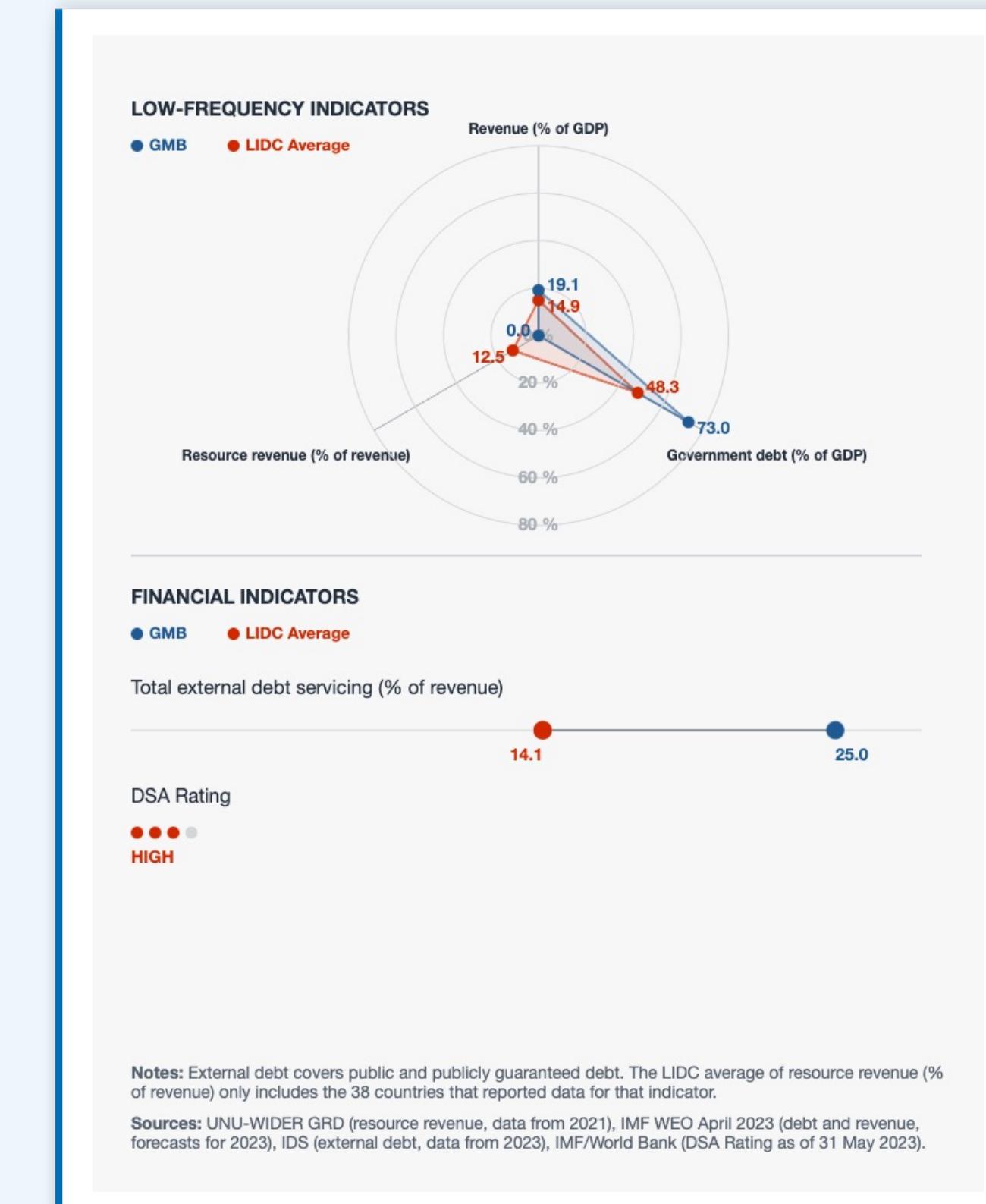
Many countries are facing reduced fiscal space, high debt levels, rising interest rates and downgrades on credit ratings. Fiscal and financial constraints tend to slow or even reverse SDG progress.

The radar diagram shows low frequency data points linked to government revenue and debt as a proportion of GDP and the natural resource share of total revenue. The financial indicator graphs show external debt servicing relative to revenue and the country's latest Debt Sustainability Assessment (DSA) risk rating.

The Gambia's gross government debt, projected at 73% of GDP in 2023, is almost 25 percentage points higher than the low-income developing countries (LIDC) group of 48.3%. Comparatively, the country collects nearly a third more revenue – projected at 19.1% of GDP in 2023 – than the average LIDC country with 14.9%.

This year the Gambia's public external debt servicing is expected to be as high as 25% of revenue compared to 14.1% for the LIDC average. According to the latest World Bank and IMF DSA of December 2022, the Gambia is assessed at 'high risk' of debt distress.

It is within these fiscal and financial constraints that the Gambia will make a commitment at the SDG Summit for accelerated actions on the SDGs' achievement in the next seven years.



SDG STIMULUS

The UN Secretary General's SDG Stimulus Plan lays out a blueprint for action within the existing financial architecture. It includes:

- Providing liquidity to support recovery in the near term
- Enhancing debt relief for vulnerable countries
- Expanding development financing by MDBs
- Aligning financial flows with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, according to country-level priorities and needs, for example through the roll-out of the UN Integrated National Financing Framework (INFFs).

Given the projected fiscal and financial constraints faced by the Gambia, possible funding options for the investments derived from the identified interlinkages are as follows:

- Climate finance
- Blended and public-private finance
- SDG-aligned business environment and investment

**United Nations
Secretary-General's
SDG Stimulus
to Deliver
Agenda 2030**

FEBRUARY 2023



METHODOLOGY

Click [here](#) to view the Methodological Note for the Integrated SDG Insights



SDG MOMENT

Methodology

Assesses challenges and opportunities in national growth trajectories with insights on environmental sustainability and inclusiveness.

Data Sources

Future trajectories to 2025 are based on IMF-WEO GDP projections, distributions of per capita income or consumption from the World Bank, and CO₂ emissions from the Global Carbon Budget 2022 and EDGAR (JRC and IEA).



TRENDS & PRIORITIES

Methodology

SDG trends tracks progress from 2015 to date for the 231 indicators. National priorities are analysed using machine learning to reveal the most prominent SDGs referenced in national policy documents.

Data Source

Trends utilizes official [UN statistics](#) to assess [SDG progress](#), supplemented with national data when available. Priorities uses a custom-built model for SDG classification. The policy documents analyses are provided by Governments.



INTERLINKAGES

Methodology

Global target-level interlinkages are drawn from the [KnowSDGs Platform by European Commission](#). SDG interlinkages were retrieved through a structured literature review in Scopus and Google Scholar to tap both grey literature and peer-reviewed publications as a source of information.

Data Source

The exercise globally considered a total of 454 documents published from 2015 to August 2022. ([Miola et al., 2019](#) updated in [2021-2022](#))



FINANCE & STIMULUS

Methodology

Provides insight into indicators of fiscal and financial stress with options (INFF) for stimulus and other means to accelerate progress.

Data Source

Most recent resource data from UNU-WIDER GRD (between 2018 and 2021), debt and revenue from IMF WEO (between 2020 and forecasts for 2023), external debt from IDS (2023), yields from Haver Analytics (8 June 2023), credit ratings from S&P, Moodys and FITCH (2023), and DSA ratings from World Bank/IMF (31 May 2023).