



INTEGRATED SDG INSIGHTS

ECUADOR

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: ECUADOR

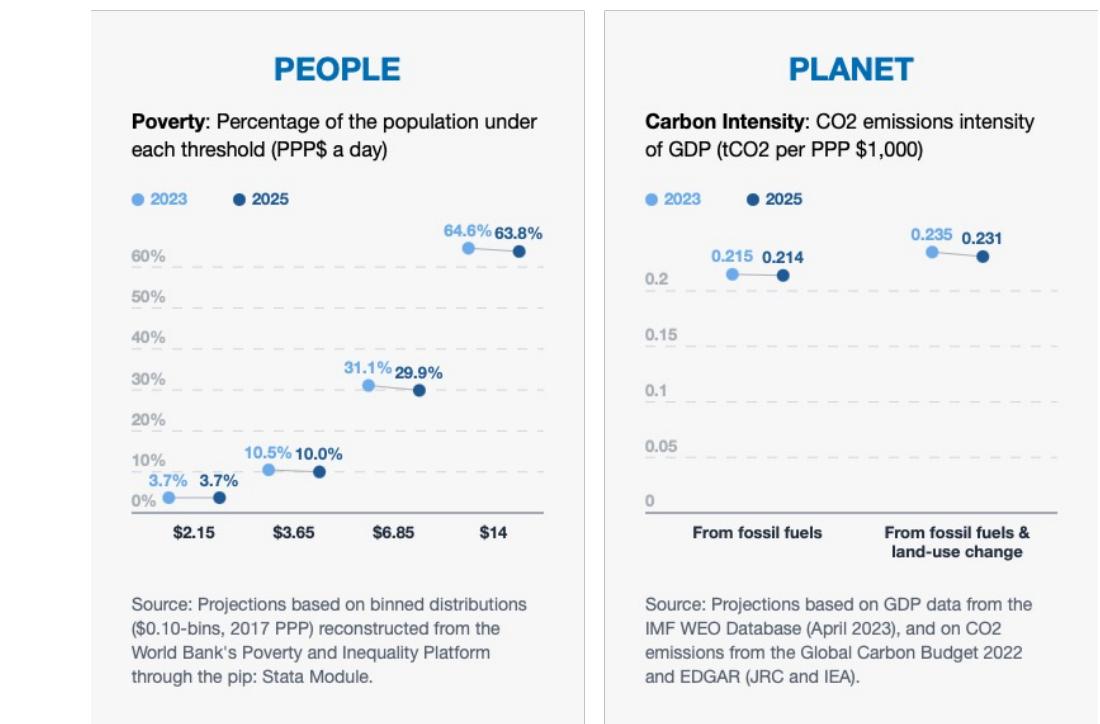
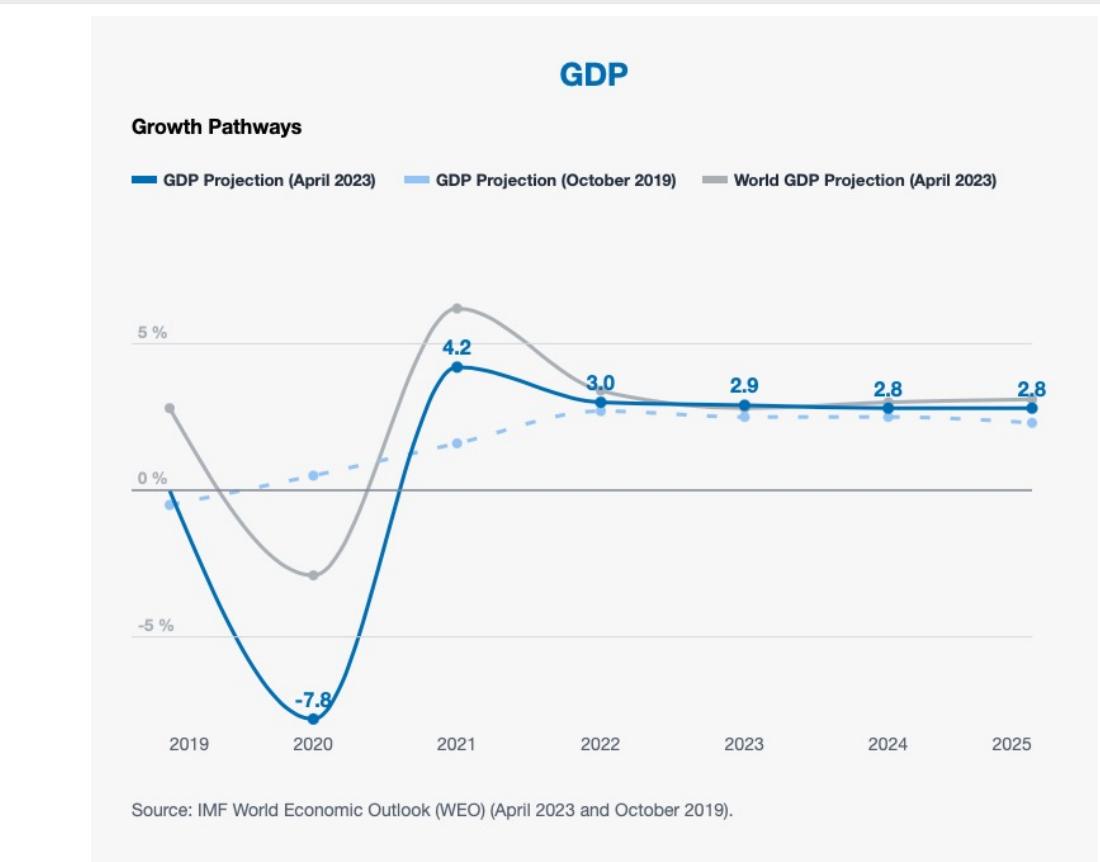
While economic growth is a key element in achieving the SDGs, many countries are intent on moving beyond growth as a yardstick for progress. In the short run, growth enables the SDGs; but in the long run, the SDGs aim to transform the pattern of growth itself.

Ecuador's economic growth cycle in 2023-2025 is characterized by moderate growth, with growth rates projected to be aligned with those forecast both for the world and for the country before the pandemic.¹ Accordingly, Ecuador's commitments to achieving the SDGs are focused on increasing people's well-being.

This pace of economic growth is projected to exert a moderate positive effect on reducing the incidence of poverty by most thresholds, though there are still some distributional challenges to accelerate progress. On the other hand, Ecuador's economic expansion would be somewhat less dependent on carbon emissions as the country's fossil emissions intensity of GDP is expected to decline by an annual rate of almost 0.4%, and of 1% when also considering land-use change.²

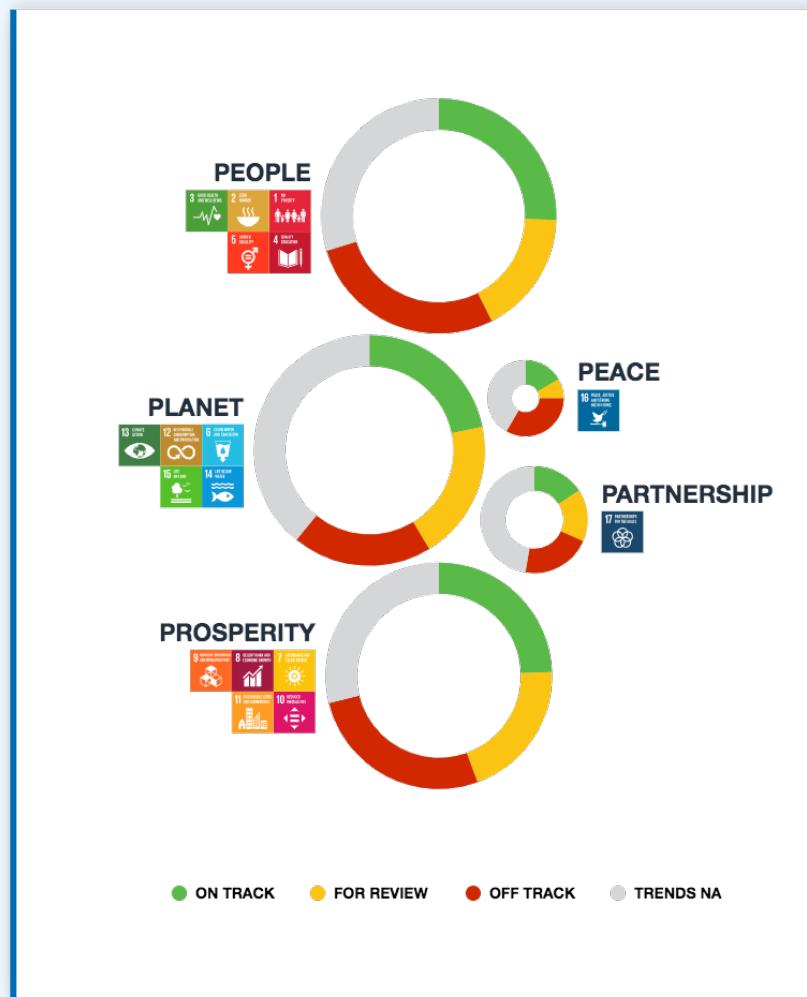
¹ The economic cycle is determined by adjusting the country's current GDP growth forecasts (April 2023) by their gap relative to the forecasts made before the pandemic and subsequent crises (October 2019). If the adjusted rates (not shown) are below 2%, the economy is considered in mitigation; it is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

Ecuador'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. National Development Plan 2021 - 2025
2. National Anti-corruption Strategy 2022
3. National Biodiversity Strategy 2015-2030
4. Sector Plan Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries 2021 – 2025
5. National Security Plan 2019- 2030
6. Health Ten-Year Plan 2022 – 2031
7. Sectoral plan for Economic and Social Inclusion 2022- 2025
8. First Nationally Determined Contribution for the Paris Agreement 2019
9. Sectoral Plan for Education 2021- 2025
10. Strategic Plan Cross- Sectoral For Prevention and Reduction of Chronic Child Malnutrition

Priorities in detail:

<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/ECUWithCountryGovlnput/current-priorities>

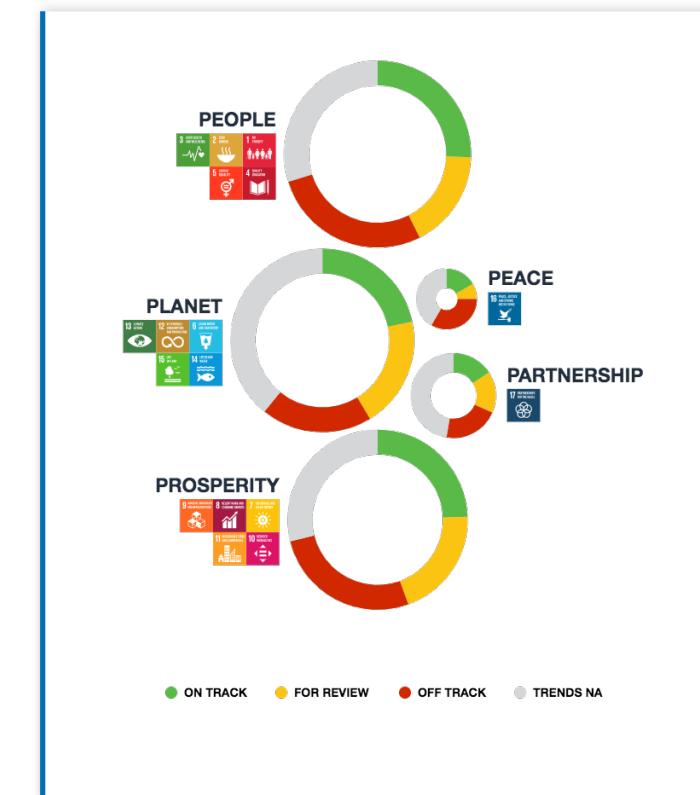
SDG INTERLINKAGES

SDG interlinkages reveal how actions directed towards one SDG can impact others. Uncovering and understanding these interactions can help Ecuador to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to navigate synergies and trade-offs. Following Breur et al (2019) synergies occur when a target has positive effects over other targets; trade-offs occur when targets have detrimental effects over other targets.

Based on a global framework for interlinkages, Ecuador'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 Ecuador:

- Target 1.1: Eradicate extreme poverty
- Target 1.2: Reduce poverty by at least 50%
- Target 3.1: Reduce maternal mortality
- Target 3.2: Reduce neonatal mortality
- Target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage
- Target 8.5: Full employment and decent work with equal pay
- Target 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related disasters
- Target 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into policy and planning
- Target 14.5: Conserve coastal and marine areas
- Target 15.1: Conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems



ACCELERATION PATHWAYS

SYNERGIES

TRADE-OFFS

SDG INTERLINKAGES

1.1: By 2030, “eradicate extreme poverty for all people, everywhere”. This is defined by the UN based on the international poverty line.

In 2019, 5.3% of the population lived below the extreme poverty line, a rate that doubled in 2020 due to the pandemic's impact, this in tandem with a rise in inequality. While economic support from the government was able to lower poverty to 5.1% in 2022, there is a need to better target policies towards the most vulnerable groups. This will enhance their prospects for accessing nutritious and sufficient food (Target 2.1), reducing chronic child malnutrition (Target 2.2), and contributing to greater equity (Target 10.4) – all great social issues prioritized by the government.

However, to achieve sustained income improvement, it is necessary to complement the social protection approach with the promotion of productive activities and the creation of decent work (Target 8.1).

The 2022-2025 Sectoral Plan for Economic and Social Inclusion focused on reaching vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and families with children and adolescents under 18 years (Target 10.4), with monetary transfers programmes, which, for example, through the Nutritional Support Bonus (US\$240) aims to enhance the food purchasing power of families in extreme poverty (Target 2.1).

By intensifying investments in targeted programmes, policies will also contribute to closing gaps across nine other Sustainable Development Goals in Ecuador spanning the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

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Explore the interlinkages at:

<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/ECUWithCountryGovInput/synergies-and-tradeoffs>

SDG INTERLINKAGES

1.2: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

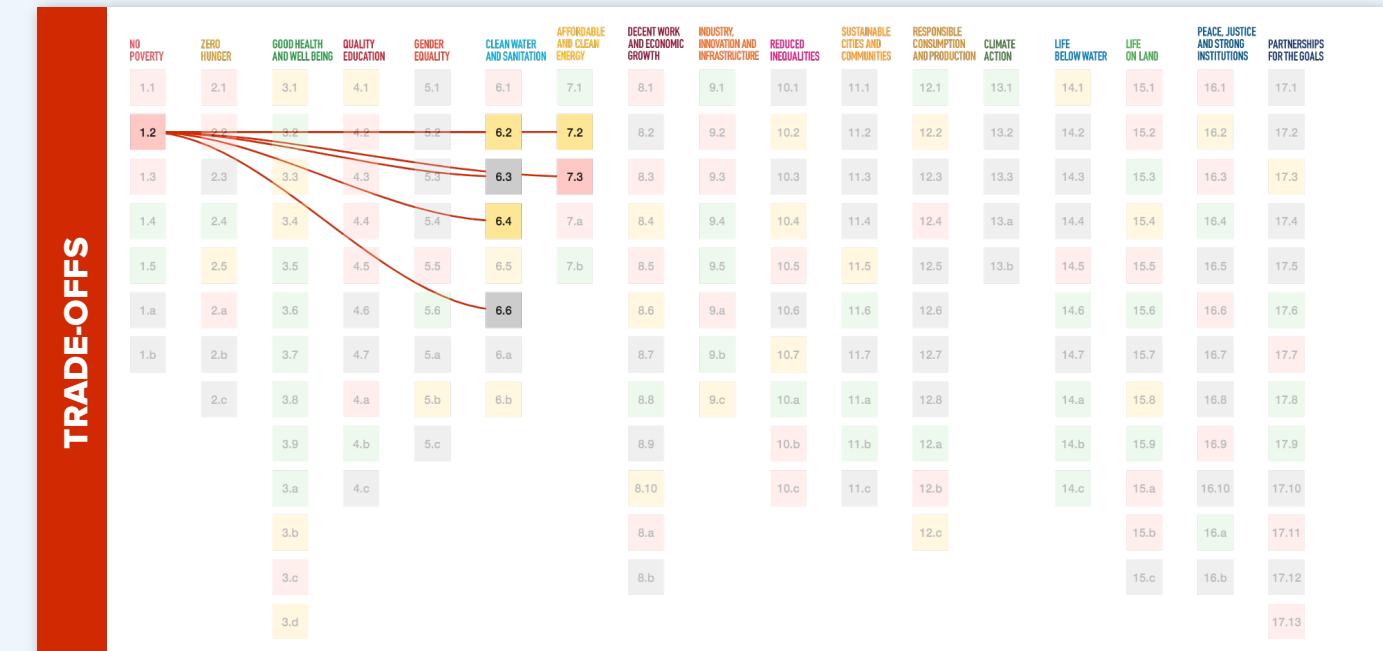
In 2022 multidimensional poverty stood at 38.1% (70.1% rural vs. 23.2% urban). Fighting poverty in all its dimensions is a priority for Ecuador, both at the national and subnational levels. Promoting investments that address deficiencies in education, employment, health care, habitat and housing could lead to closing several development gaps. While infrastructure projects in drinking water and sanitation will improve living conditions by enhancing access to basic services (Targets 6.1 and 6.2), investments in the public health care system and education (SDGs 3 and 4) are essential to overcome conditions of poverty and vulnerability.

Investments in these areas also have synergies that are also crucial to achieving gender equality goals (SDG 5) and reducing inequalities (SDG 10).

The National Development Plan 2021-2025, that includes a policy to eradicate poverty and ensure universal access to basic services and connectivity in rural areas, is the mechanism to bridge the urban-rural gap (Target 1.4). Initiatives, such as the Access to Financing Service, provide expedited access to cash through monetary transfers and pensions (Targets 1.1 and 2.a) and provide technical support to strengthen capacities and facilitate market access for beneficiaries, ensuring the sustainability of their ventures (Target 2.4).

In tandem to these initiatives, the results of the new population and housing census are being processed, and providing information will contribute to decision-making to promote sustainable development (Targets 17.18 and 17.19).

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Explore the interlinkages at:

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SDG INTERLINKAGES

3.1: By 2030 “reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births” per year.

In 2020, there were 57.6 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, a rate that decreased to 43.5 in 2021. Despite the progress, the 2019 level of 37 has not yet been regained.

The prioritization of investments aimed at strengthening the public health care system, in addition to contributing to the achievement of several SDG 3 targets, seeks to generate a positive impact on achieving gender equality (Target 5.1), and creating decent employment opportunities for women and other groups affected by the structure of the labour market (Target 8.5).

To achieve this, there are plans to enhance the conditions to exercise the right to health, encompassing prevention and promotion, with a focus on women and vulnerable populations. This involves reinforcing comprehensive, inclusive and high-quality sexual and reproductive health services (Targets 3.7 and 3.8).

To reduce both mortality rates and achieve the established goals for 2030, the Maternal and Neonatal Health Operational Plan will be reinforced. This plan includes actions to improve health care services and provide timely and quality care to pregnant and postpartum women. These initiatives should be complemented by quality audits of care services and the development of action plans to deal with cases of maternal death in health care facilities. Following World Health Organization-Pan American Health Organization recommendations, the Near Miss strategy was implemented for the epidemiological surveillance of extremely severe maternal mortality and the management of the quality of maternal-neonatal care, helping close the gaps in Target 3.1, while also addressing gender inequalities.

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SDG INTERLINKAGES

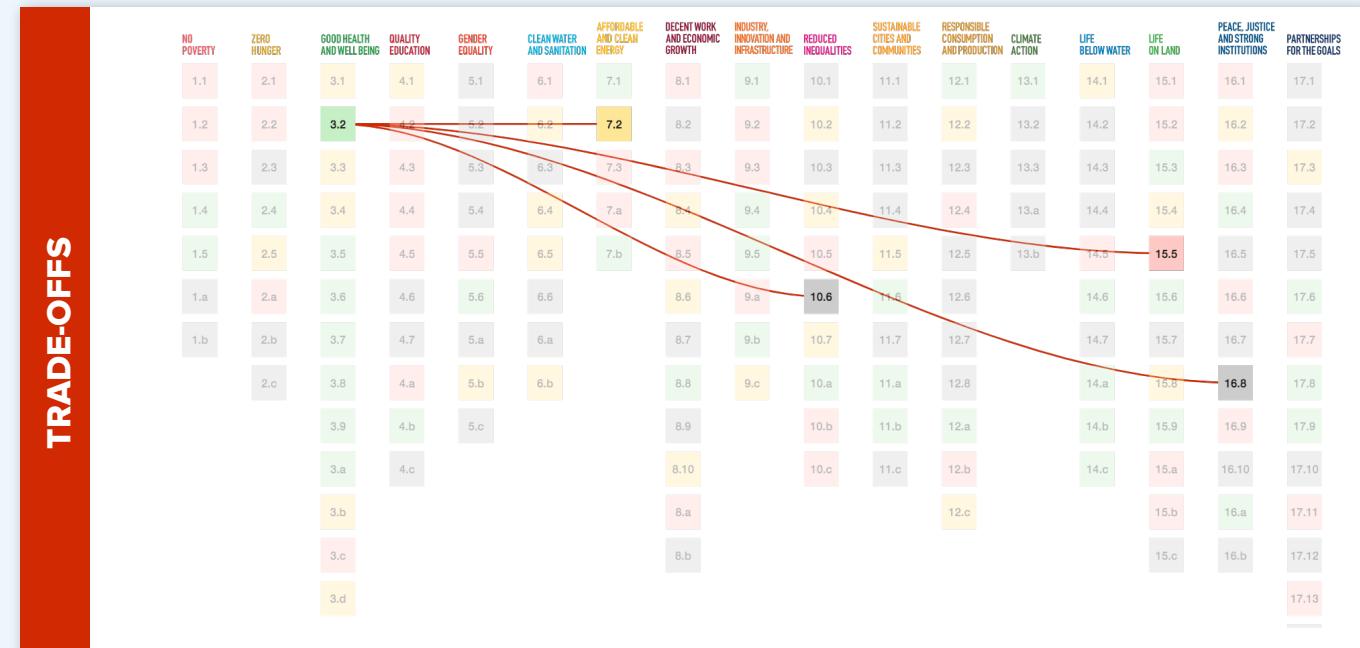
3.2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births, and under 5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births

In 2021, there were 9.8 deaths of children under 5 years old per 1,000 live births, and 5.1 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births. In both cases, advancements were recorded in comparison to 2019, achieving reductions of 2.6 and 1.0 points, respectively.

In Ecuador, ensuring the right to comprehensive, free and quality health is a key objective of national development, with particular emphasis on childhood, alongside other prioritized population groups (Target 10.4). Programmes and investment projects in this field will focus on enhancing health care services and providing timely and quality care for newborns, with a special emphasis on neonatal metabolic screening tests to promptly diagnose congenital malformations, prevent disabilities and mitigate prenatal and neonatal morbidity and mortality (Target 3.4).

The achievements envisioned in this area will not only contribute to closing the gaps in the SDG 3 targets, but also increase the potential to foster proper development in terms of health, learning and the psychosocial well-being of children (Target 4.2), and accelerate progress in education (Goal 4.1). These aspects should be reinforced by appropriate infrastructure development to ensure access to safe water (Target 6.1), which will, in the future, enable a population with greater capacity to enhance their productive potential (Target 8.5).

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SDG INTERLINKAGES

3.8: By 2030 “achieve universal health coverage including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.”

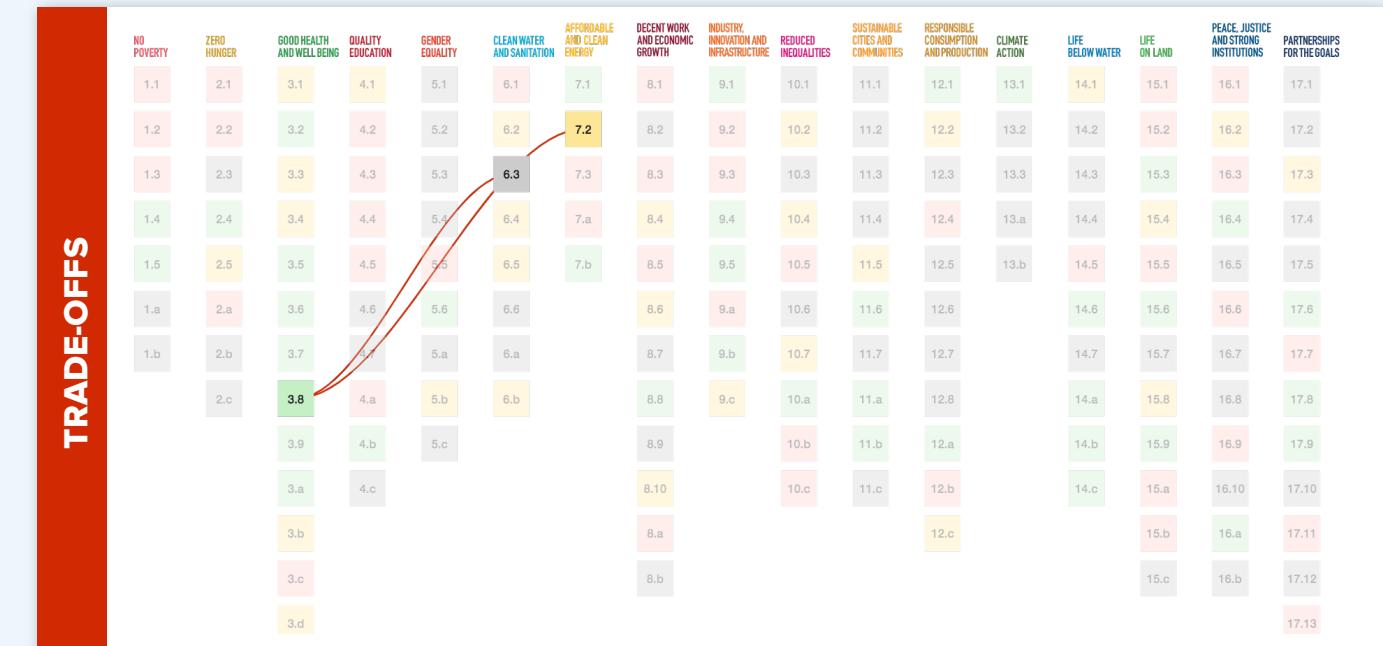
Over the past few years, the decrease in vaccination coverage put the country at risk of reintroducing nearly eradicated diseases such as measles. This situation prompted the vaccination of the entire population, resulting in a 10% increase in coverage between 2021 and 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the vulnerability and limited response capacity of health care systems globally, underscoring the high priority of investments to expand health care coverage within the realm of social policy.

This preventive approach must ensure broad coverage and continuous, timely, and inclusive access to health services under the principles of equity, universality, interculturality, quality and efficiency. This will enable addressing major challenges in poverty reduction as part of sustainable social protection systems over time (Goal 1.3).

The pandemic also demonstrated its devastating effect on the productive fabric of the economy, making actions such as the "National Vaccination Plan" (9 million vaccinated in the first 100 days of government) crucial for economic recovery (Target 8.1). In settings with high levels of informality and inadequate employment, the challenge is greater and must be confronted with actions aimed at strengthening the capacities of current and future workers (Target 8.6), particularly in the case of women and youth who face greater difficulties in accessing quality employment. Therefore, targeted interventions have significant potential to bridge existing gender and inequality gaps (SDG 5 and SDG 10).

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SDG INTERLINKAGES

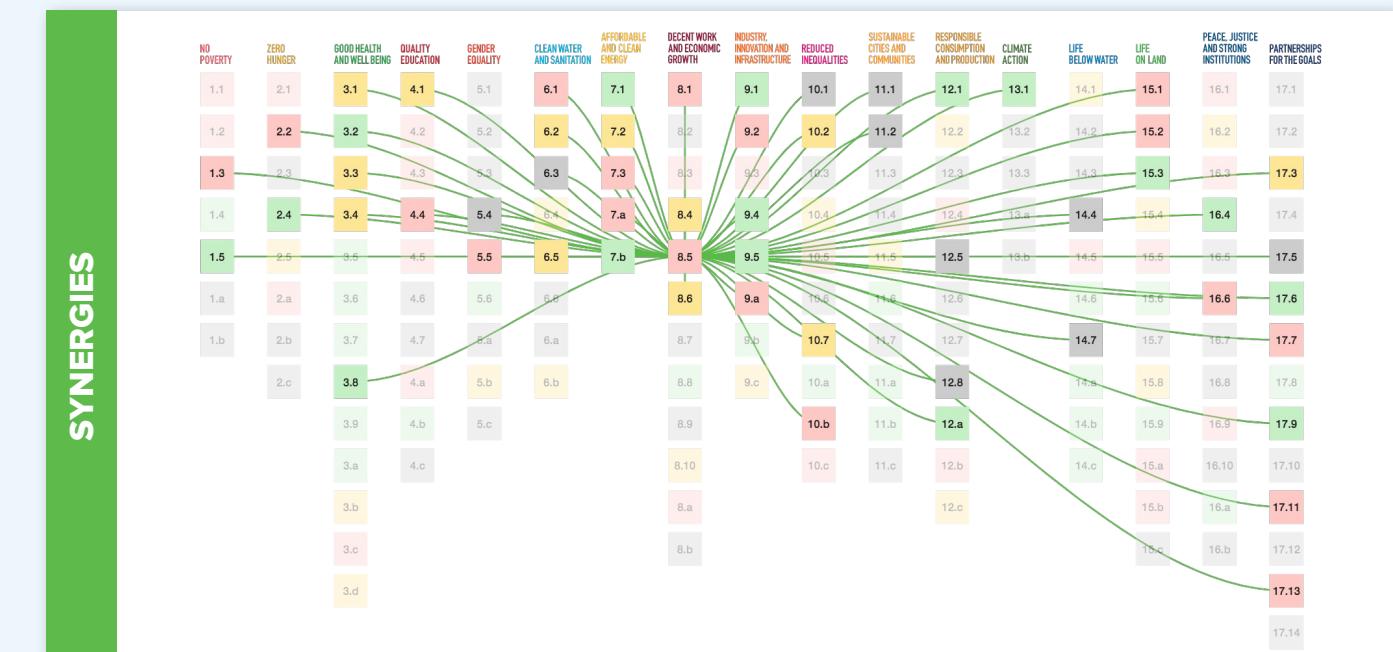
8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

In 2022, the average hourly wage reached \$3 for men and \$2.7 for women, improving from the levels of 2020 but remaining below the \$2.8 recorded before the pandemic. The unemployment rate, on the other hand, decreased from 3.8% in 2019 to 3.2% in 2022, and the rate of adequate employment stood at 36.04% in 2022. Therefore, the greatest challenges lie in enhancing the quality of the labor market, reducing informality and achieving greater access to dignified jobs.

The envisaged policies to promote decent employment and economic growth, particularly for the achievement of Target 8.5, have cross-cutting implications across the entire 2030 Agenda. They serve not only as means to reduce poverty and inequalities (SDGs 1 and 10) but also as a foundation for driving the development and innovation of the productive sector (SDG 9), while also pursuing environmental sustainability using alternative energy sources (SDGs 7 and 13). Along these lines, the Green Jobs strategy will bolster the bioeconomy and formal employment with a gender perspective, generating new job opportunities and promoting labour formalization (Target 10.4).

Meanwhile, the 2021-2025 Sectoral Labour Plan aims to promote adequate employment, with a focus on youth labour inclusion and creating opportunities for marginalized groups to reduce inequalities (Target 10.2) and improve labour market conditions (Target 8.6). In a context with limited fiscal space, these initiatives will also contribute to increased tax revenue as a mechanism to ensure the financial sustainability of social protection programmes (Target 10.4).

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SDG INTERLINKAGES

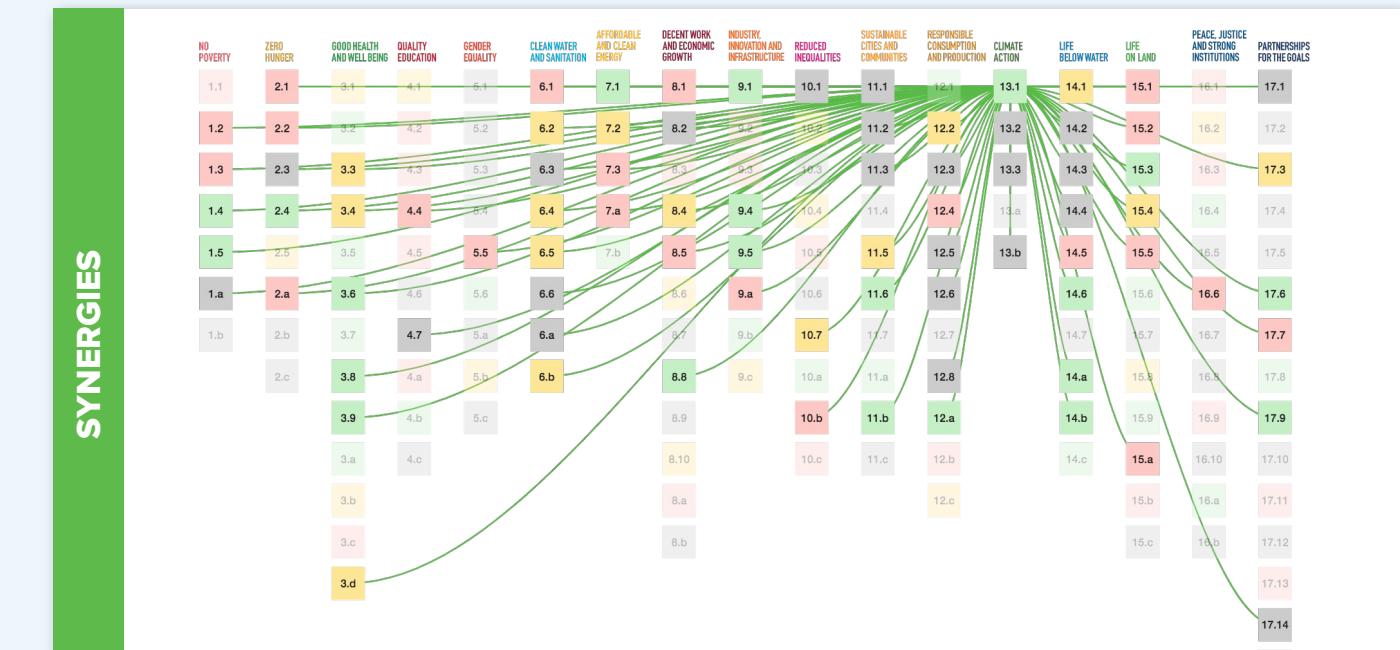
13.1: By 2030 “strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.”

By 2022, vulnerability to climate change, based on adaptive capacity, reached 83% in Ecuador, a value that underscores the urgency of implementing investments to enhance risk management.

Given its cross-cutting nature, focusing efforts on actions related to Target 13.1 will enable the advancement of other SDGs that are closely intertwined with climate management, particularly the increase of resilience among people in poverty and vulnerability to reduce their exposure to extreme events (Target 1.5), the promotion of responsible production and consumption (Target 12.8), and the conservation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems (SDGs 14 and 15).

The impacts of climate change are becoming more frequent and of greater magnitude, making the implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2023-2027 essential. This plan will contribute to identifying and reducing current and future climate risks to social, economic and environmental systems. The most vulnerable population (Target 1.5), infrastructure for providing basic services and safe water (SDG 6), food production systems (Target 2.4), and human settlements (SDG 11) are all exposed in varying degrees to climate-related events. Consequently, the management of climate projections, threats, alerts, vulnerability indicators and adaptation measures through the Climate Information, Projection, Risk and Adaptation to Climate Change System and the Early Warning System is crucial for integrating them into public policy management as a key tool to mitigate potential disaster-induced damages.

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SDG INTERLINKAGES

13.2: By 2030 “integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.”

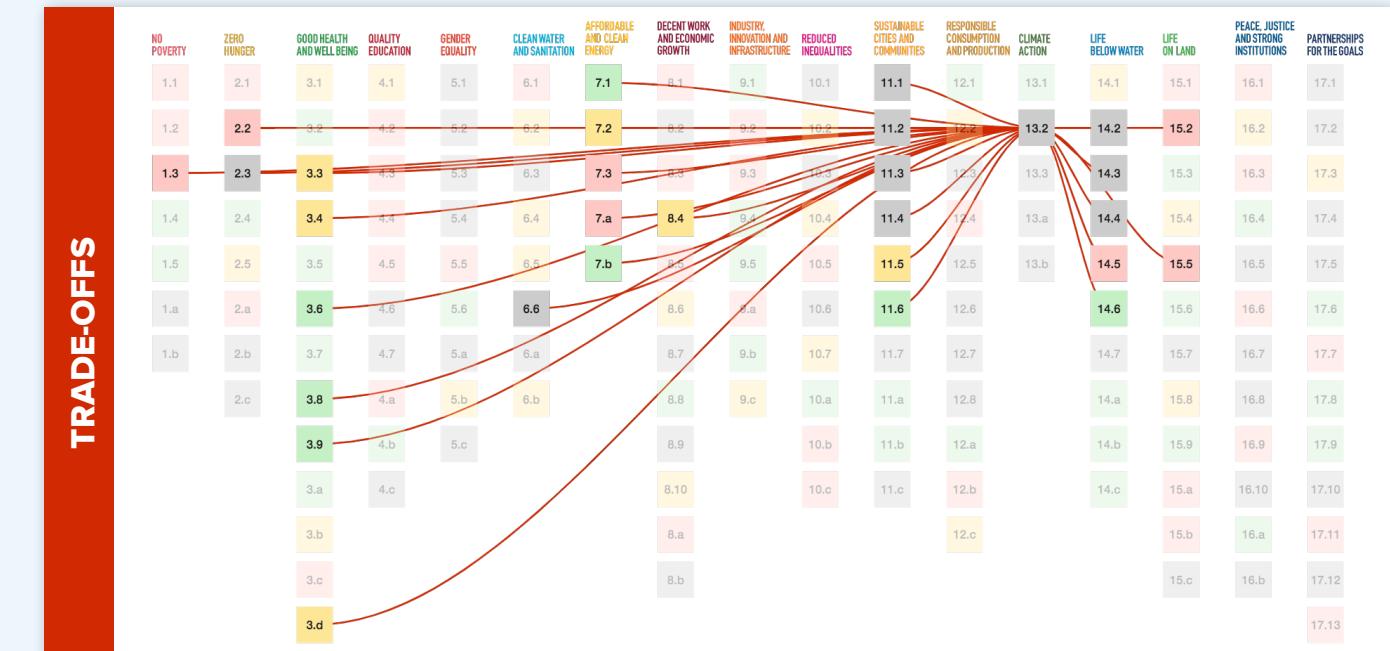
If an adequate identification and assessment of risks are not incorporated into short and medium-term development and strategic prospective planning at the national and local levels, these exercises would be plagued by uncertainty. The integration of climate change measures is paramount in the development of planning instruments and public policies.

In Ecuador, regulations need to incorporate these perspectives to accelerate the achievement of climate management and ecosystem conservation targets (SDGs 13, 14 and 15), this way policies and initiatives will also contribute to the development of resilient infrastructure (Target 9.1) and the enhancement of city and community sustainability (Target 11.5).

As part of international commitments, Ecuador presented its first NDC (2020-2025) and is in the process of developing the new document for the period 2025-2035 with the aim of promoting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change. At the national level, there are 86 instruments (policies, strategies, plans and projects) that have been implemented and incorporate climate considerations. At the subnational level, the process of updating Development and Territorial Planning Plans has begun, which must also incorporate climate considerations and those related to risk management.

This becomes even more relevant with the expected arrival of the El Niño phenomenon at the end of the year. This is essential if we aim to avoid compromising food production (SDG 2), the functionality of infrastructure for connectivity (SDG 9) and the provision of basic services (SDG 6).

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SDG INTERLINKAGES

14.5: By 2020 “conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.”

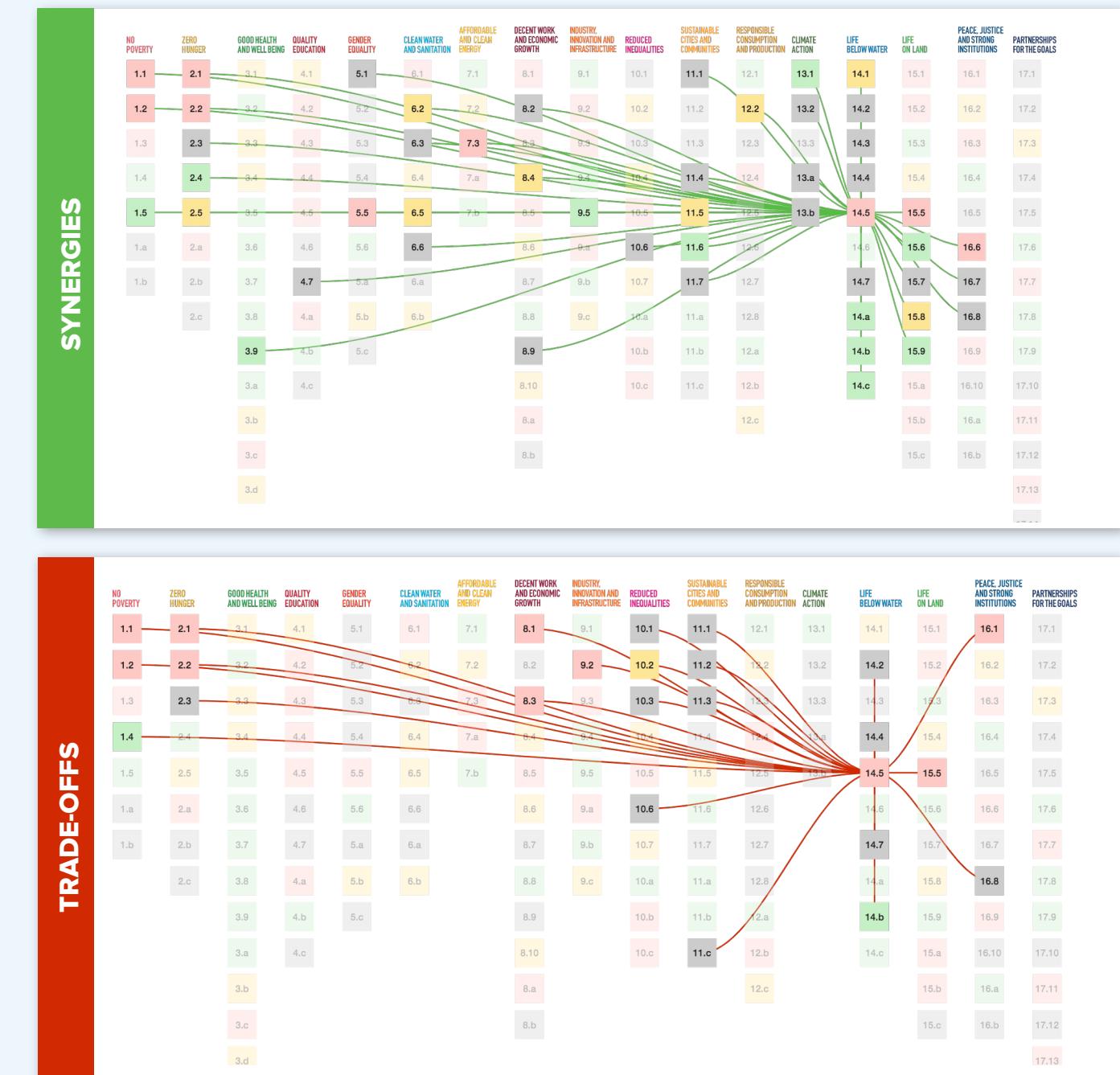
In addition to its conservation component, achieving Target 14.5, involves sustainable ocean management, which means its impact transcends the SDGs related to planet conservation. Therefore, conservation policies and investments in projects to achieve this goal will also contribute to reducing poverty for those living in coastal areas who rely on the use of their resources for their livelihoods (Target 1.4), which also contributes to sustainable food availability (Target 2.3).

One of Ecuador's main initiatives in this area is the establishment of the new Galapagos Marine Reserve, adding 60,000 square kilometers to the marine protection zone, with 30,000 square kilometers designated as no-fishing areas and 30,000 square kilometers as no-longline fishing areas. This will strengthen coastal-marine conservation, helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to promote sustainable tourism (target 8.9).

The projects developed in this area will also generate positive effects on economic growth and job creation, favouring fishing (Target 8.1) and the sustainable management of natural resources provided by the ocean (Target 12.2).

The Government of Ecuador completed the largest debt-for-nature swap in history, reducing its external debt by \$972 million through the exchange of \$1.628 billion in Global Bonds. The debt conversion will generate \$323 million for marine conservation in the Galapagos Islands over the next 18.5 years, including approximately \$18 million annually to capitalize the nonprofit corporation, the Galapagos Life Fund (GLF), that will finance projects designed to support and promote the maintenance, growth and security of its natural capital.

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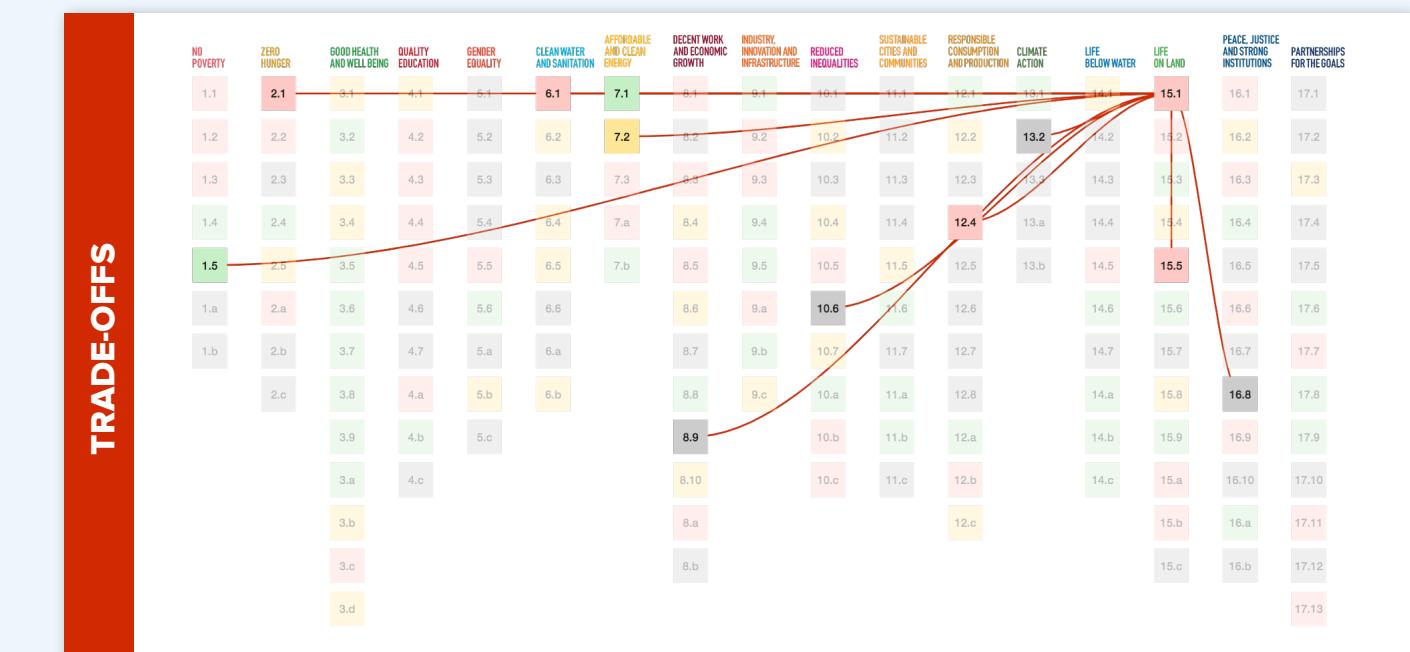
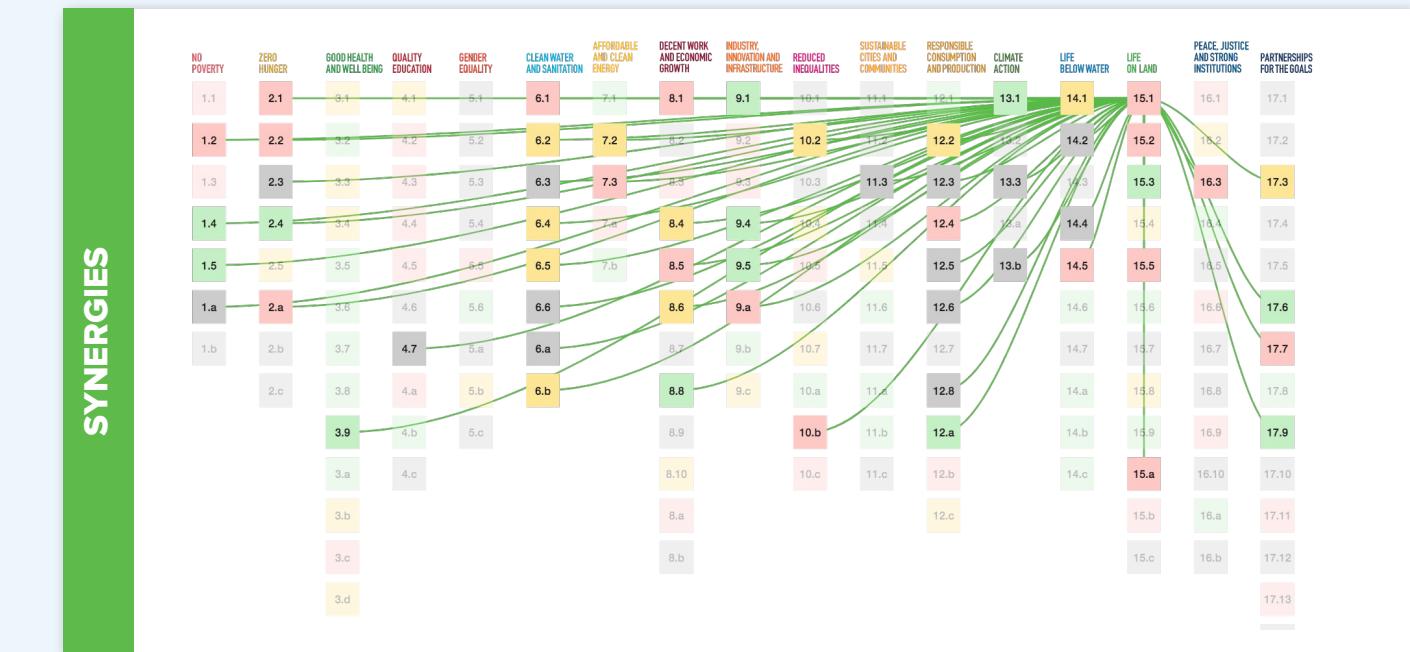
SDG INTERLINKAGES

15.1: By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services.

By prioritizing Target 15.1 in its 2021-2025 National Development Plan, Ecuador reaffirmed the significance of protecting and preserving terrestrial ecosystems and their biodiversity. This includes recognizing that the investment projects intended to fulfil Target 15.1 will not only contribute to achieving the SDGs 13, 14 and 15, but will also help restore ecosystems that underpin the availability and comprehensive management of water resources (SDG 6) and promote their sustainable use (Target 12.2). Additionally, it will also foster the generation of new energy from renewable sources (Target 7.2).

To this end, Ecuador seeks to strengthen the management of the National System of Protected Areas through its 2022-2032 Strategic Plan and the implementation of the National Forest Restoration Plan 2019-2030. These instruments serve as the technical, legal and financial foundation for executing local forest restoration processes with a landscape vision, with an overall goal of covering 30,000 hectares through its projects. Considering that the proportion of national territory under conservation or environmental management, as of 2022, stands at 22.1%, it is necessary to mobilize additional financial resources from various sources and establish robust governance (Target 17.3) to intensify the care of protected areas. This ensures the conservation of natural and cultural resources, genetic flows, the provision of environmental services for the benefit of the population and the alignment of policies on the ground.

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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, debt and natural resources rents as a proportion of GDP. The financial indicator graphs show external debt servicing relative to revenue and the country's sovereign credit rating.

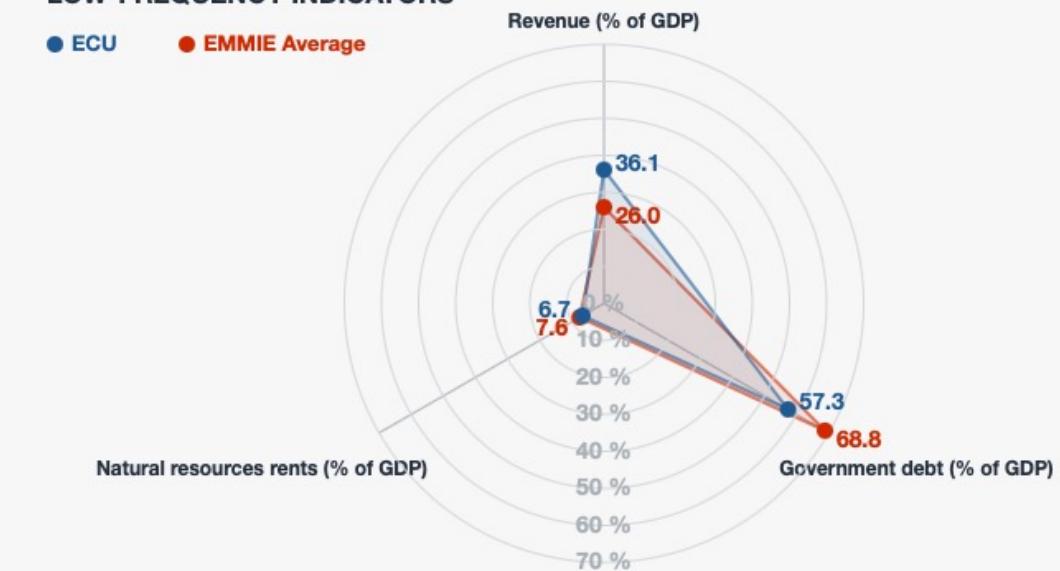
Ecuador's gross government debt, at 57.3% of GDP by the end of 2022, was 11.5 percentage points below the emerging market and middle-income economies' (EMMIE) average of 68.8%. The country was expected to collect 36.1% of GDP in revenue last year, thus nearly 1.4 times the EMMIE average at 26%.

Ecuador's external debt servicing this year is projected to be at 9.4% of revenue, hence about a fourth less than the EMMIE group's 12.3%. The country's credit rating is in the 'extremely speculative' category and hence significantly below the EMMIE average of 'non-investment grade speculative'.

In recent years, Ecuador has developed strong fiscal rules to manage its finances effectively. By focusing on fiscal policies to control public debt and reduce the deficit, Ecuador aims to bring down the debt-to-GDP ratio to 45% by 2030. This strategy will help fund important development projects to foster the country's growth.

LOW-FREQUENCY INDICATORS

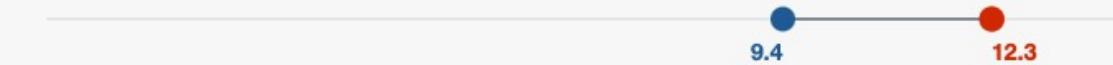
● ECU ● EMMIE Average



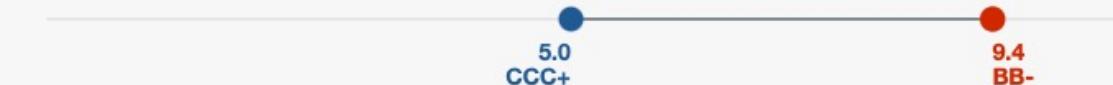
FINANCIAL INDICATORS

● ECU ● EMMIE Average

Total external debt servicing (% of revenue)



Credit rating



Notes: External debt covers public and publicly guaranteed debt. The credit rating shows the numerical average of S&P's, Moody's, and FITCH's ratings, expressed in S&P's scale in brackets.

Sources: WDI (natural resources rents, data from 2021), IMF WEO April 2023 (debt and revenue, data from 2022), debtjustice.org.uk (external debt, data from 2023), S&P, Moody's and FITCH (credit ratings, data from 2023).

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 Ecuador, possible funding options for the investments derived from the identified interlinkages are as follows:

- Tax and revenue reform
- Targeting of fossil fuel subsidies
- Debt for SDGs
- Climate finance
- Blended and public-private finance
- Remittances

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).

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



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).