



INTEGRATED SDG INSIGHTS DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

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.

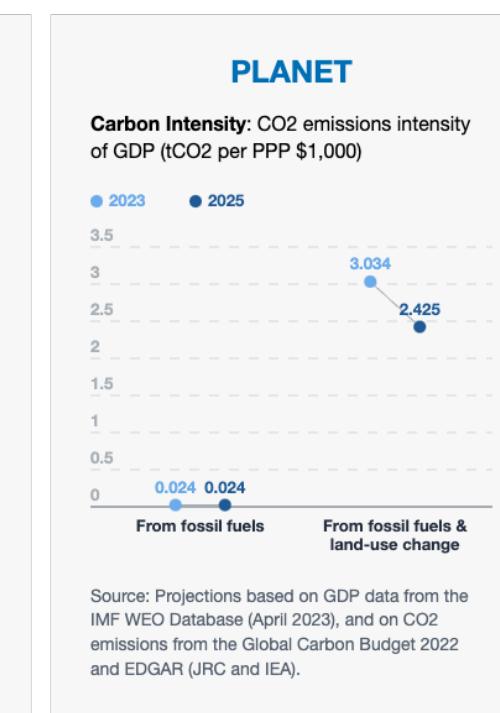
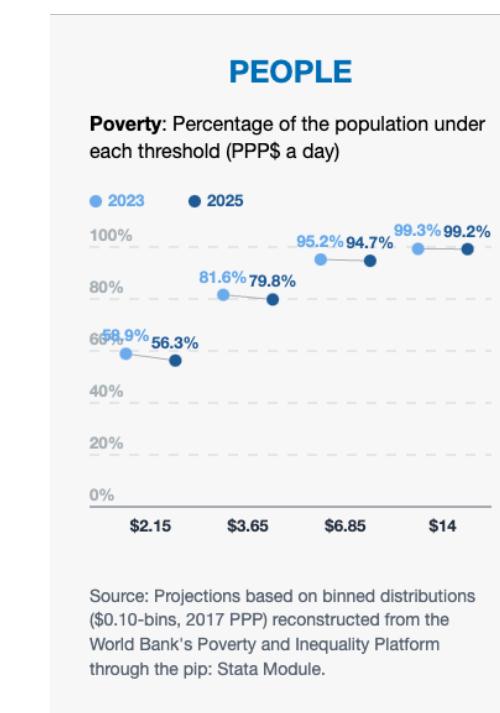
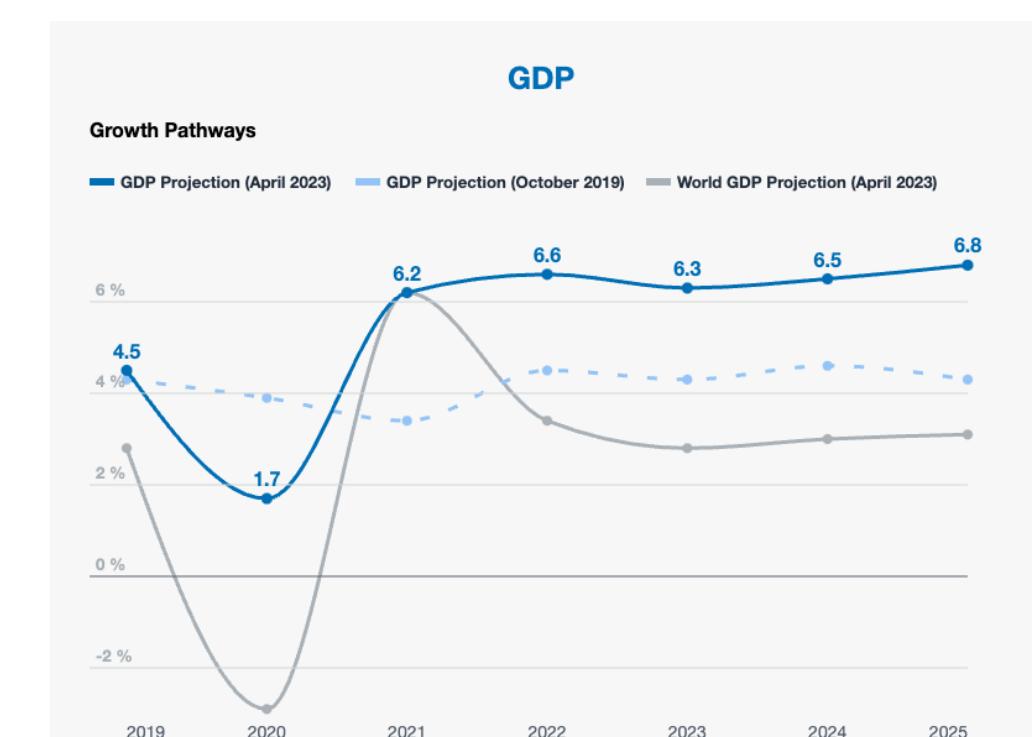
The Democratic Republic of the Congo's growth trajectory during the 2023-2025 cycle is in acceleration, characterized by being double the projected global rate of growth, and well above the forecast before the pandemic.¹

While this rapid pace of growth would exert a positive impact on lowering the incidence of poverty at \$2.15 a day, there are still significant challenges to accelerate poverty reduction from its high prevailing levels. Accordingly, the country's commitments to achieving the SDGs are focused on increasing people's well-being, with a particular focus on access to basic social services (health, education, water, energy and other areas); on the revival of agriculture and industrialization; and on the construction of infrastructure, notably roads and railroads, for real economic integration.

On the other hand, the country's economic expansion is not expected to be increasingly dependent on carbon emission as the carbon emissions intensity of GDP from fossil fuel usage is projected to remain unchanged, and to decline at an annual rate of 10% when also considering emissions from 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 the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) 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 DRC'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 Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023

SDG INTERLINKAGES

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

Based on a global framework for interlinkages, the DRC's SDG progress is colour-coded at the target level. Building from national priorities, the following pathways reflect policy investments with the most potential to accelerate the SDGs for DRC:

- Target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage.
- Target 8.5: Full employment and decent work with equal pay.
- Target 11.1: Safe and affordable housing.
- Target 11.2: Affordable and sustainable transport systems
- Target 16.1: Reduce violence everywhere
- Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions



ACCELERATION PATHWAYS



SDG INTERLINKAGES

Target 3.8: 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

DRC recognizes that beyond health and well-being, universal health coverage (UHC) also contributes to social inclusion, gender equality, poverty eradication, economic growth and human dignity. DRC is facing chronic health crises and catastrophic health spending is pushing millions of households into poverty. This hampers the universal health coverage objective of leaving no one behind.

The Government's ambition is to implement universal health coverage (UHC). This should be characterized by structural reforms throughout the sector and actions, including construction, rehabilitation of infrastructure, reinforcement of medical equipment and supply of medicines, health facilities and a significant reduction in the cost of hospitalization.

By investing in UHC and digital health technology, there is potential to extend health care services to remote areas and, as indicated by synergies, to enhance investments in energy, decent jobs and improved nutrition and in reducing poverty and inequalities.

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



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

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

The creation of decent jobs is a priority of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially for the young and rapidly growing workforce. The labour force is estimated to have increased from 14 million in 1990 to 35 million in 2022. This growing labour force would benefit from investments in youth employment, education and training (target 8.6) and in relevant skills for financial success (target 4.4).

The challenge is that jobs do not pay commensurate to the cost of living and growing exclusion of youths from decent jobs. This brings to the fore two issues – wages too low to be commensurate with decent living, and wages not increasing at least at the pace of inflation.

Investing in SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) will address DRC's current employment challenges by focusing on key priority areas, such as poverty eradication, zero hunger, improved health care and education.

Progress on Target 8.5 should be supported by policies to ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production (target 2.4), access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, especially roads to open up rural areas and strengthening institutions to deliver public services (target 16.6).

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



Explore the interlinkages at:

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SDG INTERLINKAGES

Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

Access to safe and affordable housing and basic services including water is important for DRC to achieve the SDGs. Despite abundant resources, the DRC is facing a water crisis, mainly in rural areas. Less than 58% of Congolese have access to an improved source of drinking water, with less than 40% in rural areas.

What is more, the DRC is facing high water contamination. More than 70% of Congolese use drinking water contaminated with E-coli bacteria. This contamination exposes the population, particularly poor, to a permanent risk. Water, sanitation and hygiene continue to be the third risk factor associated with death or disability in the country. Lack of access to water also hampers efforts in the areas of education (SDG 3) and gender equality (SDG 5).

Progress in achieving SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), aligns with the government efforts to increase investment in basic public services (health, education, WASH, electricity and other basic services) and the effective implementation of Law No. 15/026 of 31 December 2015 on water. Specifically, Law No. 15/026 of 31 December on water has created a legal basis by decentralizing the water service and promotes the emergence of alternative autonomous operators.

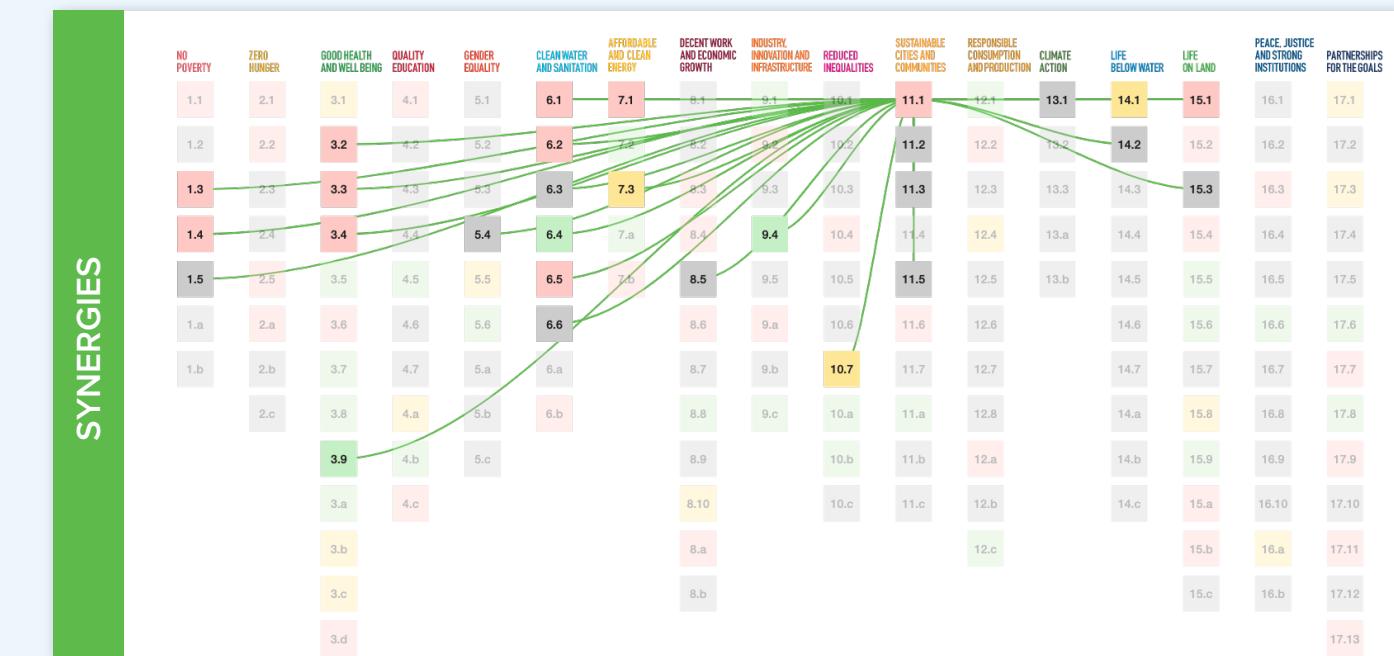
In addition, efforts are called for to integrate sustainable transportation systems and to enhance disaster preparedness to ensure resilient and sustainable urban development. Investing in target 11.1 can enhance the quality of settlements and ensuring access to essential services, such as electricity, water, sanitation, education, health care, roads and internet connectivity and access.

● ON TRACK

● FOR REVIEW

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● TRENDS NA



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

SDG INTERLINKAGES

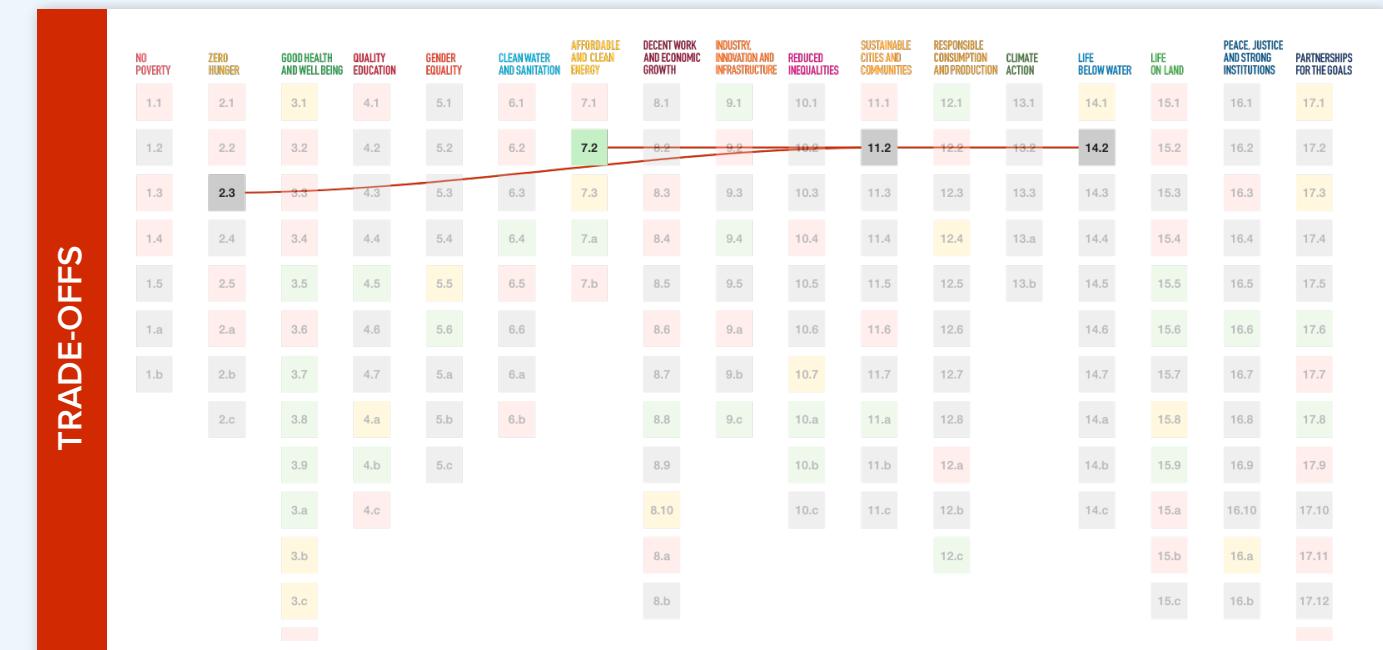
11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

The rehabilitation of damaged transport infrastructure remains a priority. Better connectivity can revive economic activity, boost growth. And development across other SDGs. The country has 58,129 km of roads of general interest that connect the capitals of the provinces; 86,871 km of agricultural feeder roads; and 7,400 km of urban roads. However, only 5,065 km of roads are paved.

To open-up several regions and to revive agricultural activities (SDG 2), linking producers, mainly small agricultural producers, and the market (SDG 8), the government, within the framework of the Local Development Programme of the 145 Territories of the DRC, initiated the rehabilitation and maintenance of more than 38,000 km of agricultural feeder roads, including more than 400 bridges and culverts. However, given DRC's geographical dispersion, improving in-land transportation is essential for livelihood, trade and commerce.

Provision of low-cost public transport systems makes the country more inclusive, safe and sustainable. Effective and low-cost public transportation reduces urban poverty and inequalities and enhances inclusive growth through increasing agricultural productivity, access to jobs, health care, education services and other public goods, therefore contributing to reliable and resilient infrastructure, although it must be accompanied by careful consideration of potential environmental and air pollution trade-offs.

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



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

SDG INTERLINKAGES

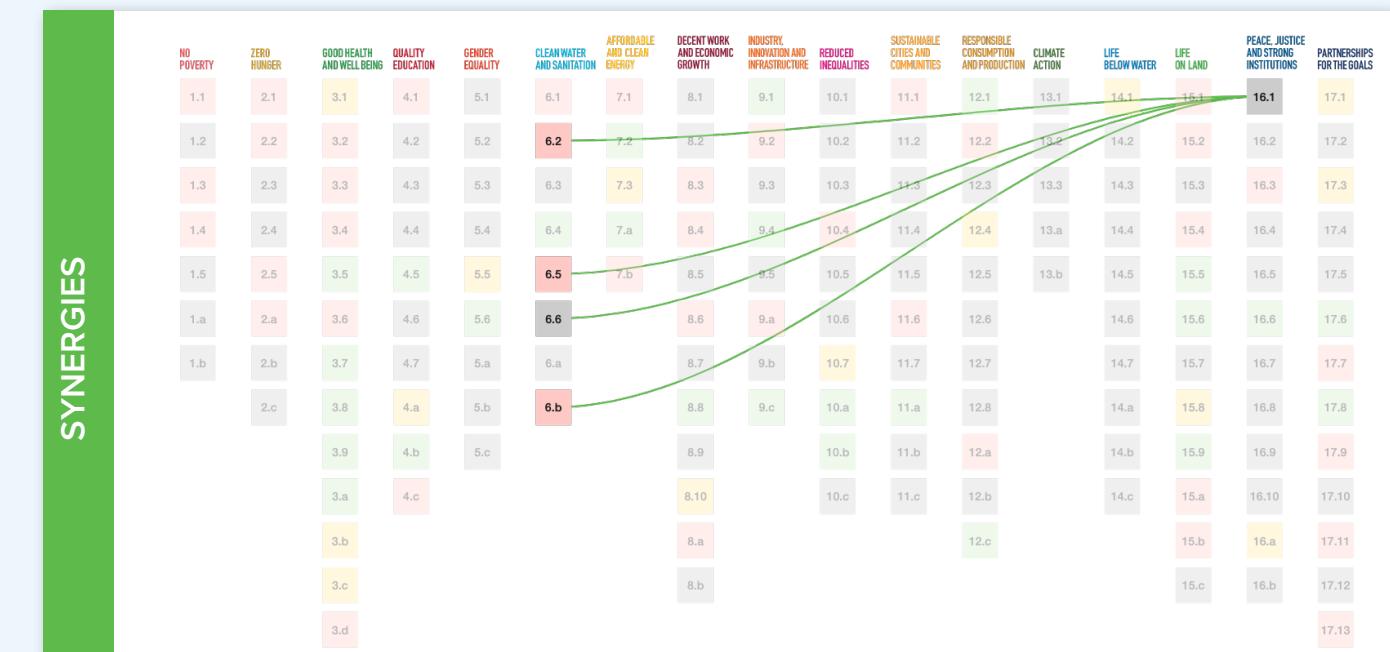
Target 16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and associated mortality rates

For nearly three decades, the DRC has experienced recurrent and evolving cycles of conflict and violence, mainly in eastern DRC. Mass rape, kidnapping, destruction of property and abductions are common and cause much misery to the population. The humanitarian drama is one of the most critical of the twenty-first century.

Achieving peace is crucial to accelerate the path to sustainable development, reducing humanitarian need, and building strong institutions. It is the founding block to build social cohesion.

Achieving peace and effective control of eastern DRC is crucial to accelerate sustainable development and build strong institutions. Meanwhile, DRC can take specific measures to protect vulnerable groups and uphold human rights for all, including legal reforms and harmonization efforts, as well as ensuring equitable access to inclusive and responsive legal and social services. Enhancing mechanisms for accountability for conflict-related violence will also enable DRC to seize these opportunities and progress towards a secure and prosperous future for all.

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



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

SDG INTERLINKAGES

16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

DRC recognises that effective, accountable and transparent institutions play a vital role in promoting good governance practices, which are also instrumental for the successful achievement of the SDGs.

The Government has laid an agenda to strengthen the capacity of state institutions, including the legislature and judicial entities to ensure rule of law and justice, reduce corruption and improve public service delivery. This, in turn, will have positive impacts on multiple development outcomes – such as reducing inequalities and improving service delivery and resource management.

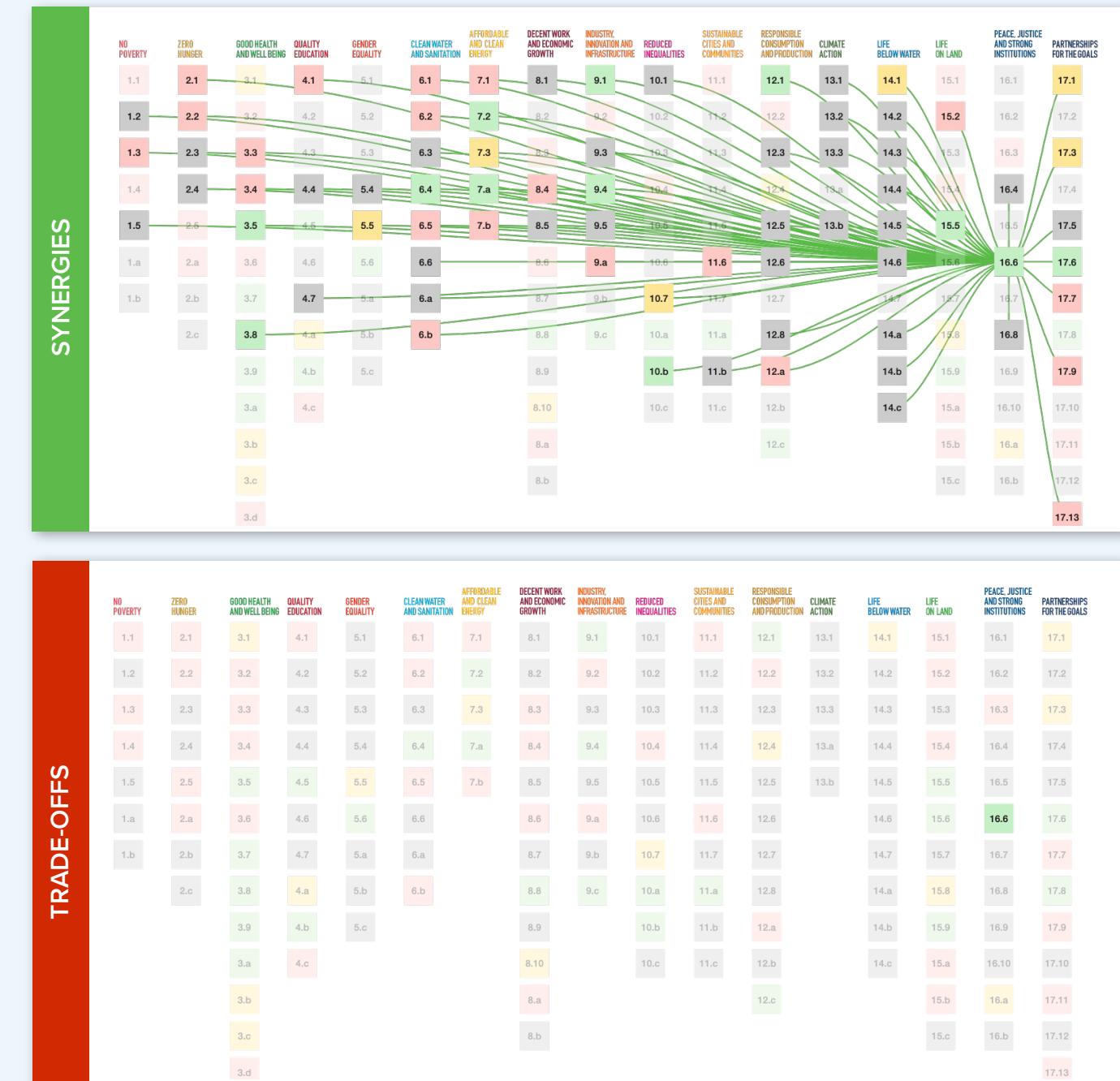
Good governance plays a crucial role in facilitating collective action, holding the parties involved accountable and addressing intricate trade-offs that arise between the SDGs in DRC. Target 16.6 can serve as an enabler to achieve all SDG-related policies and programmes by ensuring their effective implementation.

ON TRACK

FOR REVIEW

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TRENDS NA



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

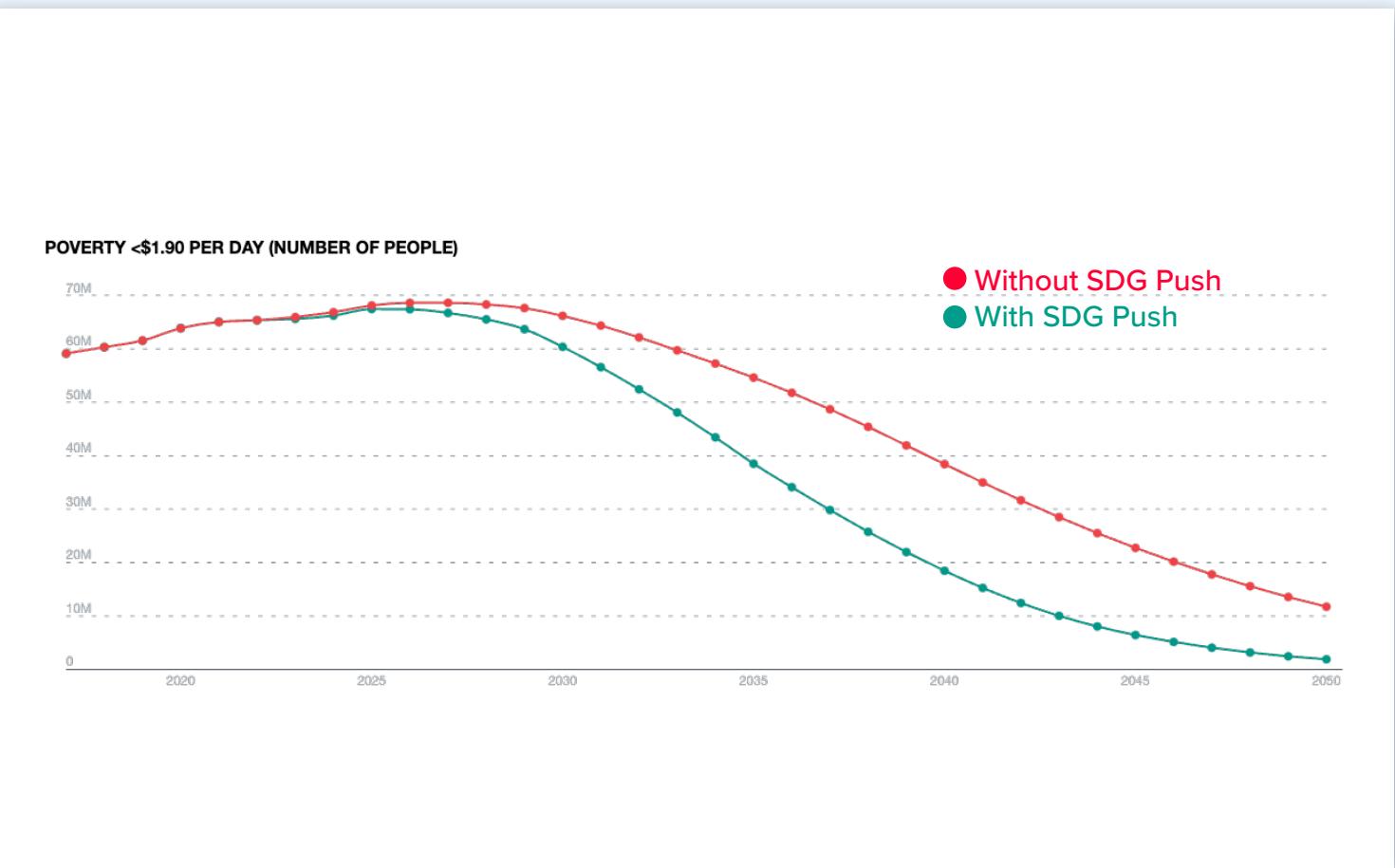
FUTURES SCENARIOS

Achieving the SDGs is possible.

The ‘SDG Push’ is a futures scenario based on 48 integrated accelerators in the areas of Governance, Social Protection, the 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 DRC can reduce the number of people living in poverty over time.

People living in poverty	By 2030	By 2050
Without the SDG Push	66 mn	12 mn
With the SDG Push	60 mn	1.9 mn



Explore SDG Futures Scenarios at:

<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/COD/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.

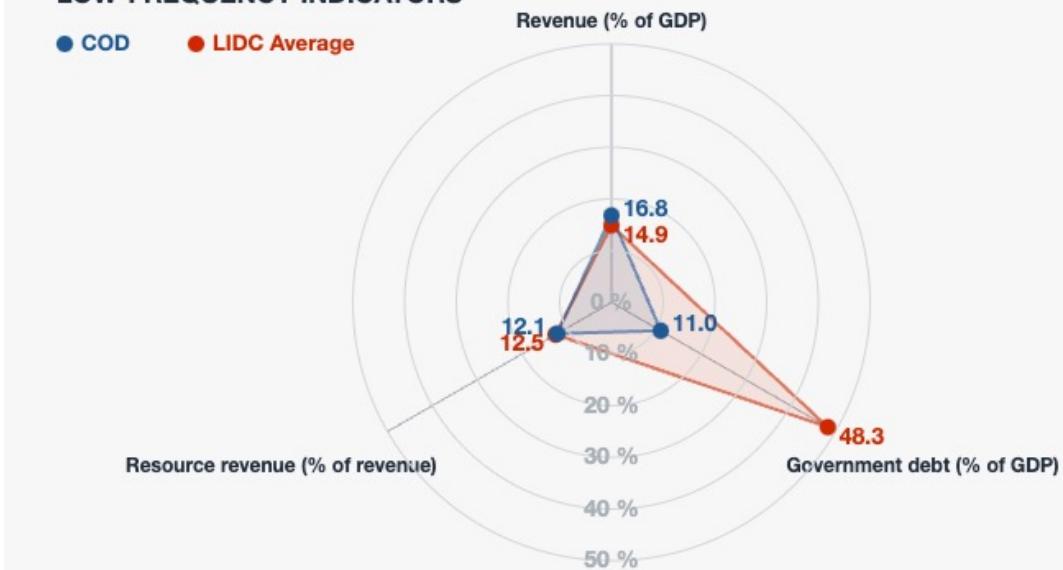
After joining the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative in 2003 and receiving debt relief in 2010, the DRCs gross government debt is projected at 16% of GDP in 2023, which is less than a quarter of the low-income developing countries (LIDC) group average of 48.3%. The country is projected to collect 16% of GDP in 2023 in revenue this year – 1.9 percentage points (pp) above the LIDC average of 14.9% – with natural resources accounting for 45% of said revenue.

Dependence on mining resources has exacerbated volatility of revenues, given instability of raw material prices. This makes macroeconomic management difficult, especially as spending is even more volatile than prices.

The DRC's public external debt servicing this year is projected to reach 6.9% of revenue, which is about half the LIDC average of 14.1%. Due to weak revenue mobilization and susceptibility to external shocks, the latest World Bank and IMF DSA rated the country as at 'moderate risk of debt distress'.

LOW-FREQUENCY INDICATORS

● COD ● LIDC Average



FINANCIAL INDICATORS

● COD ● LIDC Average

Total external debt servicing (% of revenue)



DSA Rating

● ● ● ●
MODERATE

Notes: External debt covers public and publicly guaranteed debt. The LIDC average of resource revenue (% of revenue) only includes the 38 countries that reported data for that indicator.

Sources: UNU-WIDER GRD (resource revenue, data from 2019), IMF WEO April 2023 (debt and revenue, forecasts for 2023), IDS (external debt, data from 2023), IMF/World Bank (DSA Rating as of 31 May 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 the DRC, possible financing options for the investments derived from the identified interlinkages are as follows:

- Tax and revenue reform
- Debt for SDGs
- Climate finance
- Blended and public-private finance
- SDG-aligned business environment and investment
- Accessing financial markets and insurance
- Remittances, philanthropy and faith-based financing

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).