



INTEGRATED SDG INSIGHTS

ZIMBABWE

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: ZIMBABWE

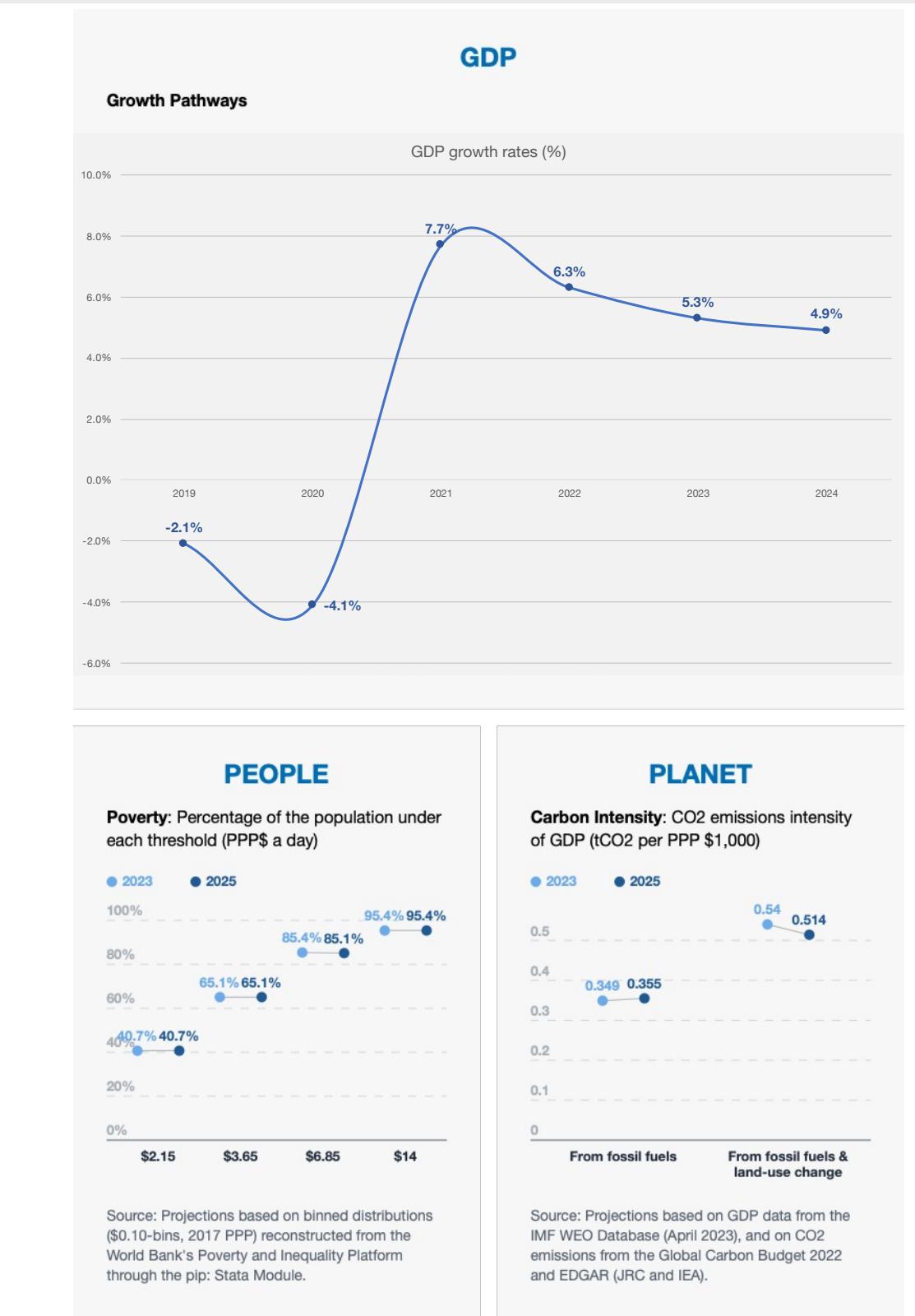
While economic growth is a key element in achieving the SDGs, many countries are intent on moving beyond growth as a yardstick for progress. In the short run, growth enables the SDGs; but in the long run, the SDGs aim to transform the pattern of growth itself.

By 2021, Zimbabwe's economy had fully mitigated the contraction experienced during 2019-2020 and is expected to expand at an average annual rate of 5.1% during 2023-2024. This pace of growth is on average higher than the global growth rate.

This accelerated pace of growth, however, is not projected to exert a noticeable impact on poverty reduction due to persistent inflation and intermittent shocks like drought. Hence, the country's commitments to achieving the SDGs should focus on increasing labour productivity through capital deepening and structural transformation, as well as through instituting a robust social protection system to reduce poverty and vulnerability.

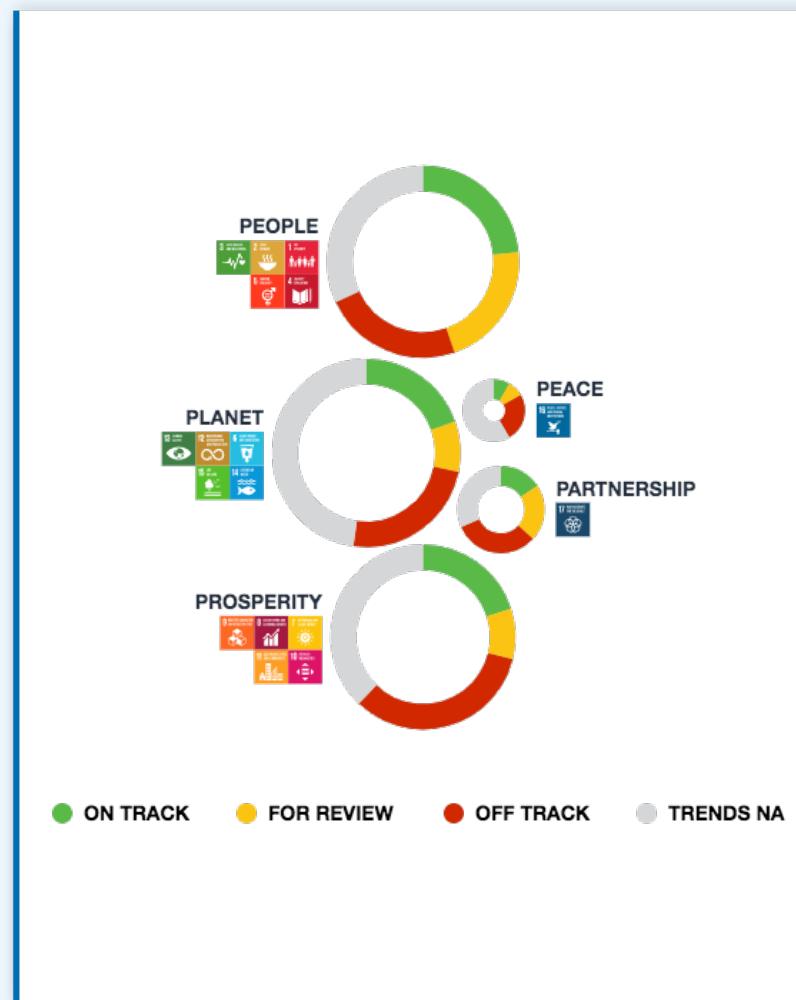
On the other hand, this economic growth cycle comes at the expense of the environment as the country's carbon emissions intensity of GDP is expected to increase at an annual rate of almost 1% due to fossil fuel usage.¹

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



SDG TRENDS

Understanding how Zimbabwe 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

Zimbabwe'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 Strategy 2021–2025
2. Voluntary National Review 2021
3. Vision 2030
4. Zimbabwe UN Common Country Analysis 2021
5. 2022–2026 Zimbabwe UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
6. Zimbabwe SDG Position Paper

ZIMBABWE'S PRIORITY GOALS

In the country's position paper, Zimbabwe has committed to implementing all 17 goals while prioritizing enabler goals as follows:

SDG 2:
End hunger

SDG 3:
Health

SDG 4:
Education

SDG 5:
Gender

SDG 6:
WASH

SDG 7:
Energy

SDG 8:
Jobs & economic
growth

SDG 9:
Innovation,
infrastructure &
industrialization

SDG 13:
Climate change

SDG 16:
Peace and justice

SDG 17:
Global partnership

SDG INTERLINKAGES

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

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

- Target 5.4: Value unpaid care and promote shared domestic responsibilities
- Target 8.5: Full employment and decent work with equal pay
- Target 9.1: Develop sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructures
- Target 11.1: Safe and affordable housing
- Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions



ACCELERATION PATHWAYS



SDG INTERLINKAGES

5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

In Zimbabwe women experience higher poverty levels than men, and poverty is particularly prevalent among individuals living in female-headed households, disproportionately surpassing their population share.

To address this, it is essential to prioritize closing the existing gender gap in employment, education and other opportunities through inclusive strategies for women. Zimbabwe's National Strategy for 2021-2025 emphasizes the need for integrated approaches to promote gender equality and to create greater opportunities, especially for young people.

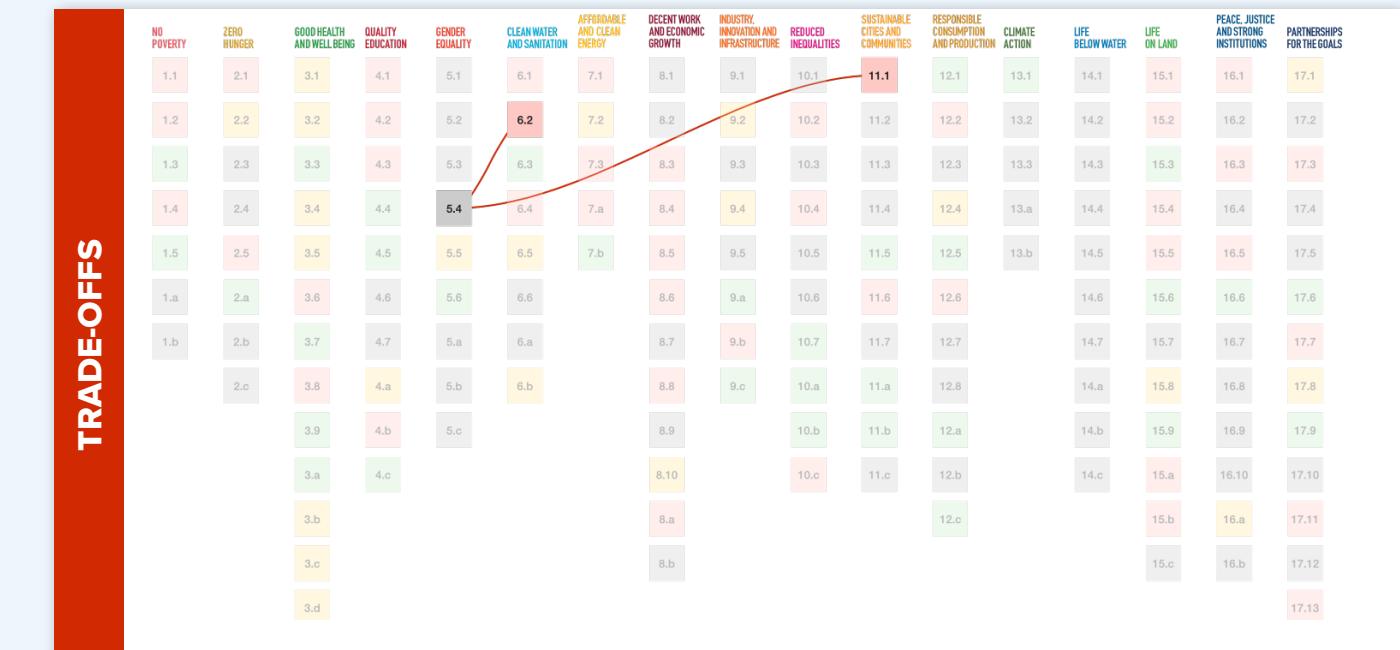
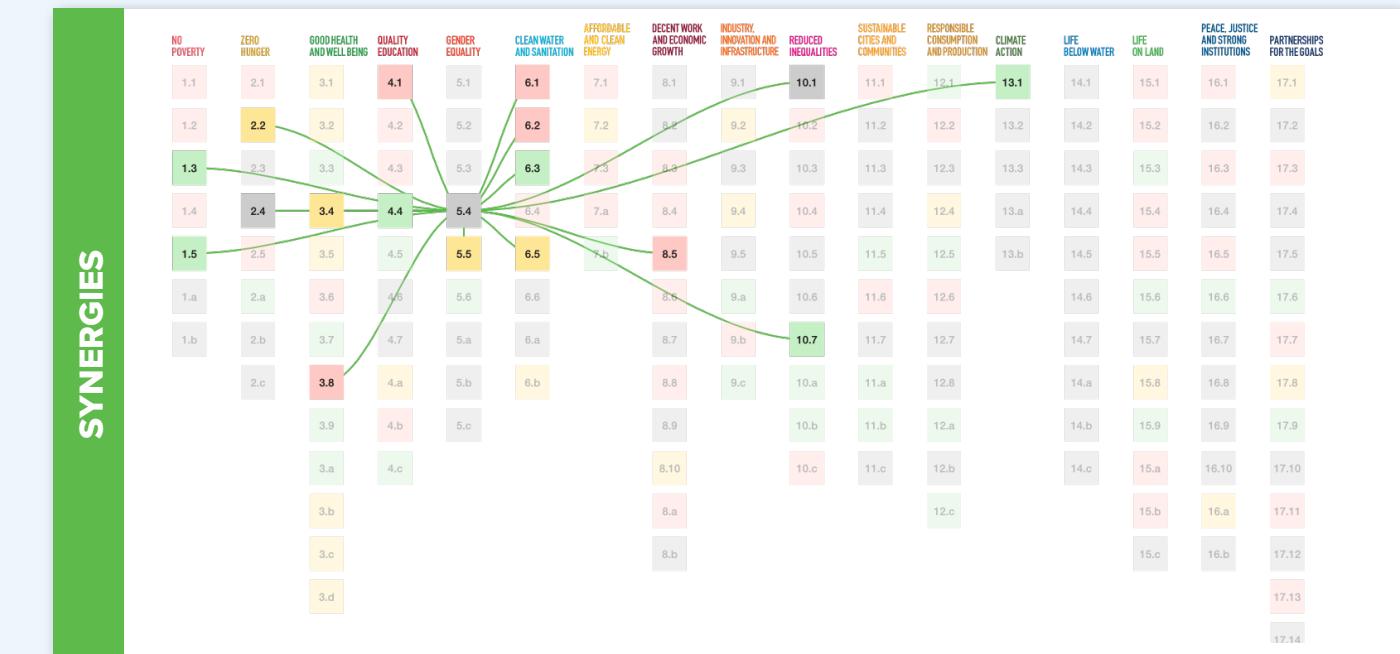
Furthermore, a robust social protection programme targeting women and that leverages the potential of the digital can empower women by enabling them to succeed in the future of work, to access essential digital services, including those for education and health care, and to increase their civic and political engagement.

● ON TRACK

● FOR REVIEW

● OFF TRACK

● TRENDS NA



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

SDG INTERLINKAGES

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

Unemployment and poverty are high in Zimbabwe due to a weak job market, high informality, low investment and limited structural transformation. The national expanded unemployment rate was around 47.3 percent in 2021, with an estimated 39.8 percent of the population living below the US\$2.15/day (2017 PPP) international poverty line in 2019.

To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, it is critical to prioritize increasing labour productivity through capital deepening and structural transformation to generate productive jobs for all which is key to reducing poverty and inequality.

By investing in SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), Zimbabwe can improve on its current employment, inequality and poverty challenges. Progress on Target 8.5 should be supported with policies to reduce energy intensity and to increase energy efficiency to mitigate the negative impact on the share of renewable energy (Target 7.2) and energy efficiency (Target 7.3).

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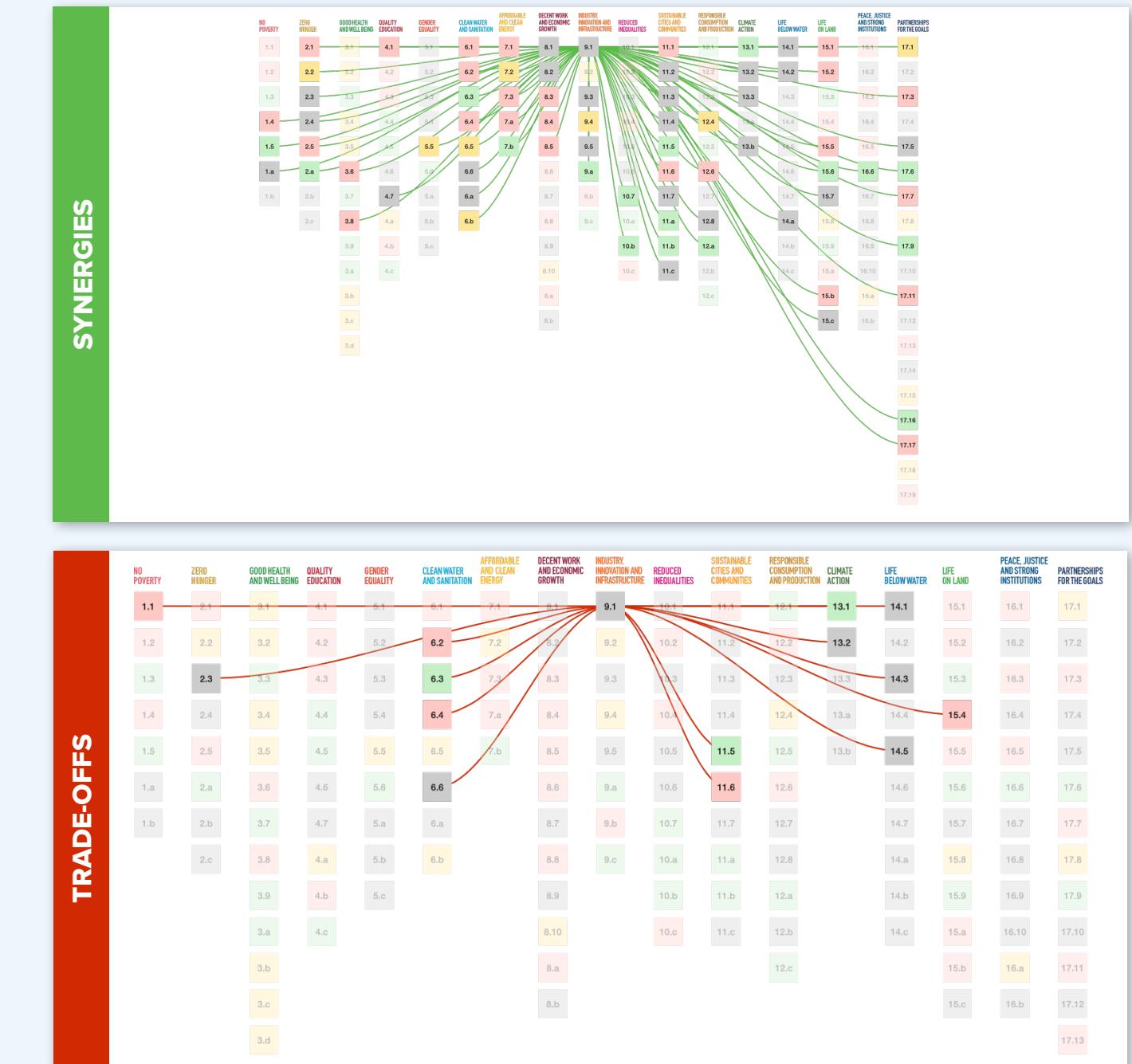
SDG INTERLINKAGES

9.1: Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all

Zimbabwe ranks 114th out of 152 countries in the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's 2020 Competitive Industrial Performance Index, down from 112th in 2019. Zimbabwe's industry faces several challenges: macroeconomic instability, inadequate access to affordable and reliable infrastructure, such as electricity, transport and water supply. To spur industrialization, the government should prioritize macroeconomic stability, supporting export diversification and participation in Global Value Chains (GVCs), and enhance the productivity of the informal sector and linkages with the formal sector.

By investing in SDG 9.1 (Industry, infrastructure and innovation), Zimbabwe can improve on its current employment challenges and focus on key priorities around the eradication of poverty, thereby reducing inequality. This, complemented with formalization of informal firms and state support for services trade, will increase the economy's ability to absorb the ever-increasing ranks of youth and increase the productivity and competitiveness of local firms.

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



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

SDG INTERLINKAGES

11.1: Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums

Urbanization and rapid population growth present challenges in providing adequate housing, water, basic services and infrastructure in Zimbabwe's cities. To tackle these issues, the Zimbabwe Government has come up with the Zimbabwe National Human Settlements Policy (ZNHSP) which will impact more than three million people.

Progress in achieving SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), aligns with the ZNHSP's national priorities for social progress. The ZNHSP is anchored on the New Urban Agenda (NUA) aspects as follows: i) local economic development; ii) sustainable land use and security of tenure; iii) preserving socio-ecological functions of land and related resources through inter alia, effective waste management; iv) appropriate spatial development strategies, including densification, avoiding sprawl and renewing settlements; and v) promoting sound socio-economic linkages within and between rural and urban areas.

Additionally, efforts should be made to integrate sustainable transportation systems and to enhance disaster preparedness to ensure resilient and sustainable urban development. Investing in Target 11.1 can advance the objectives of the NUA emphasizing the importance of improving the quality of settlements and of ensuring access to essential services, such as electricity, water, sanitation, education, health care, roads and the internet.



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

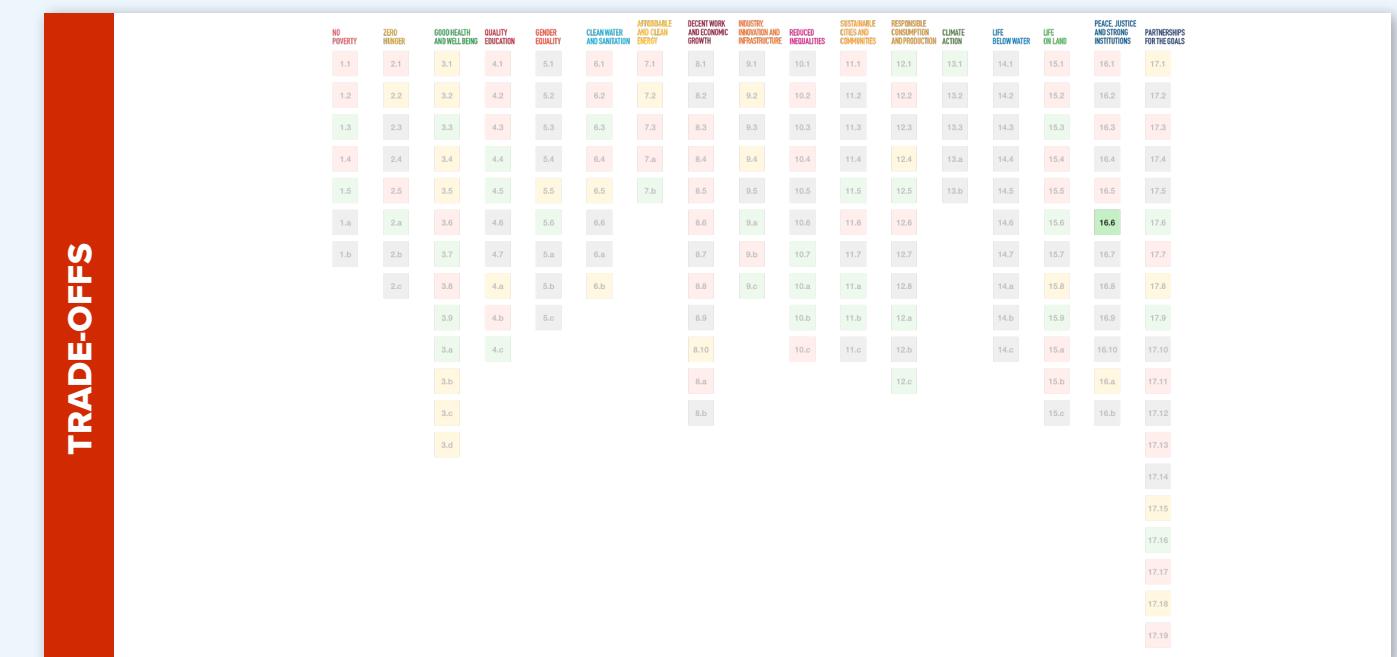
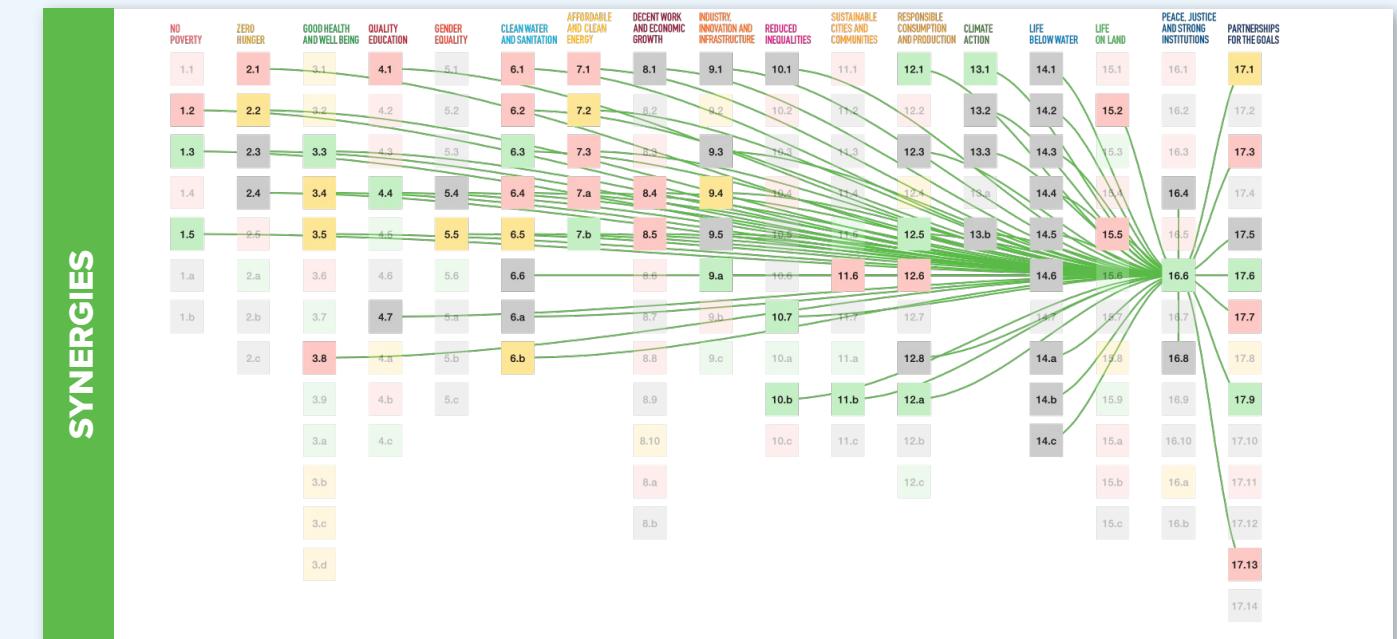
SDG INTERLINKAGES

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

In Zimbabwe, approximately 42.1 percent of the population are satisfied with the public services they receive. By focusing on SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), and specifically Target 16.6, measures can be implemented to cut across all goals and pillars outlined in the National Development Strategy, where public services are provided.

This offers Zimbabwe the opportunity to set a higher goal, for example increasing the percentage of the population satisfied with the public services received. This increase will have a positive multiplier effect on the progress of other SDGs.

However, it is crucial to ensure that this objective is accompanied by safeguards to prevent the deepening of inequalities and poverty.



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

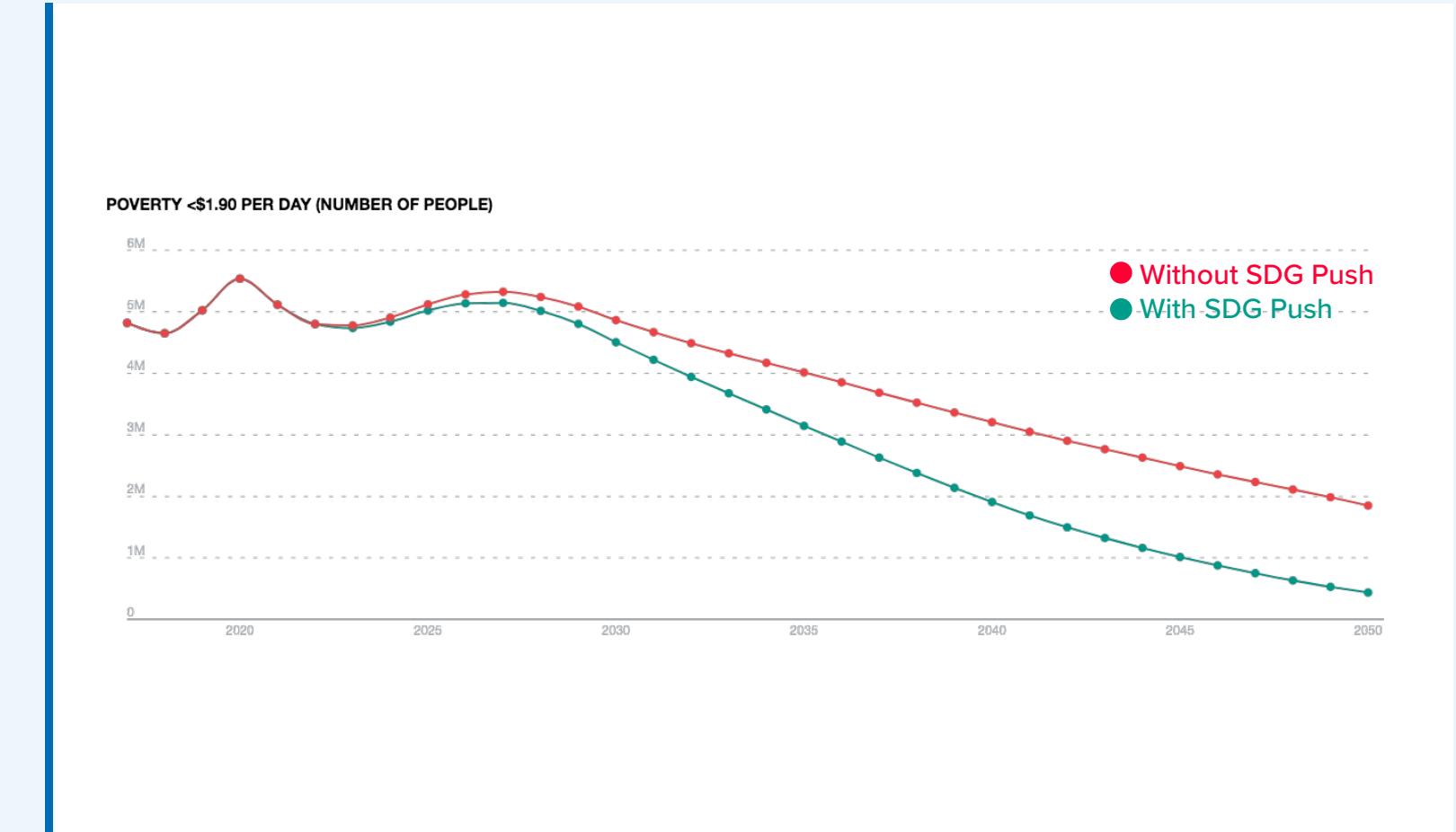
FUTURES SCENARIOS

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 Zimbabwe can reduce the number of people living in poverty over time.

People living in poverty	By 2030	By 2050
Without the SDG Push	4.9 mn	1.9 mn
With the SDG Push	4.5 mn	440,000



Explore SDG Futures Scenarios at:

<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/ZWE/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, 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 latest Debt Sustainability Assessment (DSA) risk rating.

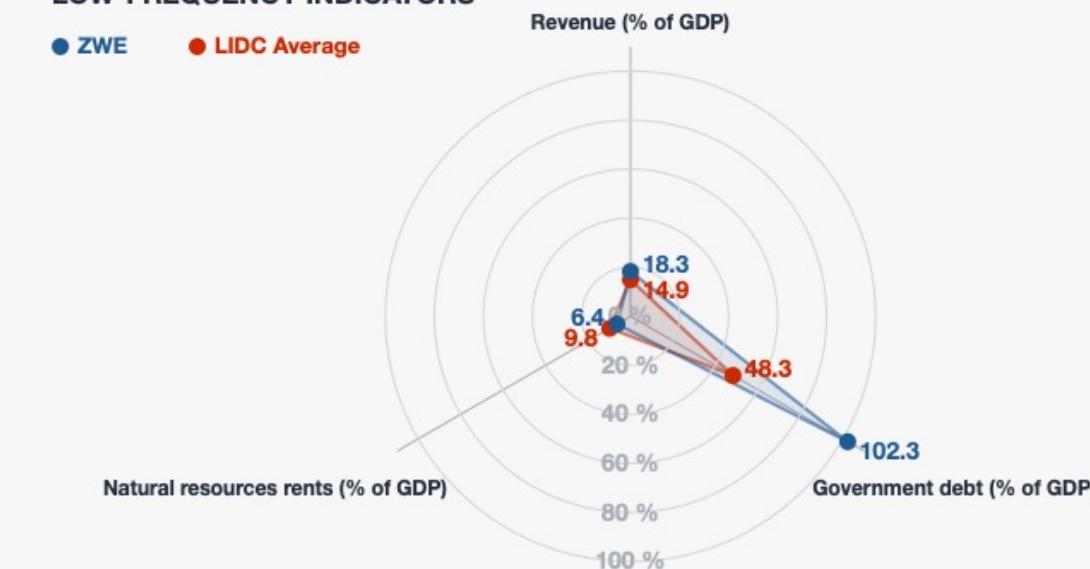
Zimbabwe's gross government debt, projected at 102.3% of GDP in 2023, is more than double the low-income developing countries' (LIDC) average of 48.3%. Part of this debt was inherited by its unrecognized predecessor state, Rhodesia, and Zimbabwe has been battling a debt crisis since defaulting in 2000. The country is projected to collect 18.3% of GDP in revenue this year according to government's figures, above the LIDC group ratio of 14.9%.

Zimbabwe's public external debt servicing this year, at 3.4% of revenue, is nearly 11 percentage points (pp) below the LIDC average of 14.1%. Due to its decades-long default and prolonged unsettled external arrears – unpaid amounts past due dates – the latest World Bank and IMF DSA from April 2022 rates the country 'in debt distress'. Additionally, Zimbabwe has had difficulty accessing external financing.

LOW-FREQUENCY INDICATORS

● ZWE

● LIDC Average



FINANCIAL INDICATORS

● ZWE

● LIDC Average

Total external debt servicing (% of revenue)

DSA Rating



IN DEBT DISTRESS

Notes: External debt covers public and publicly guaranteed debt.

Sources: Government's statistics (revenue and GDP, data from 2023), WDI (natural resources rents, data from 2021), IMF WEO April 2023 (debt, data from 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 Zimbabwe, possible funding options for the investments derived from the identified interlinkages in the SDG Stimulus that are relevant to Zimbabwe 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).



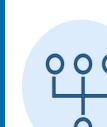
TRENDS & PRIORITIES

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).