



INTEGRATED SDG INSIGHTS CUBA

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: CUBA

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.

Several international and national studies have placed Cuba in prominent positions in sustainability measurements. Being a country with modest economic income, it has achieved high levels of social development, especially in education indicators (measured by years of schooling) and health (measured by life expectancy at birth). In the 2019 edition of the UNDP Human Development Report, an indicator is included that expresses the difference between the location of countries in terms of their Gross National Income (GNI) and their location in the Human Development Index (HDI), where a positive difference indicates that the country has a relatively unfavourable location in terms of its GNI and relatively high in its HDI. Cuba is the country that shows the greatest positive difference in this indicator, which was maintained in the 2021-2022 edition of that report.

These significant achievements in terms of social development are further enhanced when the environmental dimension is included. In recent Human Development Reports from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a complementary measurement of an HDI, adjusted for planetary pressures, has been incorporated, which takes into account both per capita CO2 emissions and material consumption per inhabitant of each country. According to this analysis, Cuba, ranked 83rd in the HDI, moving up by 30 positions with the adjustment made.

On the other hand, an alternative calculation of the HDI carried out at Centro de Investigaciones de la Economía Mundial (CIEM), in 2017-2018, which incorporates the per capita ecological footprint as a fourth dimension of human development, shows that Cuba moved up by 35 positions and ranks 33rd in this new combined index of human development and environmental sustainability.

(1) See R. Pichs, "Sostenibilidad en Cuba medida por el desarrollo humano y el impacto en el medio ambiente", on Temas de Economía Mundial, Nueva época, No. 33, CIEM, La Habana, febrero 2018, <http://www.ciem.cu/publicaciones/2018/RevistaTemasNo33.pdf>

Table 1. Planetary pressures used in the adjustment of the UNDP Human Development Index.

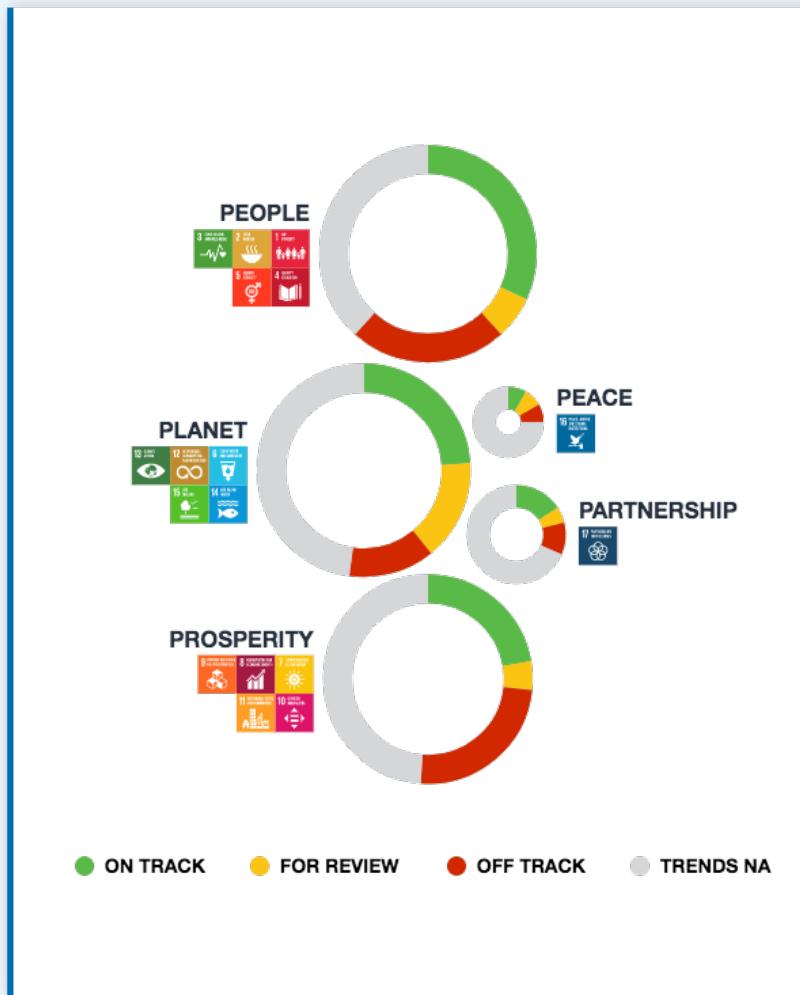
Regions	"Per capita CO2 emissions (tons)"	"Per capita material consumption (tons)"
USA	14.2	29.7
OECD countries	8.2	21.5
Least Developed Countries (LDC)	0.3	3.1
Subsaharan Africa	0.7	3.2
South Asia	1.8	5.1
Latin America	2.3	13.3
CUBA	1.8	9.2
Developing Countries	3.3	10.5
World Average	4.3	12.4

Note: OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Source: UNDP (2022). *Human Development Report 2021-2022*, New York.

SDG TRENDS

Understanding how Cuba 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.



Trends in detail:

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

SDG PRIORITIES

Cuba'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. Bases del Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social hasta el 2030 (2017)
2. Conceptualización del Modelo Económico y Social Cubano de Desarrollo Socialista (2021)
3. Estrategia de Desarrollo Económico y Social para enfrentar la COVID e impulsar la economía
4. Informe Nacional Voluntario sobre la implementación de la Agenda 2030 (2019)
5. I Informe Nacional Voluntario sobre la implementación de la Agenda 2030 (2021)
6. Impactos Económicos y Sociales de la COVID 19 en Cuba: Opciones de políticas (2020)
7. Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2019
8. Constitución de la República de Cuba (2019)
9. Política Nacional de Desarrollo Territorial

Priorities in detail:

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

SDG INTERLINKAGES

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

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

- Target 3.4: Reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health
- Target 8.2: Diversity, innovate and upgrade for economic productivity
- Target 9.2: Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization
- Target 11.3: Inclusive and sustainable urbanization
- Target 16.3: Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice



ACCELERATION PATHWAYS



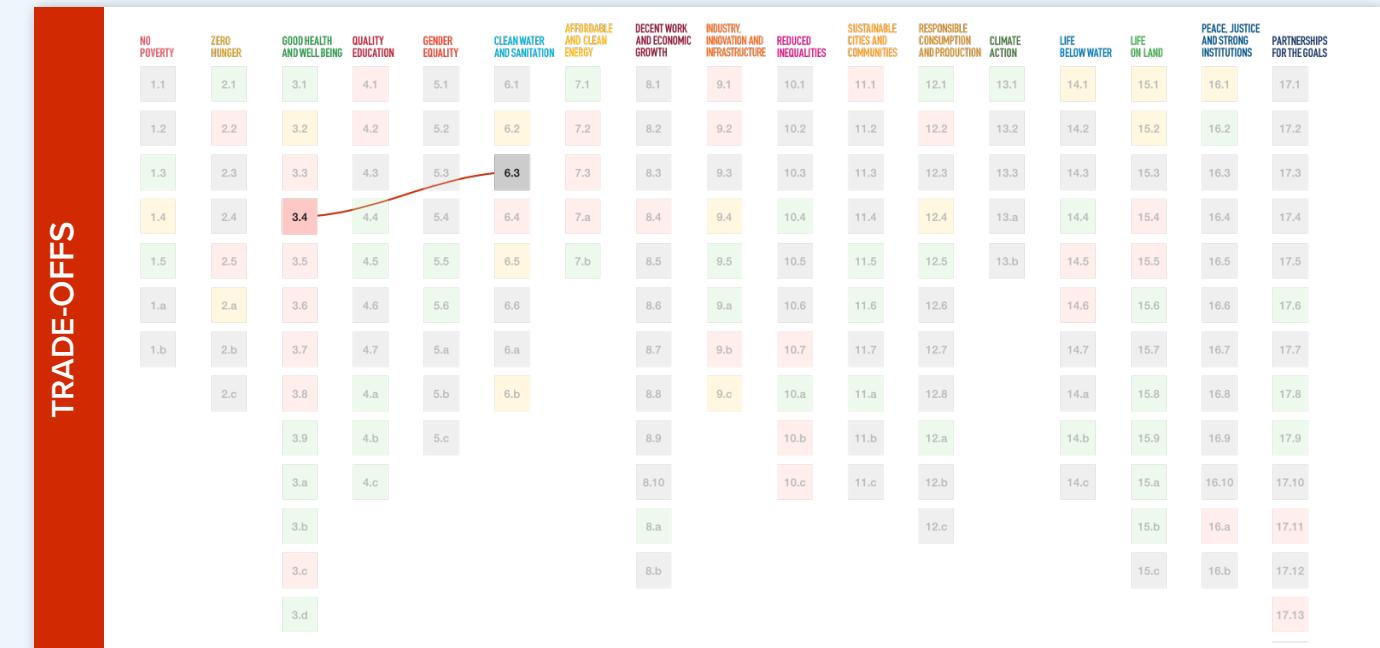
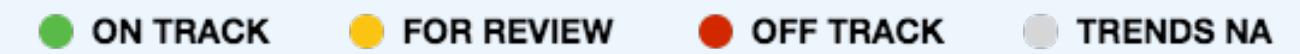
SDG INTERLINKAGES

3.4: By 2030 “reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment” in all countries.

In Cuba, health is a high priority area for the government, with universal and free coverage and access, based on the Primary Health Care (APS, in Spanish) strategy. The results achieved in the country are an international benchmark, especially for developing countries.

The country has a National Strategy for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and their risk factors (2019-2025), which promotes the adoption of healthy lifestyles with community participation and will not only allow achieving Goal 3.4, but also prevent preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years; contribute to economic growth, productivity and decent work for all, especially for young people; promote the full and effective participation of women, and thereby improve income and foster resilience of vulnerable populations; and facilitate access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene services.

Improving water quality, wastewater treatment, reducing pollution, eliminating discharges and emissions of hazardous chemicals and materials are key challenges to reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases and to allow action on central risk factors for the control of these diseases.



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

SDG INTERLINKAGES

8.2: “Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value-added and labour-intensive sectors”

Achieving higher levels of economic productivity is one of the key goals for Cuba due to its ability to stimulate economic growth, investment and the dynamization of development goals.

Consequently, important transformations are being implemented aimed at better exploiting efficiency reserves, achieving greater business autonomy and promoting productive linkages among all economic actors, with an emphasis on knowledge- and technology-intensive activities. This contributes to improving agricultural productivity, producer income and food sustainability; universal and equitable access to quality drinking water and sanitation; universal access to energy services, especially through renewable energies and improving energy efficiency; promoting responsible production and consumption, efficient management and use of natural resources, reducing the negative environmental impact on cities and increasing the quality of life of vulnerable people and communities.

Improving water quality is a key challenge to promote higher levels of productivity by favouring health conditions, facilitating food production and improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable communities and contributing to territorial development.



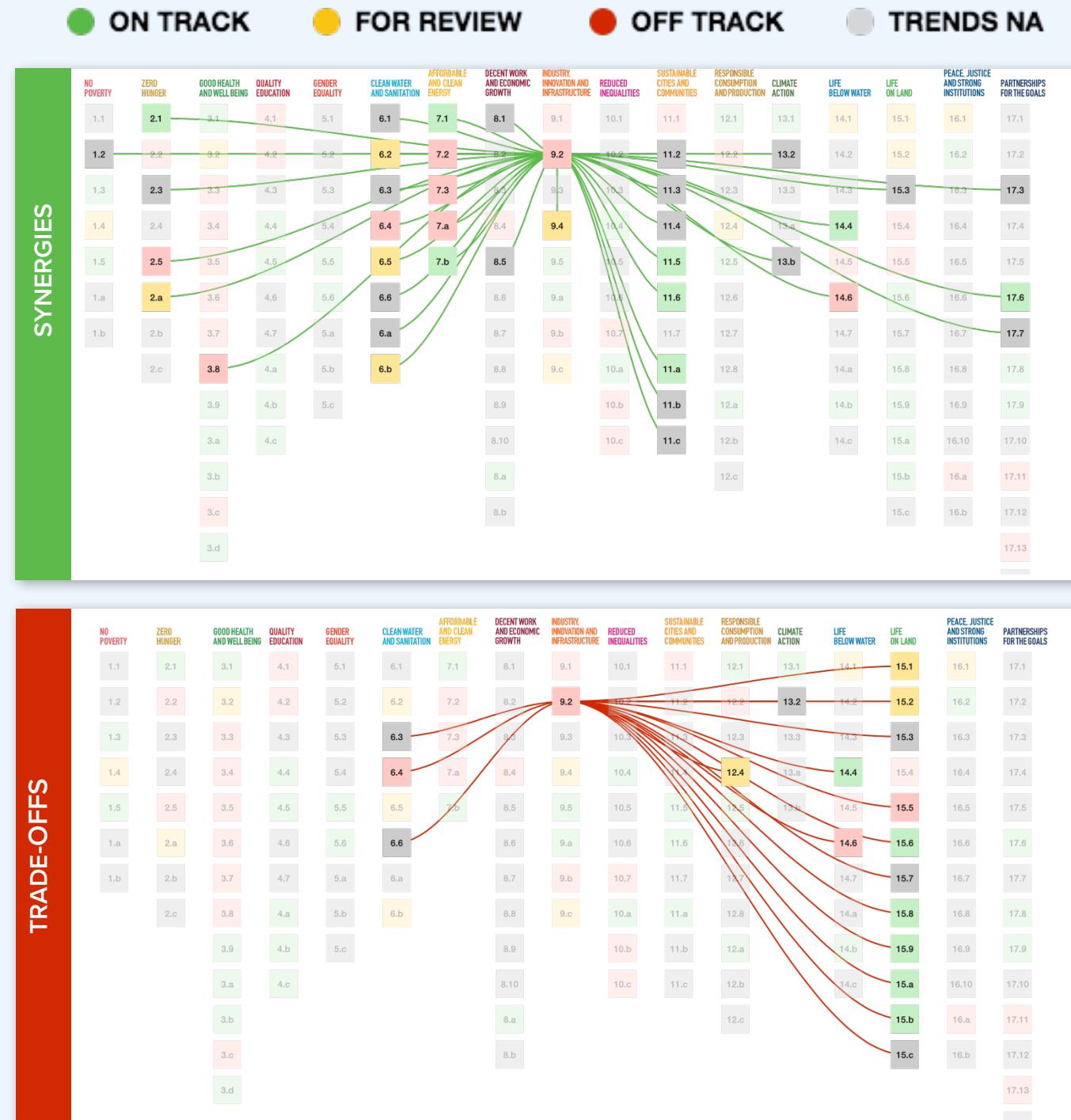
SDG INTERLINKAGES

9.2: "Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries."

Promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization is a critical path to stimulate economic growth in Cuba. To meet this challenge, the country implements the Industrial Development Policy and the Comprehensive Automation Policy, which will lead to the transformation and modernization of the industrial plant incorporating environmental sustainability criteria.

Promoting industrial development allows mobilizing additional financial resources, stimulating full employment and decent work, and modernizing and converting infrastructure, especially energy, towards sustainable models. It is key to stimulating agricultural productivity, investments in rural infrastructure and food sovereignty. It enhances South-South cooperation in science, technology and innovation, vaccine research and development, as well as the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies. In turn, it contributes to promoting inclusion, security and resilience of cities and human settlements, combating poverty and the effects of climate change, fishing exploitation and soil degradation.

Reducing industrialization gaps and achieving sustainable and inclusive industrialization implies having strong institutional arrangements that do not mean setbacks in terms of quality and efficient use of water resources, confronting climate change, rational management of chemicals and waste, fishing exploitation, as well as in the protection, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.



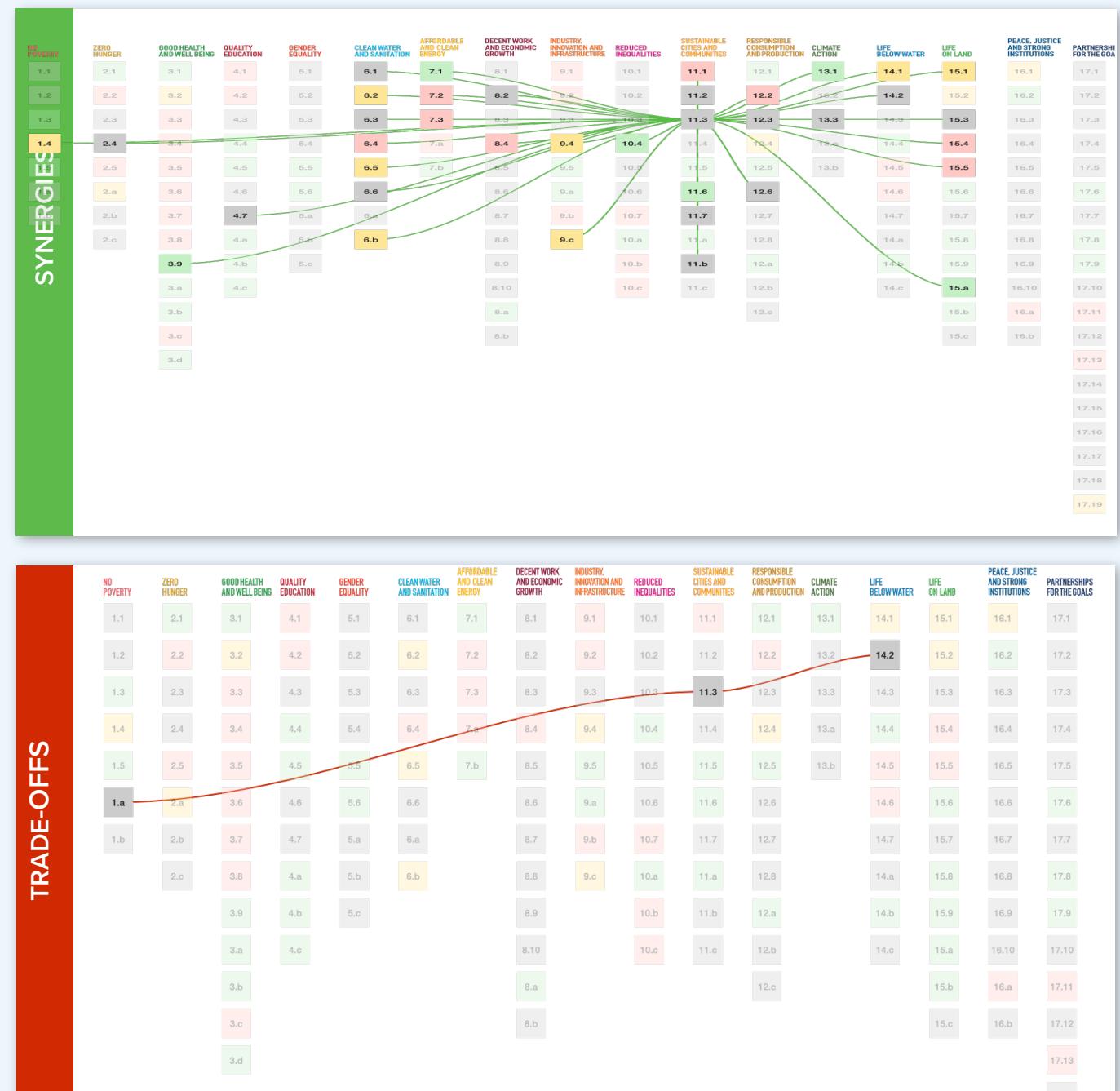
SDG INTERLINKAGES

11.3: “Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” by 2030.

The high degree of urbanization in Cuba determines the importance of focusing on cities, their planning and management as engines of economic and social development and their progressive resilience and adaptability to hazards, vulnerabilities and risks. Inclusive and sustainable urbanization stimulates greater equality and guarantees access to basic services such as water and energy, through an increasing proportion of renewable energies and greater energy efficiency. It contributes to the sustainability of food production, while stimulating productivity, efficient production and consumption, modernization and conversion of infrastructure, and access to information and communication technologies. It allows reducing deaths and diseases from hazardous chemicals and pollution of air, water and soil, more efficient use of natural resources, greater resilience and adaptation to climate change, as well as conservation, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems.

The magnitude of the challenge of inclusive urbanization requires, first of all, ensuring a significant mobilization of resources from various sources, including development cooperation. For small island developing States countries like Cuba, an inclusive urbanization strategy requires internalizing the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems.

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



Explore the interlinkages at:

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

SDG INTERLINKAGES

16.3: “Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all” across all countries” by 2030

In Cuba, the promotion of peace, inclusion and social justice are an essential part of state policies and actions. The rule of law prevails and, based on the principle of legality, institutions responsible for enforcing the law are obliged to act in accordance with the law. With the entry into force of the new Constitution, the catalogue of rights was expanded and the Guarantees System was strengthened. All citizens enjoy equitable access to justice. There are resources, avenues and mechanisms for citizens to assert their rights, and to obtain the protection recognized by the law in the rightful and equitable enjoyment of such rights.

Through the definition of clear rules and the strengthening of institutional mechanisms, greater social, economic and political inclusion of all people is promoted, as well as rights and access to basic resources, such as water availability, sustainable sanitation and management. In turn, it allows sustainable management, conservation, restoration and efficient use of natural resources, terrestrial ecosystems, all types of forests and land and soil rehabilitation.

● ON TRACK

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Explore the interlinkages at:

<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/CUB/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 Cuba can reduce the number of people living in poverty over time.

Cuba uses enhanced multidimensional international indicators, such as the HDI and the Multidimensional Poverty Index, to assess its progress in eradicating poverty, deeming that potential monetary or material deprivation does not prevent access, enjoyment and superior results in areas such as education, health, work, environmental impacts, living conditions, security and social assistance and in other dimensions of human development.

Cuba, in its I Voluntary National Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (2021), has among the lowest values in the world of the Global MPI, according to the 2020 and 2023 World Report. The guarantee that people with lower incomes can access the same social benefits as those with higher incomes contributes to poverty as a social phenomenon, while not having a great impact in terms of their magnitude and intensity.

*The data used to make these estimates do not come from the country’s official statistics, which are reported by Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas e Información (ONEI).

FINANCE & STIMULUS

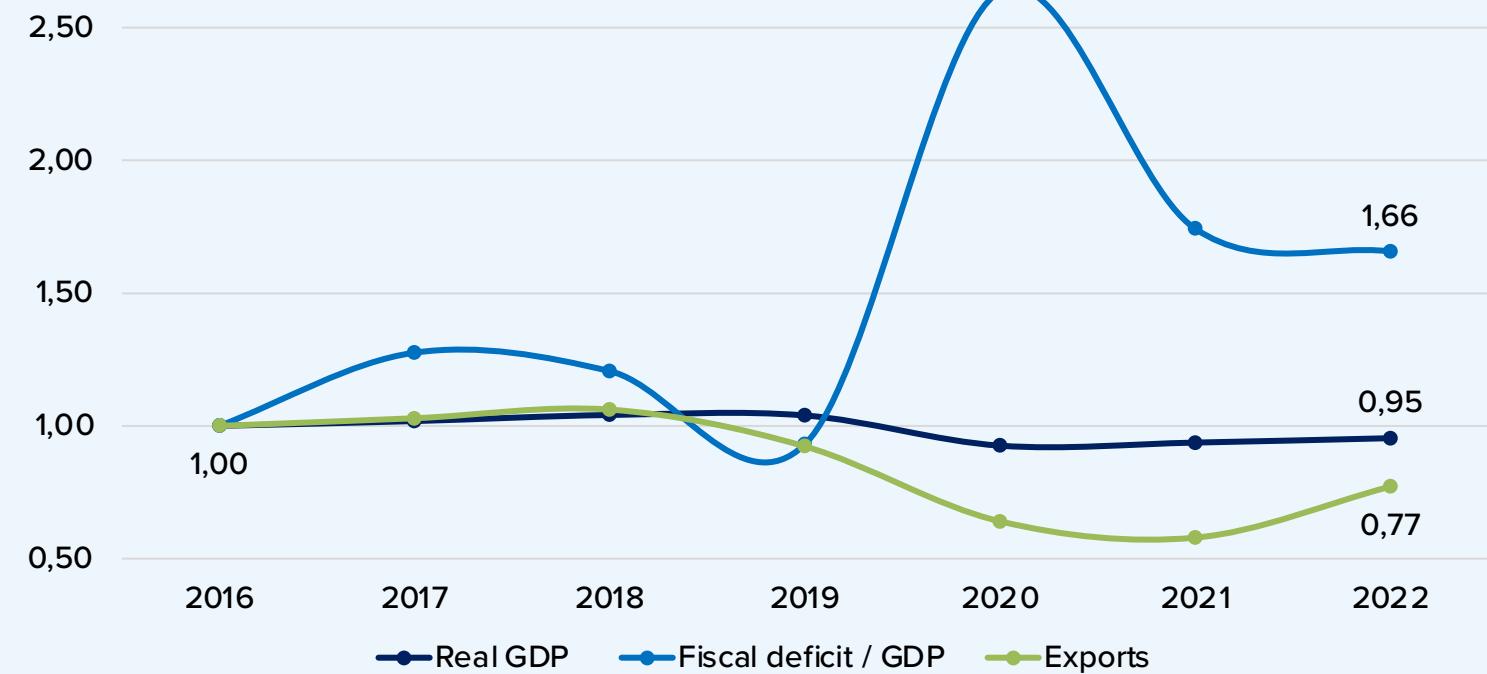
Many countries are facing reduced fiscal space, high debt levels, rising interest rates and downgrades on credit ratings. Fiscal and financial constraints tend to slow or even reverse SDG progress.

The combined impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, the tightening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade by the Government of the United States of America, the negative effects of climate change, the multidimensional crisis at the global level and internal imbalances have caused a deterioration of the Cuban macro-financial context.

In 2020, GDP contracted by 10.9% and the fiscal deficit rose to 17.7% of GDP because of the global health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the priority given by the Cuban Government to medical care for controlling this disease and developing national vaccines.

The Cuban economy has experienced a gradual recovery, with growth of 1.3% in 2021 and 1.8% in 2022, which is still not enough to compensate for the damage caused to productive and social activities.

This is compounded by structural restrictions on access to international capital markets and to international financial institutions , which limit the country's sources of foreign exchange income.



Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas e Información, Cuba

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).

In the Cuban context, compliance with strategic development goals, aligned with the 2030 Agenda, largely depends on the ability to diversify, expand and optimize financing sources. To this end, work is being done on the following alternatives:

- Focusing efforts on promoting exports, attracting foreign direct investment and financing productive transformation
- Modernization of public finance management
- Management of external debt, through innovative mechanisms.
- Formalization of remittance flows and their channelling towards development objectives
- Access to regional development banks
- Access to innovative funds and development financing instruments

**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).