High-level Dialogue on Energy 2021

Technical Working Group III. Enabling SDGs through inclusive, just energy transitions

Draft outline for review by TWG members. Made available on 11 March

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1. Goal

*Section 1 provides a background to SDG7 and the Agenda 2030, and presents the overall goal and targets for Theme III, the achievement of the SDGs through inclusive, just energy transitions. Approx. 500-**1,000 words** in total.*

The brief aims to enhance our understanding of the role sustainable energy plays in enabling sustainable development under the UN Agenda 2030's core mission of balancing its three dimensions of the economic, the social and the environmental, **benefiting people, the planet and prosperity.** It explores this interrelation in a two-directional way: an inclusive, just energy transition helps promote progress along different SDGs, but its own success is also determined by progress in other SDGs themselves. SDG7 is briefly introduced as the most direct representation of the energy transition within the SDGs, and, along with SDG17, as a key means of achieving other SDGs. It also sets clear ambition in support of the Paris Agreement, the achievement of SDG 7 by 2030, and net-zero emissions by 2050.

2. Context

*Section 2 provides an introduction to the multifaceted way in which energy, and the energy transition itself, interacts with the Agenda 2030's sustainable development goals. Approx. **1,000 words-2,000** in total.*

The section explores the nature of interactions between sustainable energy (as most directly represented by SDG7) and SDGs as not one- but two-directional.[1] This means the energy transition enables sustainable development in other areas, but is also conditioned by it. Sustainable energy is a critical enabler of progress in poverty reduction, the elimination of hunger, universal access to health and education, gender equality, climate action, and the principle of leaving no one behind. Progress in key areas such as education, poverty alleviation, and institutional reform, in turn, is critical to power the energy transition itself. The section highlights priority areas of interaction for development, but also commonly overseen links; and discusses how these interlinkages affect the needs of the most vulnerable, including children, youth, indigenous peoples, and refugees.[2]

Structure of the section: The section explores links between the energy transition, SDG7, and SDGs 1-16, one by one. For example, access to clean, modern and affordable energy is directly interlinked with other SDGs- related to poverty, decent work and economic growth, industrial innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, responsible consumption and production,

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[1] SDG17 as a means rather than an end toward achieving the Agenda 2030 is discussed separately in Section 4 below.

[2] This follows the UN Declaration as part of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, Paragraph 23. United Nations (2015) *Transforming Our World: The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development*. A/RES/70/1. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf.

and climate action. Related groups pf SDGs can later be grouped together or rearranged in order depending on priority if this makes sense at the end of the writing process. **Approximate word budget per SDG/paragraph: 60-160 words maximum**.

SDG 1 "No Poverty"

SDG 2 "Zero Hunger"

SDG 3 "Good Health and Well-Being"

SDG 4 "Quality Education"

SDG 5 "Gender Equality"

SDG 6 "Clean Water and Sanitation"

SDG 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth"

SDG 9 "Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure"

SDG 10 "Reduced Inequalities"

SDG 11 "Sustainable Cities and Communities"

SDG 12 "Responsible Consumption and Production"

SDG 13 "Climate Action"

SDG 14 "Life Below Water"

SDG 15 "Life on Land"

Visuals

- Figure showing the interlink between the energy transition, SDG7 and the 16 other SDGs
- Charts highlighting specific relationships, e.g. the water-food-energy nexus

3. Challenges

Section 3 identifies critical barriers that constrain the enabling role sustainable energy and the energy transition can play in the Agenda 2030. Approx. ***2,000 words*** *in total*.

This section proposes two considerations: first, utilising sustainable energy as an enabler of sustainable development across other SDGs suffers from the same set of institutional barriers that slow progress in the energy transition and in other SDGS in the first place. These include political, regulatory and financial aspects, market design, and behaviour. Second, the nature of interactions between SDG7 and other sustainable development goals is itself multidimensional. Goals associated with the energy transition may be indivisibly tied to progress in some SDGs, but may also (appear to) also constrain or even counteract progress in other SDGS.[3] Part of these trade-offs include differences in priorities allocated to short- medium- and long-term goals, technological aspects (large-scale bioenergy and hydropower), and to the interests of current versus future generations, which are typically assessed by current government institutions.

3.1. Institutional barriers

i. Political barriers
ii. Policy and regulation, including prioritization (which may differ between countries and regions)
iii. Financial markets

[3] E.g. M. Nilsson et al. (2013) "Towards an Integrated Framework for SDGs: Ultimate and Enabling Goals for the Case of Energy" *Sustainability* **5**, 4124-4151; David L McCollum et al (2018) "Connecting the sustainable development goals by their energy interlinkages" *Environmental Research Letters* **13** 033006.

iv. Energy markets
v. Behavioural aspects

3.2. Trade-offs

i. On an SDG basis one after the other, based on Section 2, potentially to be grouped at the end under logical groups[4]. This includes a discussion of trade-offs between different aspects of SDG7 itself, in particular affordability versus sustainability.

4. Recommendations/Plan of Action

Section offers recommendations and policy options to help strengthen the way current and future generations ***– people, the planet and prosperity*** *– can benefit from the energy transition. Approx.* ***5,000-6,000 words*** *in total.*

The section aims to offer action-oriented, concrete examples of transformational action, including where possible implementation details and potential co-benefits, taking into account unique and diverse challenges faced across counties and regions. Achieving the SDG will require coordination between sectors and institutions to help formulate coherent policies. The take-away message for policymakers will be a call to end silo-thinking, moving toward holistic and integrated policies. To this aim, international development initiatives may want to reprioritise institutional capacity building and knowledge creation as key elements offered to developing country partners. This also features a discussion of the critical role of SDG 16 ("Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions") and SDG 17 ("Partnerships") as an enabler of change.

4.1. Capacity and knowledge[5]

4.2. Institutions and governance

4.3. Public policy

4.4. Technology and Innovation

4.5. Investment and finance

(specific recommendations to be provided by SDG based on Sections 2 and 3, with specific reference to barriers identified. Timeframe should be considered for the **Plan of Actions** over the **horizon 2025, 2030 and 2050**)

5. Impacts

Assessment of catalytic potential impacts of the proposed recommendations on SDG7 in support of the SDGs and net-zero emissions by 2050. Approx. ***1,000-2,000 words*** *in total.*

This part follows previous sections findings. It may also provide some inputs on aspects that may be relevant but not be currently covered by the SDGs.

[4] See e.g. David L McCollum et al (2018) "Connecting the sustainable development goals by their energy interlinkages" *Environmental Research Letters* **13** 033006.

[5] This structure follows Nilsson et al. (2013) "Towards an Integrated Framework for SDGs: Ultimate and Enabling Goals for the Case of Energy" *Sustainability* **5**, 4124-4151 and UN input.

6. References

7. Appendices

7.1. A proposed **list of concrete indicators to support the Agenda 2030**, based on the interaction of SDG7 with other SDGs as explored. Where relevant, separate indicators should be provided for 2025, 2030 and 2050.

Suggested indicator	Target	Source of the data

7.2. **Case studies linking people, planet and prosperity** (some examples are provided in separate file. To the extent possible the case studies **should not exceed 150 words** and should be selected in a way that they clearly presents a problem and the solution. The solution should present evidence of an integrated approach where sustainable energy contributes to address several SDGs, including the means of implementation.

Kindly provide the following:
- Title of The Case Study
- Problem Statement
- Solution
- Lessons Learned
- Link to the Case Study and relevant material

7.3. Suggested reading, core publications