

Synergy Drivers for Accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals

Executive Summary

Although some advances have been made with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a UN evaluation of 135 underlying targets showed that nearly half are progressing too slowly, while more than another third are stalled or going in the wrong direction.

To accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, this report recommends implementing *Synergy Drivers*, which are policies and measures that advance two or more SDGs at the same time. They do so by taking advantage of the strong and reinforcing interconnections among many SDGs. Synergy Drivers have the potential to achieve multiple goals at reduced cost and over shorter time periods.

This report reviews ten examples, selected because they cover a wide variety of SDGs and scales, from household to global. The examples are: people-centred early warning systems; integrated nature conservation and public health programmes; clean cookstove programmes; sustainable supply chains to prevent deforestation linked to trade; urban greening projects; decarbonising urban transport; decentralised solar energy systems; green energy businesses for women; social protection measures; and reducing food waste and post-harvest losses.

These cases were also selected because of the availability of concrete evidence that they substantively advance multiple SDG targets. For example, *integrated nature conservation and public health programmes* have led to the establishment of new forest conservation areas in conjunction with increasing public health provision; *clean cookstove programmes* have reduced the exposure of women to illness-causing smoke while lessening deforestation in the vicinity of villages; *decentralised solar energy systems* are contributing to climate mitigation while making electricity available for the first time to many low income people. These documented beneficial effects all help advance specific targets of the SDGs.

But it is also known that well-intended policies sometimes lead to negative side-effects, or “trade-offs”. To minimise these trade-offs, a set of guidelines are presented (derived from internationally agreed-upon principles) which, if followed, would help ensure synergy drivers are implemented in a just and equitable manner.

In a time of shrinking resources, and imminent deadlines for delivering the SDGs, Synergy Drivers are an option for more efficiently using the resources we have, to achieve the international goals we aspire to.

Synergy Drivers and their SDGs



People-centred Early Warning Systems

Alerting specific communities to extreme weather events



Integrated Nature Conservation and Public Health Programmes

Combining ecosystem conservation and health provision services



Clean Cookstove Programmes

Reducing exposure to indoor pollution with energy efficient cookstoves



Sustainable Supply Chains to Prevent Deforestation Linked to Trade

Tackling the destruction of forests and exploitation of forest communities



Urban Greening Projects

Expanding the greenness of cities, enhancing biodiversity alongside health and well-being



Decarbonising Urban Transport

Expanding low- and zero emissions transport infrastructure



Decentralised Solar Energy Systems

Generating cost-effective off-grid electricity at small scale



Green Energy Businesses for Women

Supporting women to prosper in the green energy sector



Social Protection Measures

Combatting poverty and strengthening resilience of vulnerable populations



Reducing Food Waste and Post-harvest Losses

Sustainable production and consumption that limits waste, saving agricultural land

