Approach for Implementing the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs in the Arab Region

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Preparatory Meeting on Regional Environmental Issues and Priorities for the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development 23-24 April, Cairo

UNITED NATIONS

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Overview of Presentation

1. Introduction and Terms of Reference
2. Issues to consider for the method and approach
3. The environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda
4. International experience and guidelines for implementing the SDGs and lessons learned
5. Proposed approach and method for developing an implementation framework
6. Final words on environmental targets and priorities for the region

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1. Introduction and context

CAMRE Decision (December, 2016):

Requested UNESCWA and UNEP to prepare an **implementation framework for the environmental dimension of the SDGs**

ToRs - To be developed in three stages:

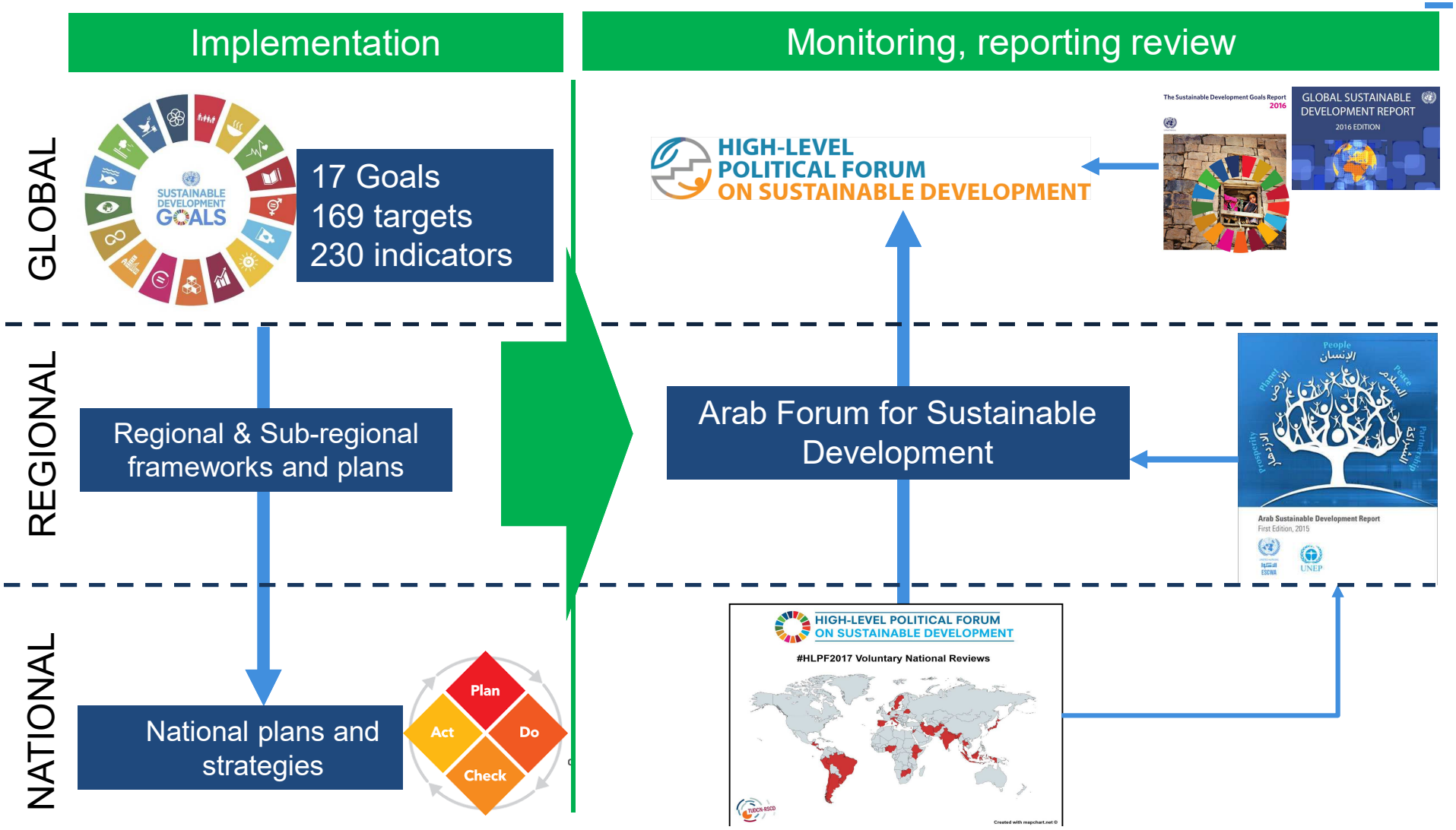
1. **Develop approach and method (draft completed)**
2. Undertake assessment and mapping (commenced)
3. Develop implementation framework

Additional parameters

- *To include **a review of experiences in other regions and countries***
- *To **respond to current and projected priority environmental concerns in the Arab region***
- *Feasible to implement **within available data***
- *Support **informed and integrated policy-making** in the Arab region*

1. Introduction – components of the 2030 Agenda

A multi-tiered development framework
Global goals, national implementation + regional frameworks



1. Introduction – components of the 2030 Agenda

A multi-tiered development framework - National Implementation

Implementation

GLOBAL

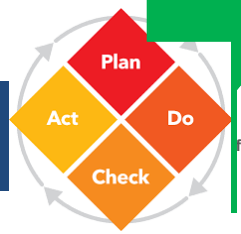
17 Goals
169 targets
230 indicators

REGIONAL

Regional & Sub-regional frameworks and plans

NATIONAL

National plans and strategies



Implementation primarily at **national level** – governments to play a key role through policy and planning functions

- Prioritise and adapt targets to national circumstances
- Mainstream priority targets into plans and strategies
- Design, assess and select policies to achieve targets
- Implement, monitor, review and adapt

1. Introduction – components of the 2030 Agenda

A multi-tiered development framework - Regional frameworks

Implementation

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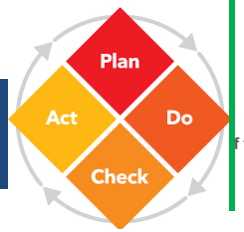

Regional frameworks can help countries to translate the goals and targets into concrete action *(Agenda 2030)*

Arab countries requested regional support to:

- Adapt the SDG targets to national and regional level
- Identify sets of interlinked goals and assess interlinkages
- Identify a narrow set of priority indicators for periodic reporting

(Doha declaration 2016)

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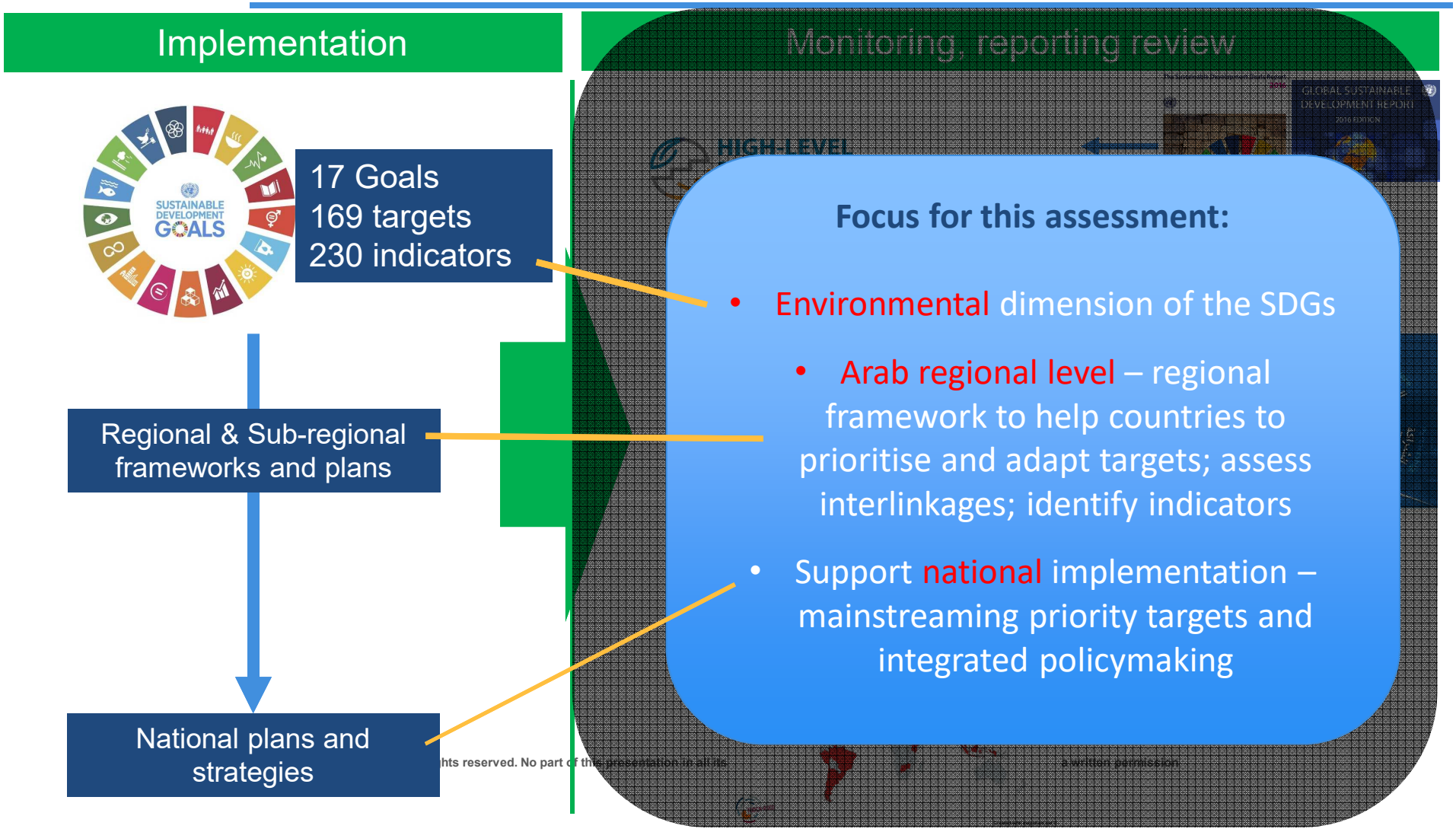
1. Introduction – components of the 2030 Agenda

An implementation framework for the environmental dimension of the SDGs



2. Issues to consider – some key questions…

1. How do we define the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda?
   - Which goals, targets and indicators represent the 'environmental dimension'?
   - Which of these should be prioritized for the Arab region?
   - How can the targets be adapted to the Arab regional context?
   - What target values and indicators should we be adopting? How do we identify these?
   - How do we assess and manage interlinkages with broader goals and targets?

2. What steps should the Arab region be taking now to implement the 2030 Agenda?
   - What action should be taken now at both the regional and national levels?
   - Is the Arab region 'ready' for implementation? How can we assess this?
   - How should the prioritization of goals and targets be undertaken? What tools are available to assist this prioritization?
   - How can we best align the goals and targets with existing plans and strategies?
   - How can we maximize synergies with existing frameworks (e.g. MEAs)?

2. Issues to consider – some key questions…

1. How do we define the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda?
   - How can we implement the 'environmental dimension' of an integrated framework?
   - Which goals, targets and indicators represent the 'environmental dimension'?
   - Which of these should be prioritized for the Arab region?
   - How can the targets be adapted to the Arab regional context?

Focus is now on targets/indicators– **prioritize, adapt, assess, align, adopt**

Many new resources emerging to assist countries:

✓ International guidelines, resources and tools

✓Emerging national experience and practice

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3. The environmental dimension of the SDGs in the Arab region

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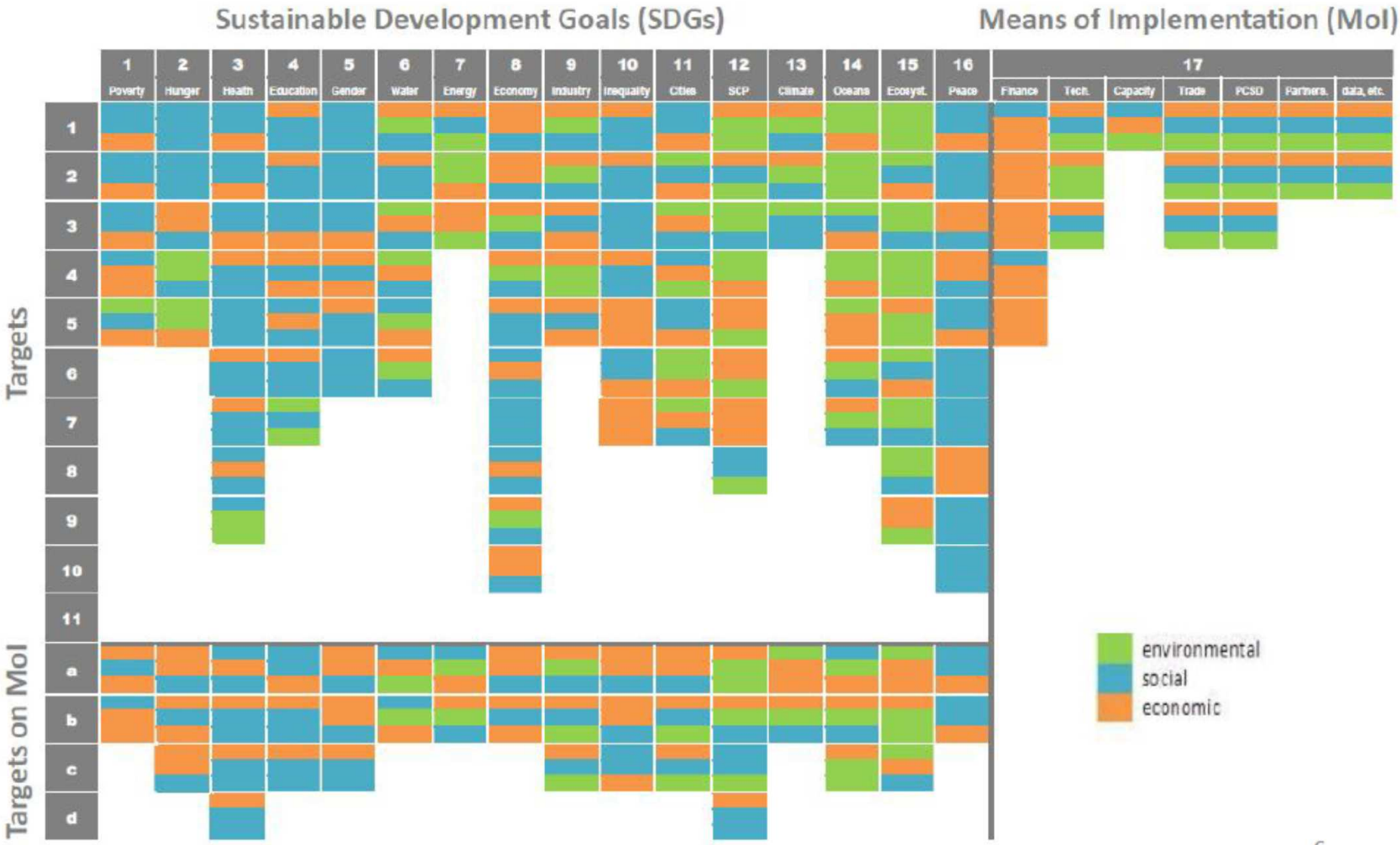
3. Environmental Dimension of the SDGs



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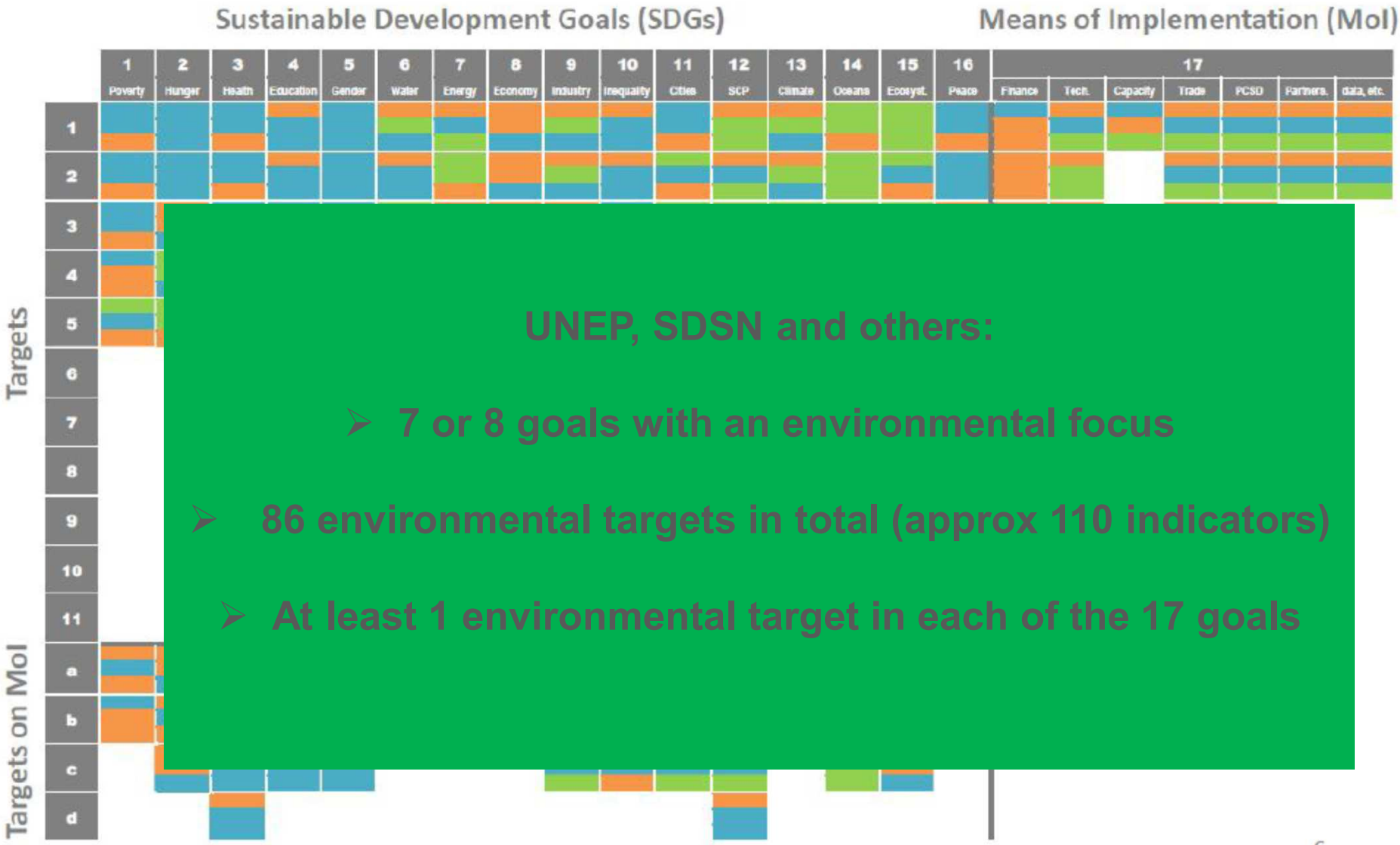
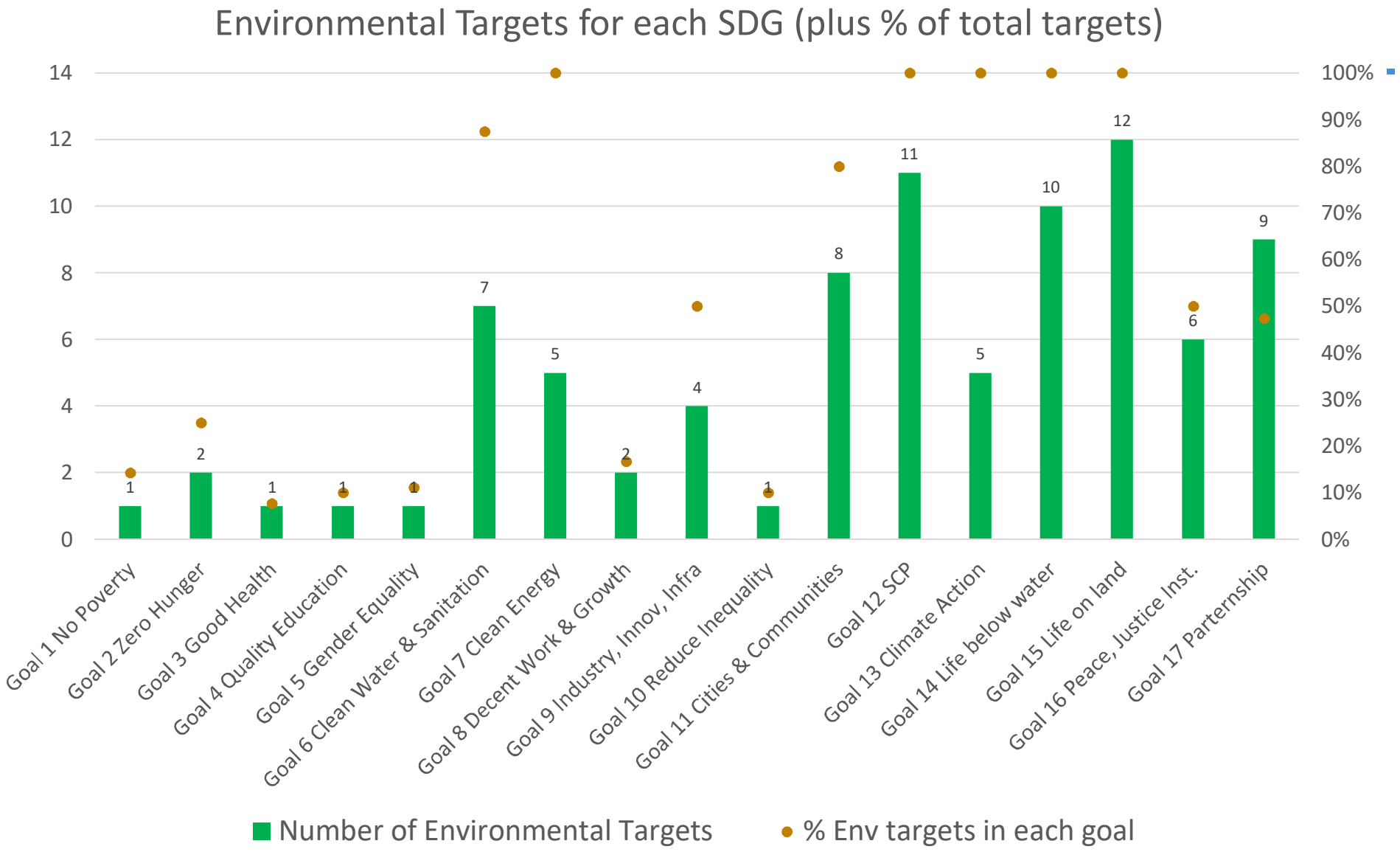
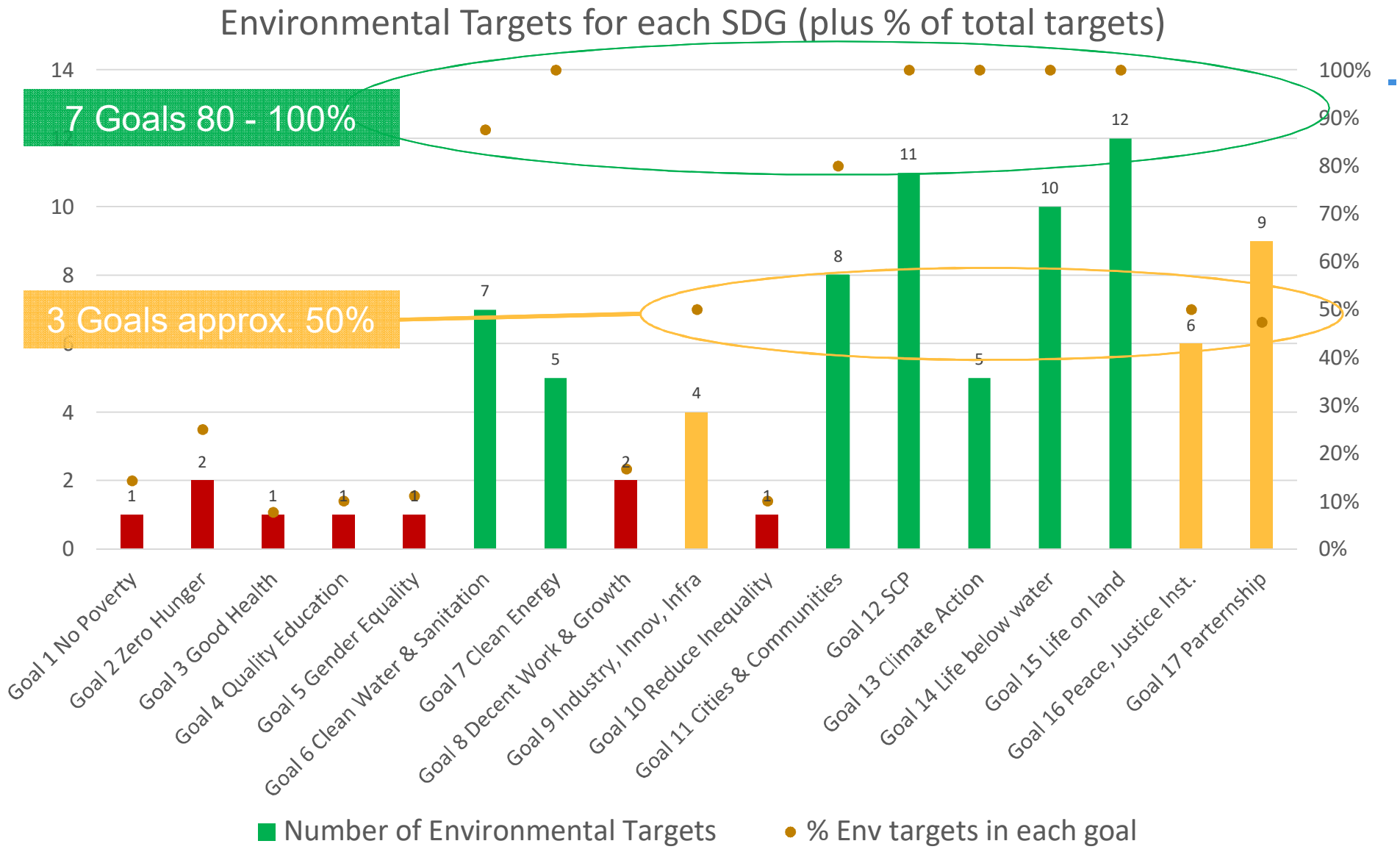


3. Environmental Dimension of the SDGs - Targets



3. Environmental Dimension of the SDGs - Targets



3. Environmental Dimension of the SDGs – Indicators

Data is a big problem….

The **86 environmental targets** have around **110 different indicators**, almost 50% of all indicators…

(compared with only 10 environmental indicators in the MDGs)

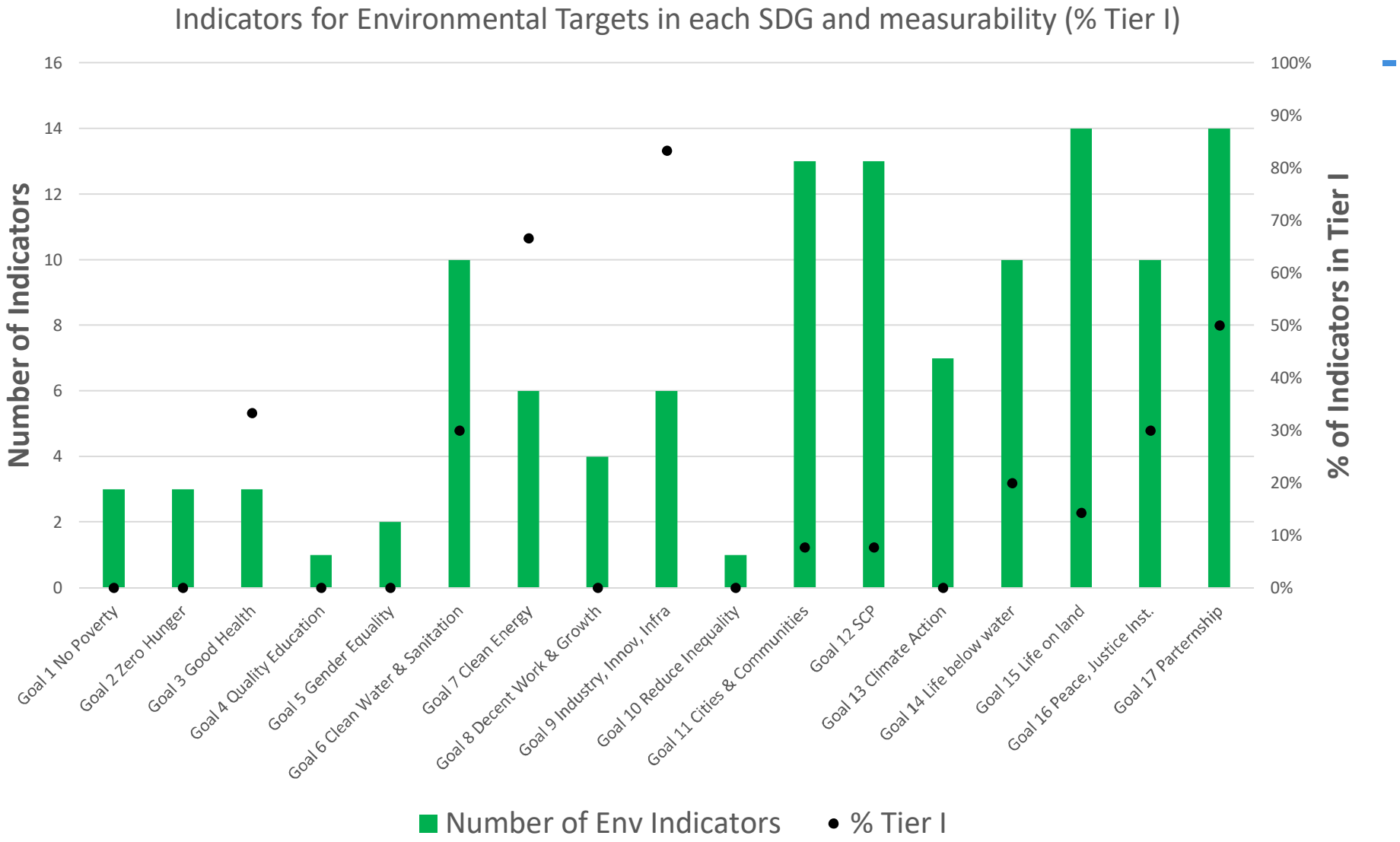
The UN Statistical Commission has assessed **measurability** of these indicators and categorised each indicator as:

Tier I = clear method and regularly produced

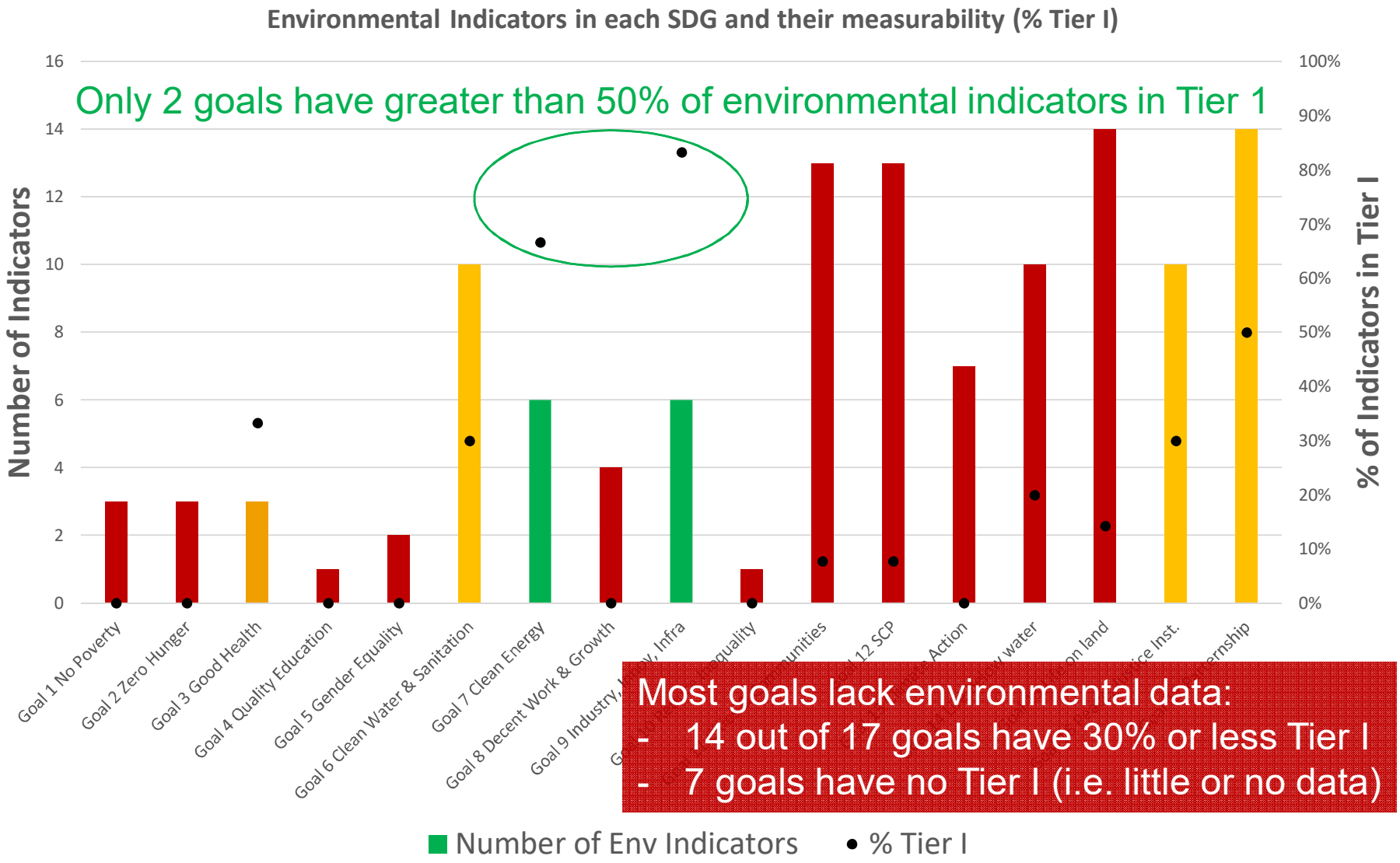
Tier II = clear method but data not regularly produced

Tier III = no method

3. Environmental Dimension of the SDGs - Indicators



3. Environmental Dimension of the SDGs - data is a big problem



3. Environmental Dimension of the SDGs - data is a big problem

- **Only 24% of environmental indicators are regularly produced (Tier I)**
- **Important implications – without data, it will be difficult to assess baselines and set target values**

We have to start assessment with what data is available and identify priority gaps

SDGs	% Tier I
Goal 1 No Poverty	0%
Goal 2 Zero Hunger	0%
Goal 3 Good Health	33%
Goal 4 Quality Education	0%
Goal 5 Gender Equality	0%
Goal 6 Clean Water & Sanitation	30%
Goal 7 Clean Energy	67%
Goal 8 Decent Work & Growth	0%
Goal 9 Industry, Innov, Infra	83%
Goal 10 Reduce Inequality	0%
Goal 11 Cities & Communities	8%
Goal 12 SCP	8%
Goal 13 Climate Action	0%
Goal 14 Life below water	20%
Goal 15 Life on land	14%
Goal 16 Peace, Justice Inst.	30%
Goal 17 Parternship	50%
TOTALS	**24%**

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4. International experience, guidelines and leading practice for implementing the SDGs

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4. International experience and guidelines

- ✓ There is a growing catalogue of resources, guidelines, tools and best practices available to countries to support implementation of the SDGs…
- ✓ Builds upon the considerable experience with implementing the MDGs (e.g. PRSPs) as well as sustainable development (e.g. NSDSs)
- ✓ Emerging national experience in initial stages of implementation

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4. International experience and guidelines

General guidelines and resources:

- UNDG portal for mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda – guidance and links to many tools
- UNDP SDGs Rapid Assessment Tool and Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
- UNITAR 'Preparing for Action' learning manual and online resources and modules for national dialogues
- UNDESA – tools for adapting SDGs and assessing interlinkages
- Sustainable Development Solutions Network – guidelines for getting started on the SDGs

Environmental resources:

- UNEP – delivering on the environmental dimension of the SDGs; UNEPlive SDGs
- Institute for Global Environmental Studies – action on the environmental dimension of the SDGs

4. International experience and guidelines

Recent national experience:

- Initial assessments, dialogues, prioritization and ‘mainstreaming’ of SDGs and targets in many countries with support from UNDG and UNCTs, amongst others
- Includes initial assessments and dialogues in Algeria, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Somalia
- ‘SDGs are Coming to Life’ – case studies in Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia
- VNRs also provide a source of information – 44 countries so far, including Morocco, Qatar and Jordan

Arab States

- **Egypt:** Aligning the nation’s plans with the 2030 Agenda and the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and investing in capacity to monitor SDG progress
- **Morocco:** Harnessing the power of multi-stakeholder forums to adapt the SDGs to national and local contexts
- **Somalia:** Embarking on a new national development planning process while establishing a governance structure and statistical system

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What can we learn from these guidelines and initial experiences?

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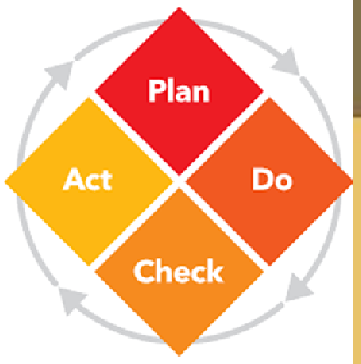
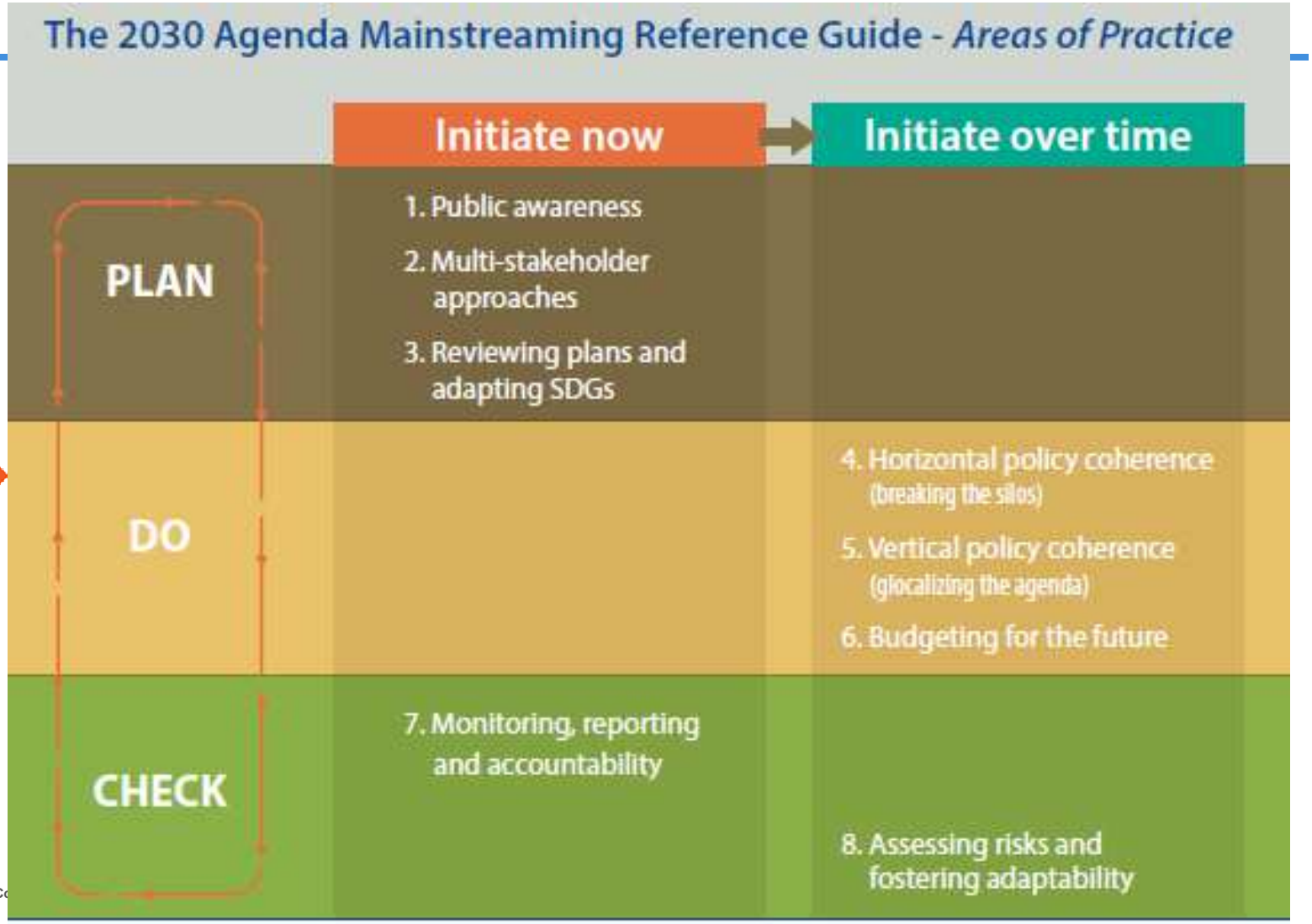
Recommended initial steps for mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs





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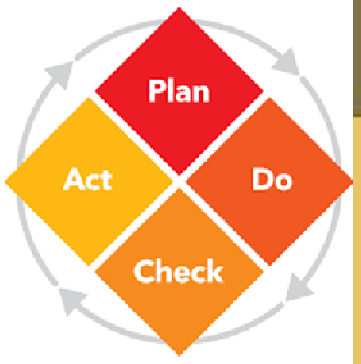

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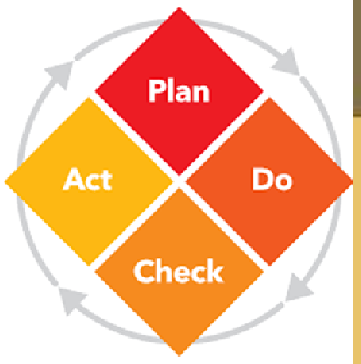

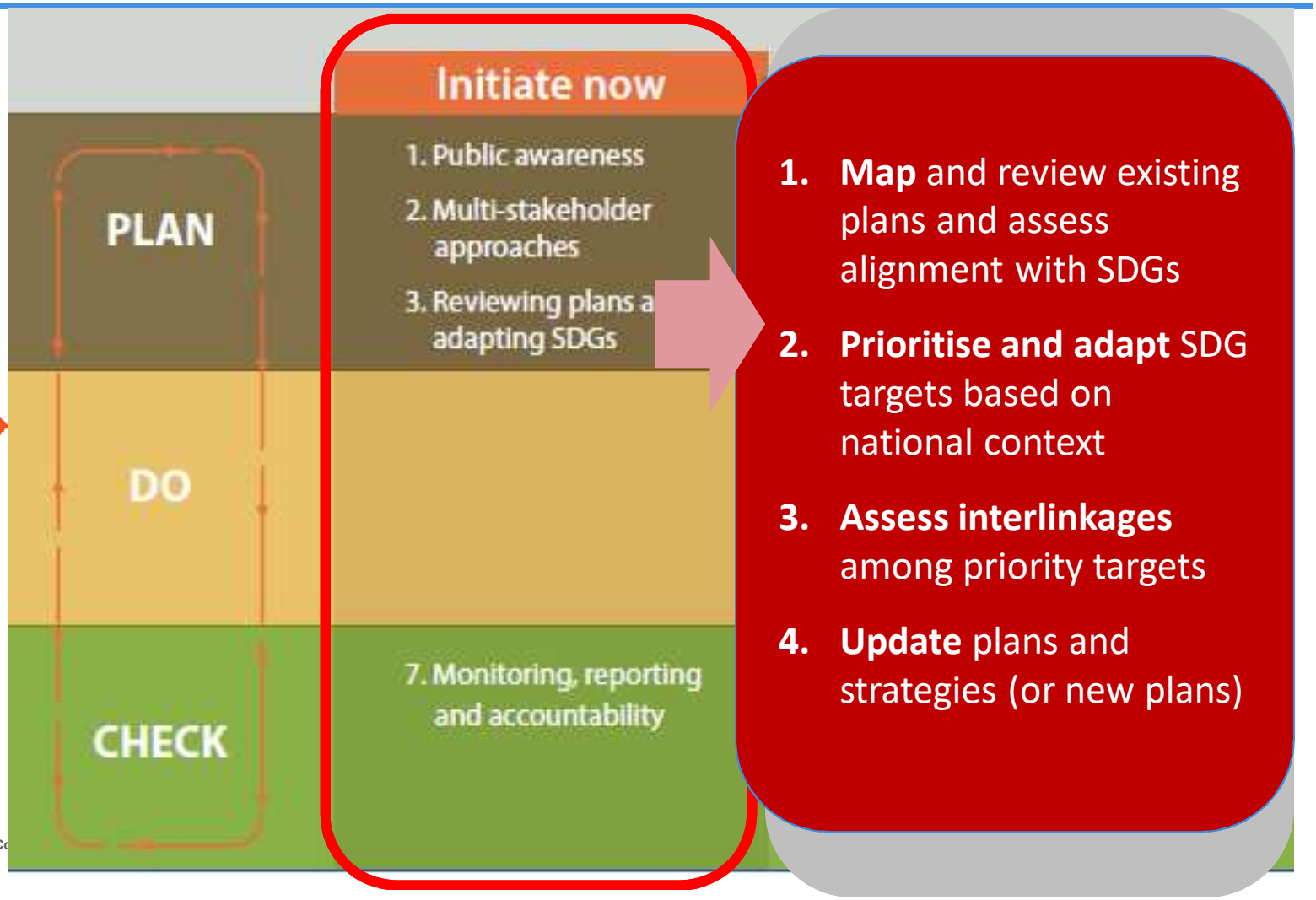

1. **Map** and review existing plans and assess alignment with SDGs
2. **Prioritise and adapt** SDG targets based on national context
3. **Assess interlinkages** among priority targets
4. **Update** plans and strategies (or new plans)

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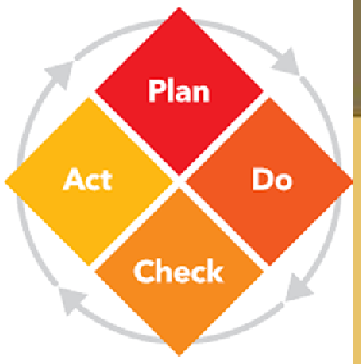
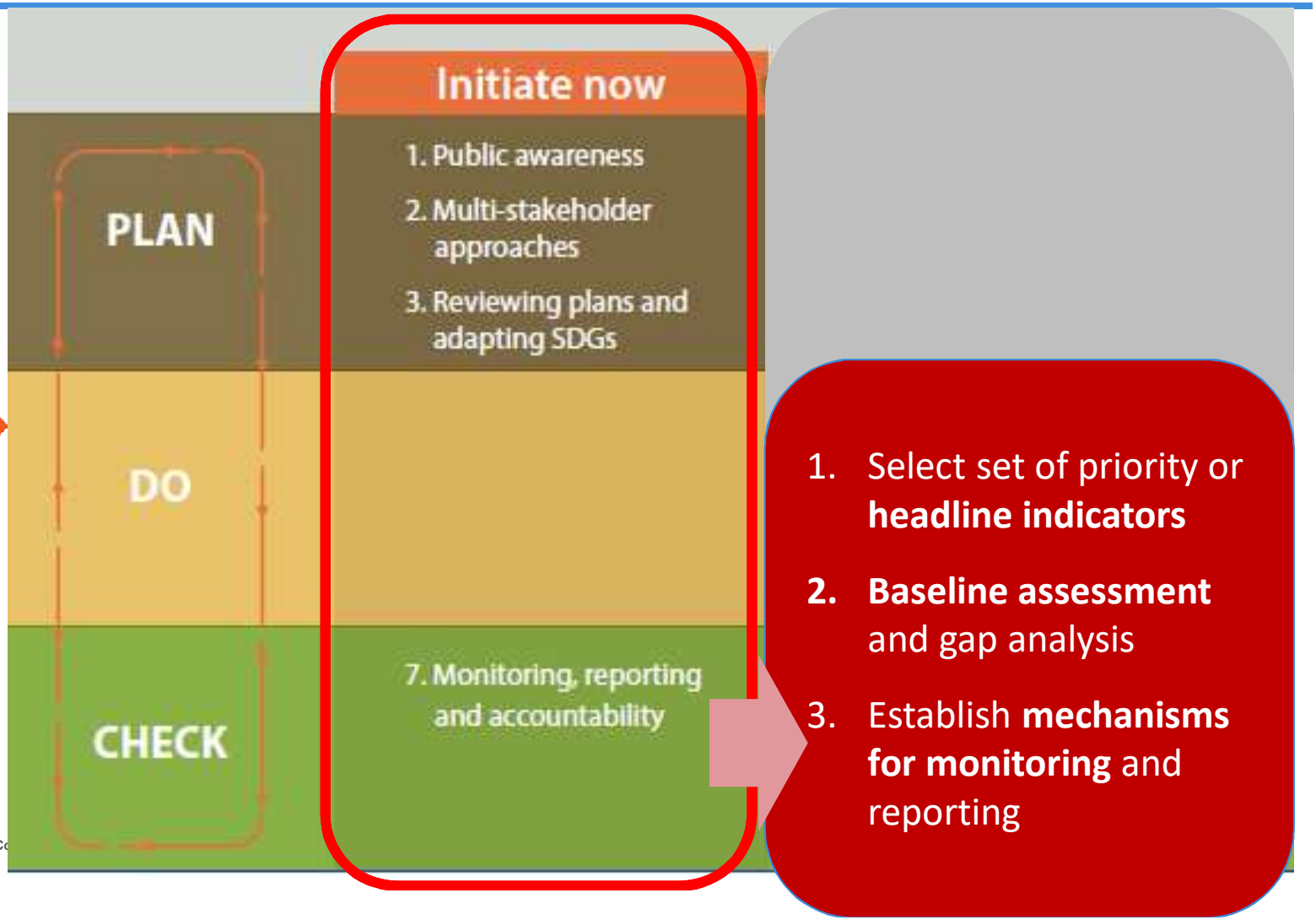
Recommended initial steps for mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs





1. Select set of priority or **headline indicators**
2. **Baseline assessment** and gap analysis
3. Establish **mechanisms for monitoring** and reporting

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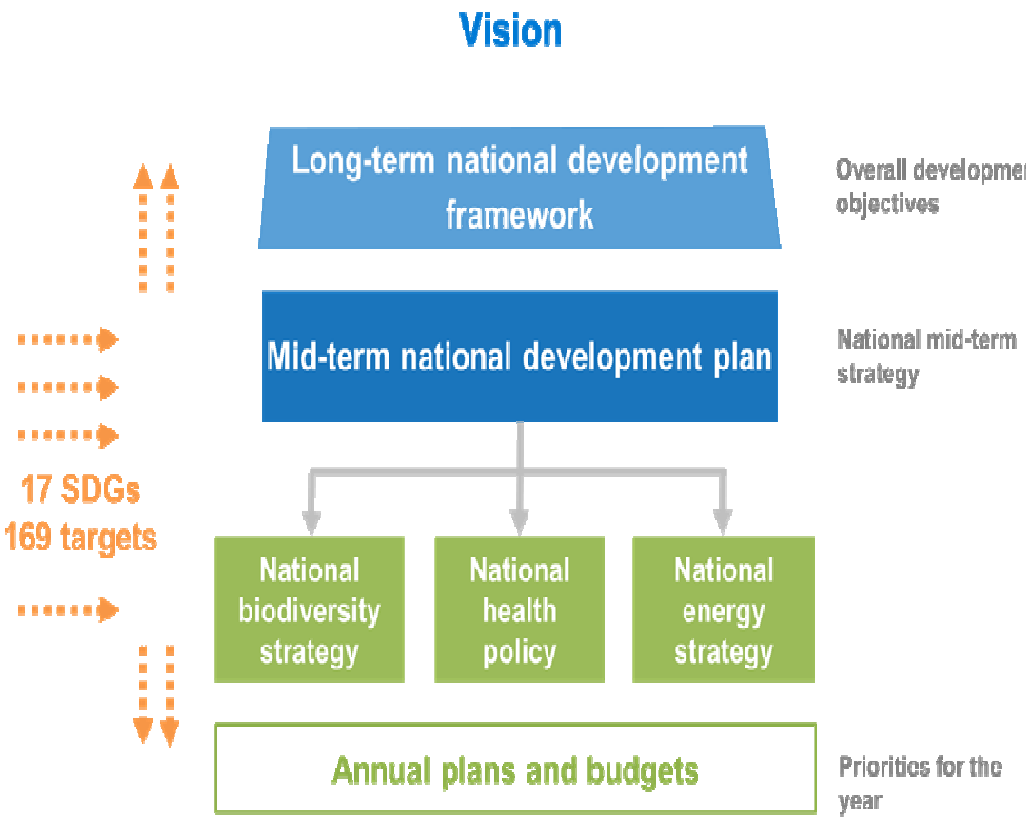
Initial steps: map the landscape of existing strategies and evaluate alignment SDGs



Goal	Degree of coverage
Goal 1. Poverty	3
Goal 2. Hunger/ Food security	3
Goal 3. Health	3
Goal 4. Education	3
Goal 5. Gender equality	3
Goal 6. Water/ Sanitation	3
Goal 7. Energy	2
Goal 8. Growth/ Employment	3
Goal 9. Infrastructure/ Industrialization	3
Goal 10. Inequlities	2
Goal 11. Cities and human settlements	1
Goal 12. SCP	1
Goal 13. Climate Change	1
Goal 14. Oceans	1
Goal 15. Ecosystems	1
Goal 16. Peaceful societies/ Institutions	1
Goal 17. Global partnership	1

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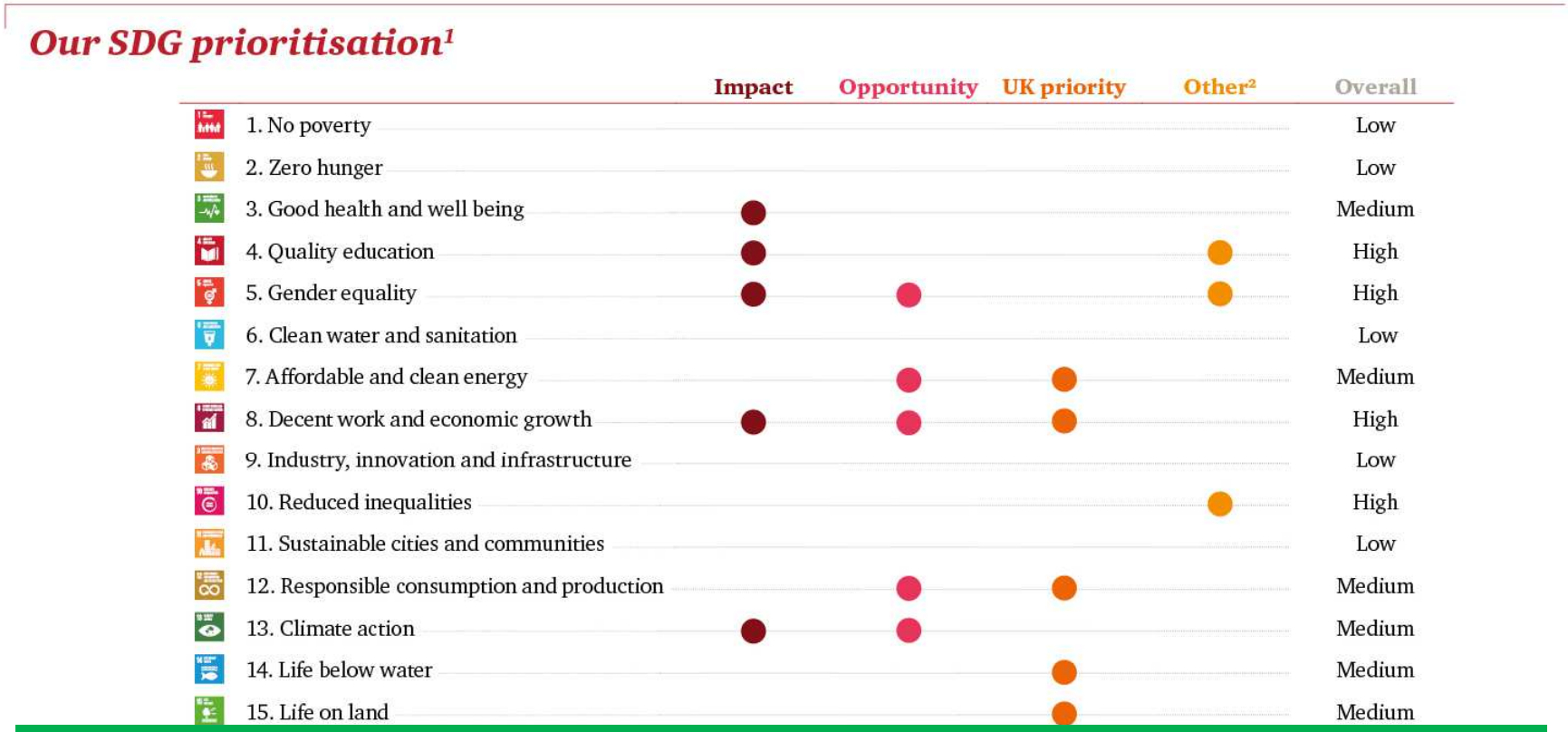
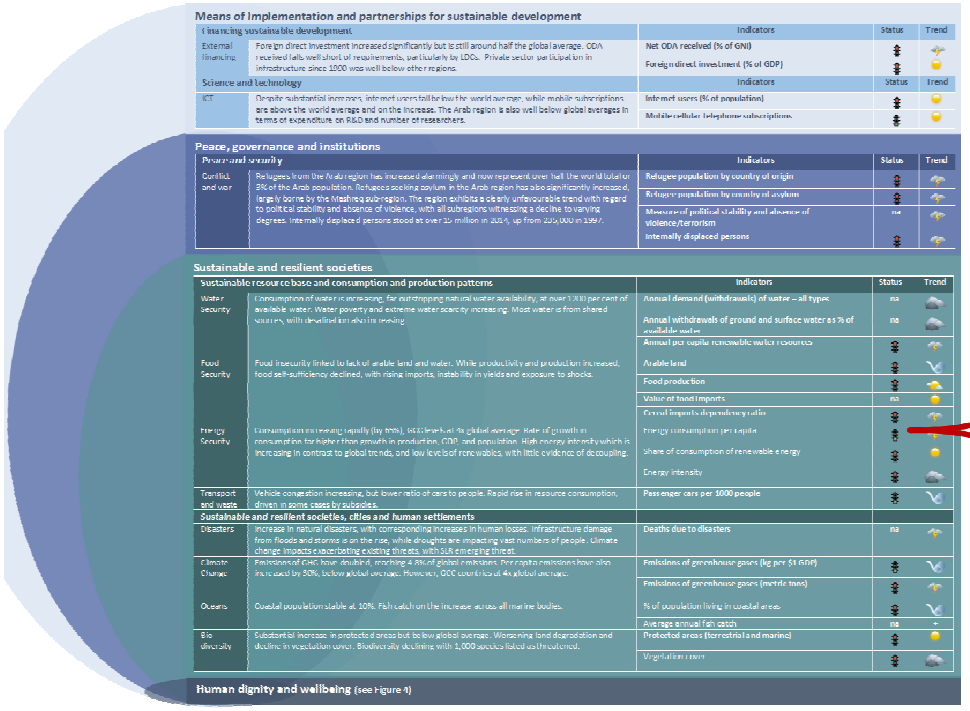
Initial steps: prioritize targets based on national circumstances (criteria-based assessment)



Use **criteria** to assist with prioritisation

e.g. level of impact, urgency, availability of resources/funding, availability of data, systemic contribution/interlinkages etc.

Initial steps: baseline assessment of headline indicators (priorities, gaps, and setting target values)



Indicators	Status	Trend
Annual demand (withdrawals) of water – all types	na	
Annual withdrawals of ground and surface water as % of available water	na	
Annual per capita renewable water resources		
Arable land		
Food production		
Value of food imports	na	
Cereal imports dependency ratio		
Energy consumption per capita		
Share of consumption of renewable energy		
Energy intensity		
Passenger cars per 1000 people		
Deaths due to disasters	na	
Emissions of greenhouse gases (kg per $1 GDP)		
Emissions of greenhouse gases (metric tons)		
% of population living in coastal areas		
Average annual fish catch	na	+
Protected areas (terrestrial and marine)		
Vegetation cover		

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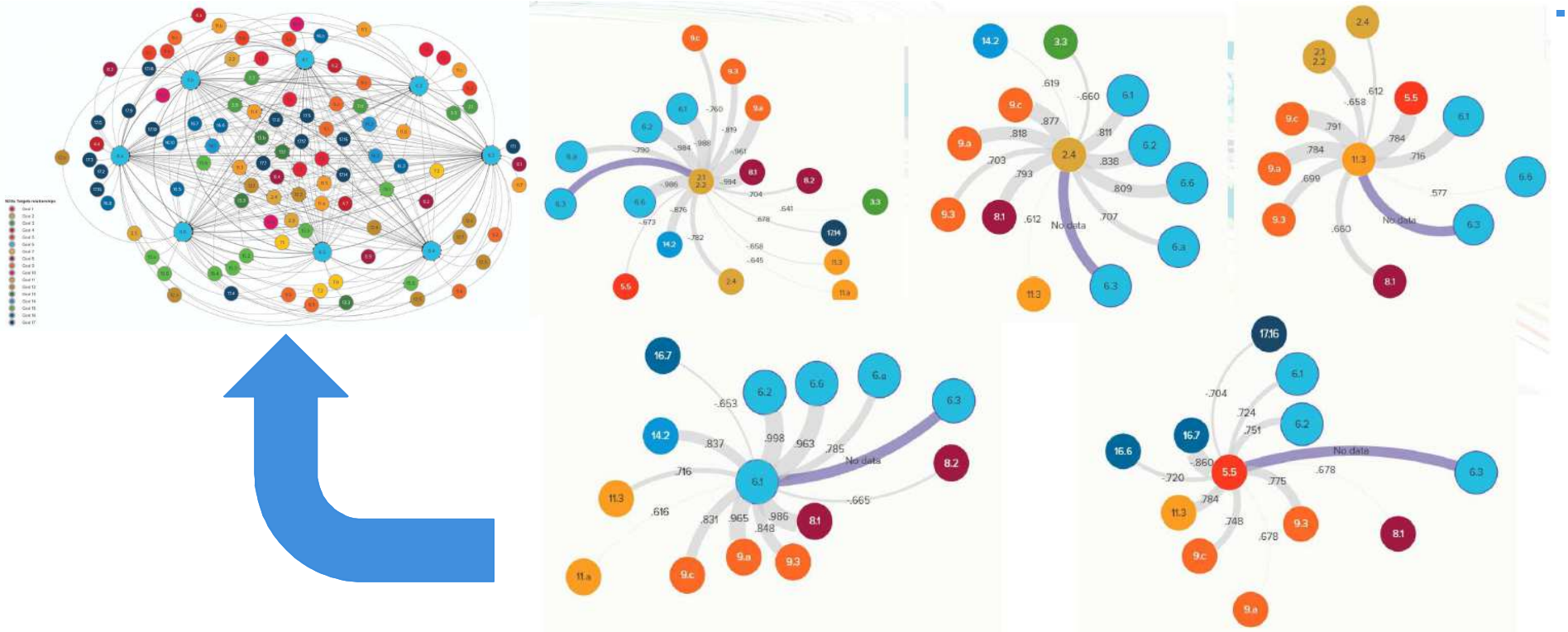
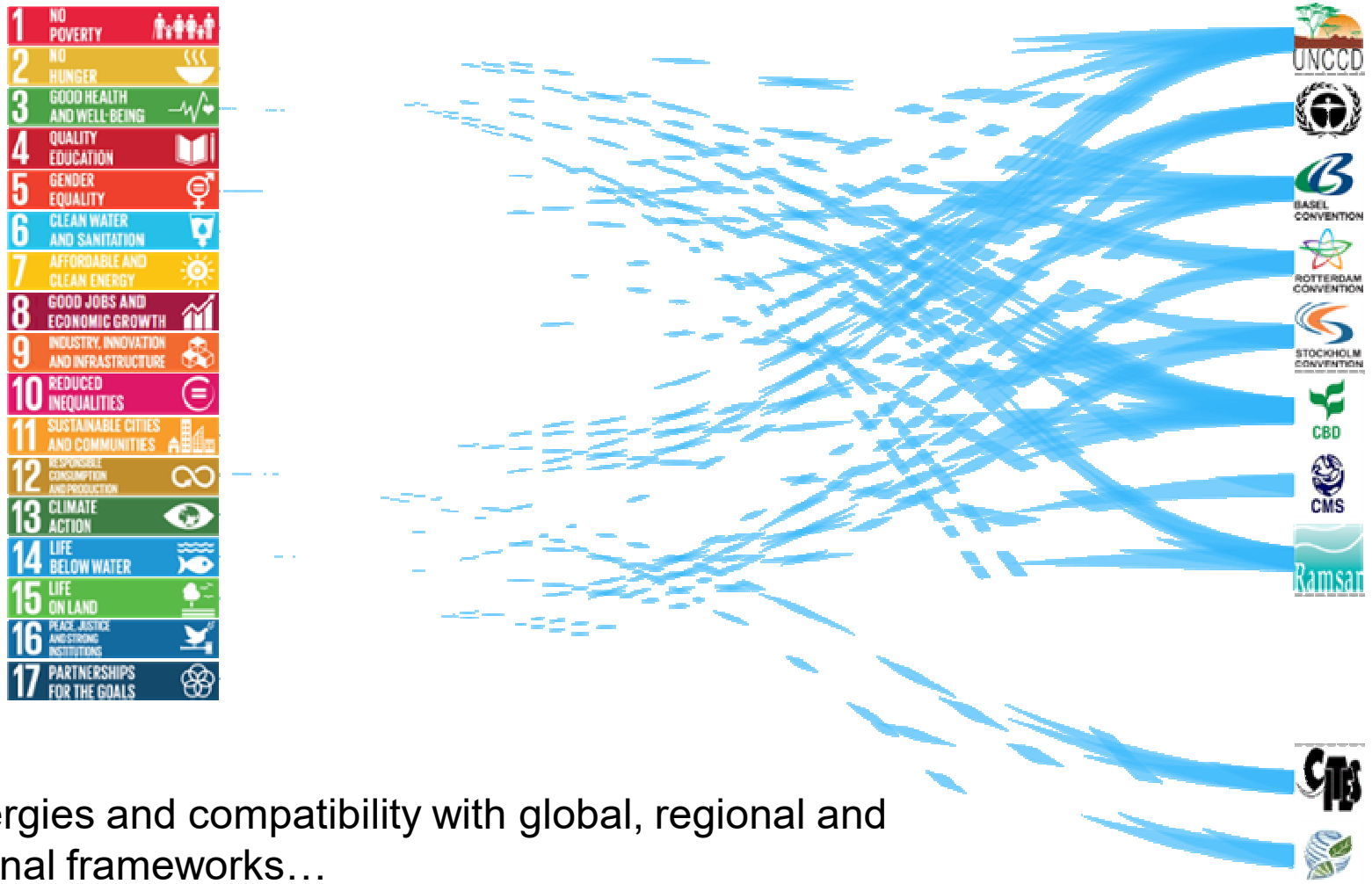
Initial steps: assess interlinkages between priority targets and broader targets



Can assist with prioritization – i.e. which targets have strongest links to other SDGs and targets – **high impact leverage points**

Environment dimension – also need to consider synergies (MEAs)



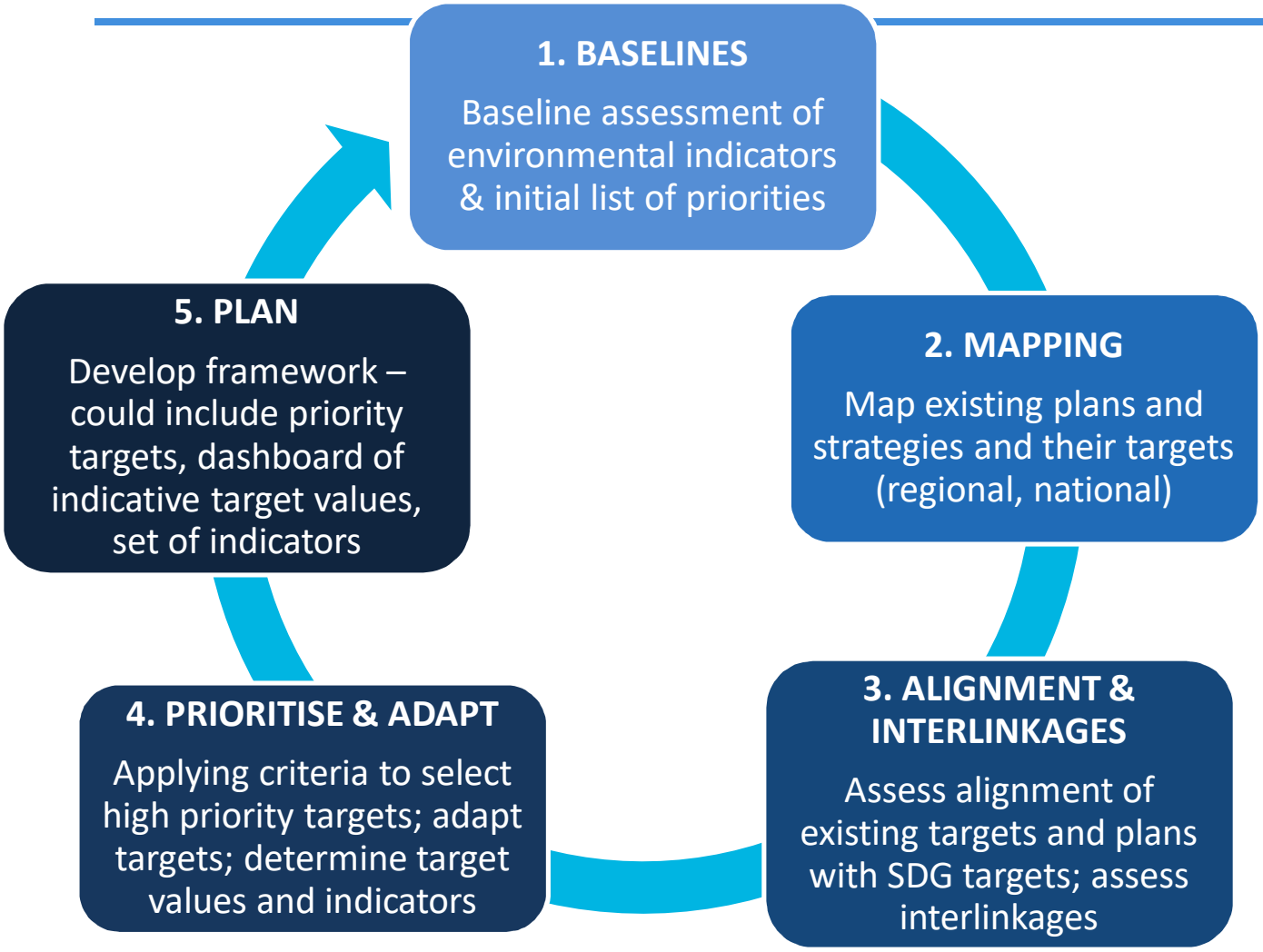
Synergies and compatibility with global, regional and national frameworks…

4. Lessons learned…

Desired outcomes for initial stages of implementation:

- To **assess SDG readiness** of existing plans and strategies
- To **prioritize** SDG targets based on national and regional circumstances – using baseline assessments, systems analysis, and criteria
- To **mainstream priority targets** into relevant national and regional development plans and sectoral strategies
- To establish **monitoring and follow-up** mechanisms, including a set of indicators

5. Proposed approach – steps for assessment



Prioritization of environmental targets and indicators will be critical

- 86 environmental targets and 110+ indicators
- Many linkages to economic and social targets and indicators
- Need to reduce complexity – focus on a smaller group of interlinked priority targets

SDG environmental targets

Arab environmental priority targets

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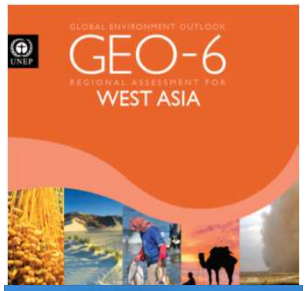
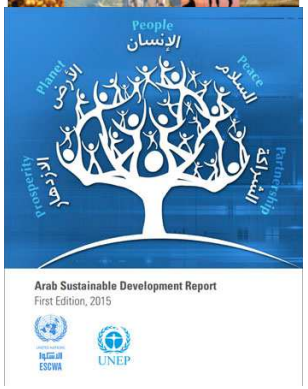
Environmental priorities in the Arab region

Regional environmental priorities identified in:

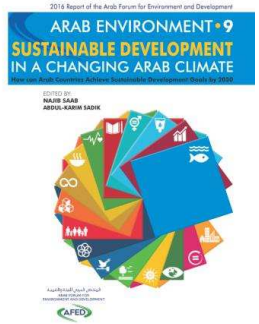
1. Regional and national strategies, frameworks and declarations (e.g. Arab Strategic Framework for SD)
2. Regional and national environmental assessments and reports





The water-energy-food (or land) nexus features prominently in these documents - prioritize these?

Process underway to review environmental indicators for the Arab region – currently 30 indicators - could provide a useful starting point?



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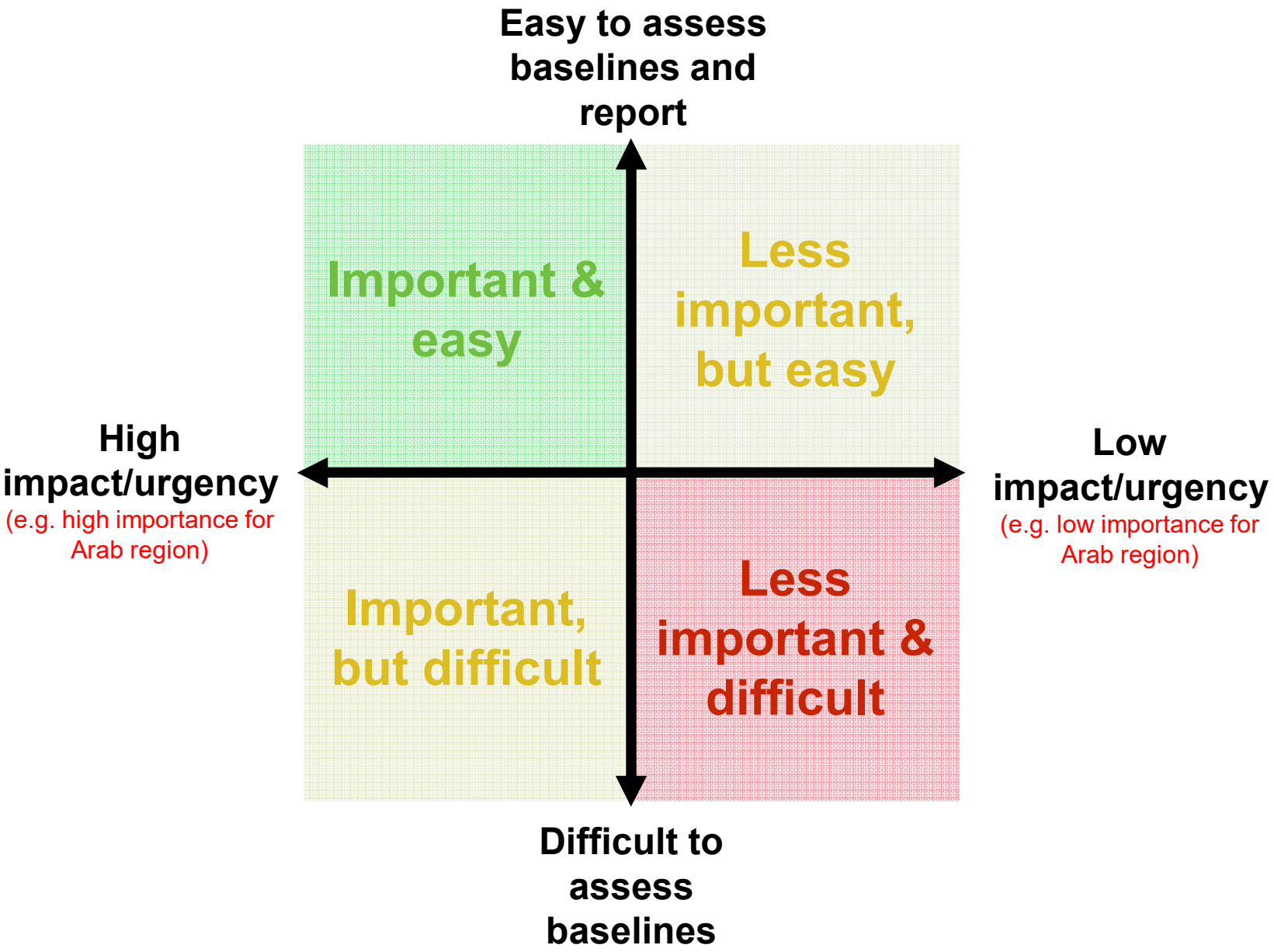
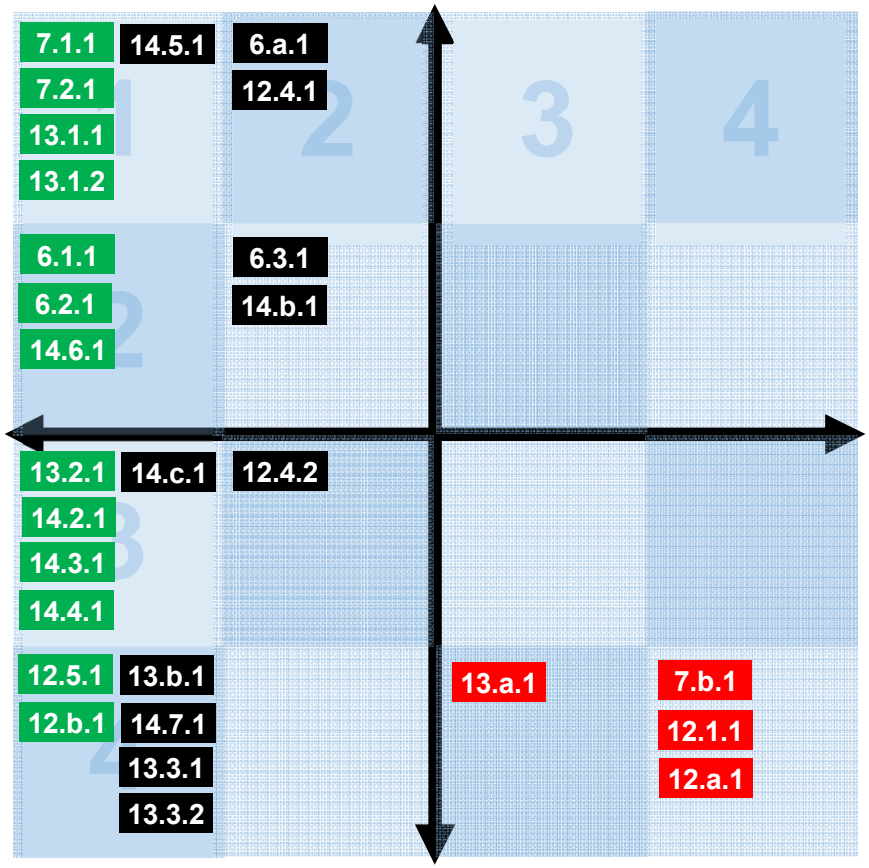
Potential prioritization framework?



Easy to assess baselines and report

High impact/urgency
(e.g. more important to Arab region)



Low impact/urgency
(e.g. less important to Arab region)

Difficult to assess baselines

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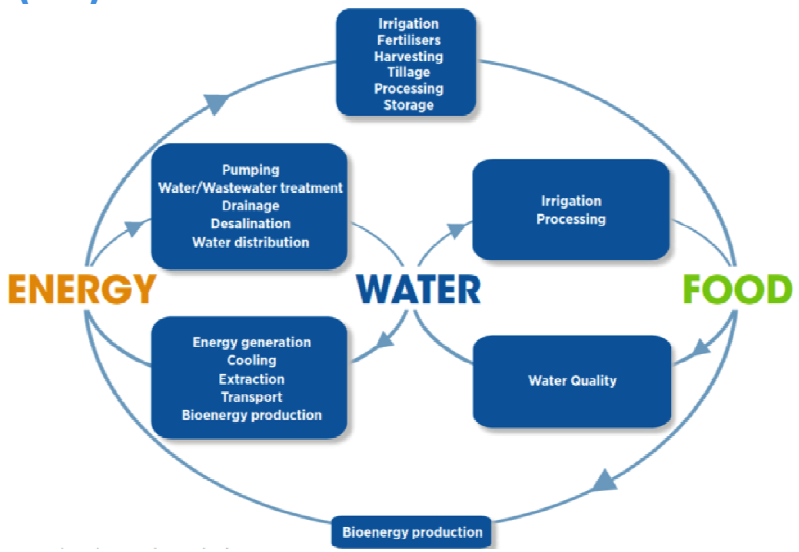
Environmental priorities: a nexus approach?

Environmental targets for the nexus include (14):

- SDG 2 Food: 2.4 and 2.5
- SDG 6 Water: 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6a, 6b
- SDG 7 Energy: 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7a, 7b



However, a more thorough analysis of interlinkages to other goals and targets will be needed

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