



COORDINATION SUD



POLICY BRIEF

SDG WORKING GROUP

FRANCE'S SDG EXTERNALITIES: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Revised in August 2023

Coordination SUD is the national coordinating body of French NGOs working for international solidarity

Coordination SUD was founded in 1994 and currently comprises 184 NGOs, either as direct members or through six networks of associations (CLONG-Volontariat, Cnajep, Coordination Humanitaire et Développement, CRID, FORIM and Groupe initiatives). These organisations work in the fields of emergency humanitarian and development aid, environmental protection, human rights, advocacy and global citizenship education for international solidarity – with a special focus on helping the most disadvantaged groups of people.

Coordination SUD and its member organisations in the French international NGO sector work in four key areas: promoting and defending an enabling environment for Civil Society Organisations' (CSO); supporting and strengthening CSOs; defining and advocating joint positions on international solidarity policies vis-a-vis public and private institutions in France, Europe and around the world; and finally, monitoring and analysing developments and challenges in the international solidarity space.

Coordination SUD, –Bringing Together and Acting for International Solidarity

1. WHAT IS THE SPILLOVER INDEX?

SPILLOVERS OR EXTERNALITIES AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Spillover effects occur when the actions of one country generate benefits or impose costs on another that are not reflected in market prices and are therefore not "internalised" by the actions of consumers and producers. In a nutshell for our context, spillovers can be defined as the impact of one country on the ability of one or more other countries to achieve the SDGs. The methodology for calculating spillovers was developed by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) as part of its *Sustainable Development Report 2022*.¹

Countries cannot achieve the SDGs if the negative externalities of other countries undermine their efforts.

The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs recognise the importance of spillovers in a number of ways, including:

- ➔ SDG 17 calls for "policy coherence" for sustainable development.
- ➔ SDG 12 stresses the need for more sustainable production and consumption.
- ➔ SDG 8 calls for the eradication of modern slavery and child labour.

It should be emphasised, however, that as almost all the SDGs call for international cooperation, they are linked to spillovers, and efforts to monitor the SDGs must take international externalities systematically into account.

FOUR CATEGORIES OF INTERNATIONAL SPILLOVERS

Spillover effects in the context of the SDGs can be grouped into four categories.

Environmental and social spillovers embodied into trade

These impacts include:

- ➔ International effects linked to pollution, the use of natural resources and the social impacts generated by the consumption of goods and services.
- ➔ Exports of toxic pesticides (sometimes banned in the country of production), trade in waste and illegal wildlife trade.

They are particularly linked to SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDGs 12-15 (responsible consumption, climate and biodiversity) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) and have an indirect impact on all the other SDGs.

¹[Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#), Bertelsmann Stiftung, June 2022.

Direct crossborder flows in air and water

These cover effects generated through physical flows – for instance of air and water – from one country to another. They are particularly linked to SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and SDGs 12-15 on climate and biodiversity, but also concern many other goals, in particular SDG 3 (good health and well-being.)

Spillovers related to economic and financial flows

These include:

- ➔ Unfair tax competition, corruption, banking secrecy, profit shifting, tax havens and stolen assets - all of which undermine the ability of other countries to mobilise resources to achieve the SDGs.
- ➔ Positive spillovers (or handprints) such as international development finance (for example, official development assistance (ODA)).

These types of spillovers are closely related to SDG 16 (Peace, Security and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), and indirectly to all other SDGs, notably through ODA.

Peacekeeping and security spillovers.

These include:

- ➔ international organised crime and arms exports, which can have a destabilising effect on poor countries.;
- ➔ investments in conflict prevention and peacekeeping.

These spillovers are particularly related to SDG 16 (Peace, Security and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), but also indirectly connected with most of the SDGs – including poverty, hunger, and health, as well as other socio-economic goals.

However, spillovers are not necessarily negative.

As noted above, spillovers can be negative as well as positive. The financial contributions made by the countries of the North to help the countries of the South transition to more sustainable economic systems are examples of positive externalities. Official development assistance and contributions to the 100 billion dollars a year that rich countries have pledged to developing countries for climate action are two examples. The SDSN itself identifies investment priorities that will make it easier to achieve the SDGs, areas or SDGs that enable "societal transformations" such as investment in public services, the circular economy, sustainable food, etc., but also funding for the SDGs, in particular through an increase in ODA.

2. METHODOLOGY

THE DATA

The data used in SDSN's *Sustainable Development Report 2022* were gathered on the one hand from administrative data (collected and managed by national statistics offices and international intergovernmental organizations) and on the other from non-traditional data (for example from associations or researchers).

- ➔ Most of the data (around two thirds) came from international organisations (including the FAO, ILO, OECD, Unicef, WHO and World Bank), which have extensive and rigorous data validation and harmonisation processes in place.
- ➔ Other data (around a third) came from less traditional sources, including household surveys (Gallup World Poll), civil society organisations and networks (such as Oxfam, Reporters sans Frontières, the Tax Justice Network and the World Justice Project) and peer-reviewed scientific journals (for example, to track international spillovers).
- ➔ The full list of indicators and data sources is available online².

To minimise bias due to missing data, the SDG Index only includes countries that have data for at least 80% of the indicators included in the report. With regard to the weighting of scores, the SDSN gives equal weight to each of the SDGs in order to reflect the commitment of political decision-makers to address all the SDGs. To make the data comparable between indicators, each variable has been rescaled from 0 (worst possible performance) to 100 (optimum performance).

AUDIT BY THE EUROPEAN JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

The SDSN methodology was peer-reviewed by Cambridge University Press and Nature Geoscience, and was revised by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in 2019³.

The 2019 JRC statistical audit focused on two main issues: the statistical consistency of the indicator structure and the impact of key modelling assumptions on the SDG Index ranking.

The uncertainty and sensitivity analyses carried out confirmed that the SDG Index allowed meaningful conclusions to be drawn. Nevertheless, the conclusions that can be drawn from the SDG Index cannot be considered 'significant' because of differences of two or three places between countries, whereas differences of 10 places more surely reflect a significant difference.

² Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Bermont Diaz, L., Kloke-Lesch, A., Koundouri, P., Riccaboni, A. (2022). *Achieving the SDGs: Europe's Compass in a Multipolar World. Europe Sustainable Development Report 2022*. SDSN and SDSN Europe. France: Paris

³ Papadimitriou, E., Fragoso Neves, A. and Becker, W., *JRC Statistical Audit of the Sustainable Development Goals Index and Dashboards*, EUR 29776 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019, ISBN 978-92-76-08995-7, doi:10.2760/723763, JRC116857.

3. OBSERVATIONS

FOR 'RICH' COUNTRIES, GREATER NEGATIVE EXTERNALITIES

Rich countries tend to generate the greatest negative spillover effects. While the Member States of the European Union and many OECD countries top the SDG Index and the World Happiness Report⁴, they are among the worst performers when it comes to spillovers.

European countries are at the top of the SDG Index because of their better performance with respect to the socio-economic SDGs, but they generate significant spillovers to the rest of the world through unsustainable supply chains and value creation. Here are a few examples to illustrate this:

- ➔ Only four EU members have reached the target of devoting 0.7% of their gross national income to official development assistance.
- ➔ 40% of greenhouse gases (GHG) caused by the EU are emitted abroad.
- ➔ EU consumption is potentially linked to the forced labour of 1.2 million people and to more than 4 000 fatal industrial accidents every year.
- ➔ The growing demand for raw materials in the EU, particularly for renewable energies and other technologies, is fuelling greenhouse gas emissions and forced labour at international level.
- ➔ The transfer of waste to countries and regions that cannot manage it has profound ecological and health repercussions.

FRANCE'S SCORE

France is noteworthy for its limited commitment to the 2030 Agenda in its foreign policy. In this respect, France's impact on the ability of the countries with which it interacts to achieve the SDGs is extremely revealing. France's score on the International Spillover Index (61,9⁵) is very low indeed⁶, well below the average for other OECD member countries in 2023 (73,8). As a result, in the Spillover Index France is ranked 148 out of 166 countries included and, in the Spillover Index ranking contained in the Europe Sustainable Development Report (ESDR) 2022⁷, the European version of SDSN's global report on sustainable development, France is ranked 22 out of 31, behind Germany and Austria and ahead of Lithuania and Cyprus.

⁴ [World Happiness Report 2022](#), Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J. D., De Neve, J.-E., Aknin, L. B., & Wang, S. (Eds.), Sustainable Development Solutions Network, New York 2022.

⁵ Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). [Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023](#). Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2023. 10.25546/102924

⁶ The Spillover Index measures the cross-border impacts generated by one country on others, which may in turn compromise the latter's ability to achieve the SDGs. The scores should be interpreted in the same way as the SDG Index score: from 0 (poor performance, i.e., significant negative spillover) to 100 (good performance, i.e. no significant negative spillover). To enable international comparisons, most of the spillover indicators are expressed in per capita terms. This index takes into account three dimensions: social and environmental impacts integrated into trade, the economy and finance, and security.

⁷ Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Bermont Diaz, L., Kloke-Lesch, A., Koundouri, P., Riccaboni, A. (2022). [Achieving the SDGs: Europe's Compass in a Multipolar World. Europe Sustainable Development Report 2022](#). SDSN and SDSN Europe. France: Paris

The indicators included in the Spillover Index with the greatest negative impact on France's SDG Index are:

- ➔ Exports of pesticides banned in the EU
- ➔ Threats to terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity embedded in imports
- ➔ CO₂ emissions embedded in imports
- ➔ Exports of plastic waste
- ➔ Exports of major conventional weapons

The SDGs and international spillover indicators	France's performance
SDG 2.8: Exports of hazardous pesticides (tonnes per million population)	5.0
SDG 6.5: Scarce water consumption embodied in imports (m ³ H ₂ O eq/capita)	2875.2
SDG 8.5: Fatal work-related accidents embodied in imports (per 100 000 population)	0.2
SDG 12.3 SO ₂ emissions embodied in imports (kg/capita)	6.1
SDG 12.5: Nitrogen emissions embodied in imports (kg/capita)	19.9
SDG 12.6: Exports of plastic waste (kg/capita)	6.1
SDG 13.2: CO ₂ emissions embodied in imports (tCO ₂ /capita)	2.5
SDG 14.6: Marine biodiversity threats embodied in imports (per million population)	0.4
SDG 15.5: Terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity threats embodied in imports (per million population)	7.1
SDG 16.8: Exports of major conventional weapons (TIV constant million USD per 100 000 population)	4.5
SDG 17.2: For high-income and all OECD DAC countries: International concessional public finance, including official development assistance (% of GNI)	0.6
SDG 17.4: Corporate Tax Haven Score (best 0–100 worst)	67
SDG 17.5: Financial Secrecy Score (best 0–100 worst)	47.9
SDG 17.5: Shifted profits of multinationals (USD billion)	42.6

Colour key:

✓ Major challenges
✓ Significant challenges
✓ Challenges remain
✓ SDG achieved

In light of these observations and drawing on the expertise of its member organizations as well as its research work, Coordination SUD is putting forward 10 key recommendations to align French public policies with the SDGs. In particular, these echo the work carried out by numerous civil society organizations as part of the preparation of France's 2023 voluntary national review⁸ within broader forums; in particular, the conclusions carried by the Agenda 2030 Working Group of the National Council for Development and International Solidarity (CNDSI) as well as the Contributory Conference organized by Open Diplomacy in spring 2023. The vast majority of these orientations therefore enjoy broad consensus within civil society.

⁸ Gouvernement français (2023), [Revue nationale volontaire de la France 2017-2022. Transformer la société par l'Agenda 2030](#). Commissariat général au développement durable. Délégation au développement durable. Juin.



10 RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE COHERENCE OF FRENCH PUBLIC POLICIES FOR THE SDGs

- Set up a ministry dedicated to coordinating and implementing the 2030 Agenda or a body dedicated to the SDGs, reporting directly to the Prime Minister's Office or the President's Office, with sufficient resources and the political clout to influence interministerial decisions.
- Ensure that, in terms of accountability, France's reports on its roadmap and the 2030 Agenda in general include the international dimension, in particular by adding to the indicators developed by the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) and the ministerial statistical departments:
 - indicators from the spillover index developed by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN);
 - indicators based on the methodology developed by UNEP and OECD for target SDG 17.14 (strengthen policy coherence for sustainable development).
- Make the Programming act on solidarity development and the fight against global inequalities (LOP-DSLIM) operational and prevent inconsistencies by systematising ex-ante cross-sectoral impact assessments that take account of the economic, social and environmental implications of government initiatives, particularly when French initiatives may have an impact on third countries.
- Systematise the evaluation of public policies, particularly those implemented by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the light of the SDGs and their cross-cutting nature.
- Hold regular universal, inclusive and cross-cutting hearings of ministers on the contribution of their policies to the 2030 Agenda.
- Establish a mechanism for parliamentary oversight of the coherence of France's legislative actions in the light of the SDGs and the need for coherence in public policies for sustainable development.
- Make sustainable development issues a cross-cutting concern in Parliament by extending the remit of existing sustainable development committees.
- Make the participation and consultation of civil society organisations systematic, for example by creating a dedicated space or maintaining the 2030 Agenda Working Group within the National Council for Development and International Solidarity (CNDSI).
- Carry out exhaustive annual monitoring of the implementation of the sustainable development goals by drawing up a public report setting out France's progress, the policies implemented and their impact on the 2030 Agenda, as well as the ministries and local players involved.
- Carry out a voluntary national review every two years as from 2023 by:
 - enhancing the contribution of civil society, in France and internationally, to achieving the SDGs;
 - including civil society in the preparation of voluntary national reviews, through regular consultations and greater transparency in their preparation.

Further reading

Sustainable Development Report 2022. From Crisis to Sustainable Development: the SDGs as Roadmap to 2030 and Beyond, Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Bertelsmann Stiftung, June 2022.

International spillovers and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Measuring how a country's progress towards the SDGs is affected by actions in other countries, Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Guido Schmidt-Traub, Holger Hoff, Maren Bernlöhr, July 2019.

Achieving the SDGs: Europe's Compass in a Multipolar World. Europe Sustainable Development Report 2022, Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Bermont Diaz, L., Kloke-Lesch, A., Koundouri, P., Riccaboni, A., SDSN and SDSN Europe, Paris 2022

Pour une politique française en faveur des objectifs du développement durable, Coordination SUD, September 2022.

Coordination SUD – SDG Working Group

France's implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a strategic advocacy priority for Coordination SUD and is monitored by its SDG Working Group, a forum for discussion and analysis that aims to:

- Highlight and sustain the role of French civil society in measuring and monitoring the implementation of the SDGs in France's sustainable development and international solidarity policy.
- Ensure that the SDGs are integrated into and applied coherently across French public policies, including sectoral and transversal strategies and approaches, relating to international solidarity and sustainable development.
- Formulate Coordination SUD's positions on the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs, the coherence of development policies and their inclusion in French development and international solidarity policy.
- Enable Coordination SUD's members and partners to share their analyses and expertise on current developments in terms of monitoring and implementing the SDGs in order to make recommendations for the effective transposition of the SDGs into strategic frameworks and policy actions.

Editorial coordination

Nicolas Paris, Coordination SUD

Director of the publication

Reynald Blion, Coordination SUD

Translated from the French, 'Les Externalités de la France sur les ODD : Constats et
Recommandations'

August 2023

Photo credit: © Greens and Blues, Shutterstock



COORDINATION SUD

Rassembler et agir
pour la Solidarité internationale

Working together for international solidarity



14, Passage Dubail 75010 Paris
Tél. : + 33 1 44 72 93 72
www.coordinationsud.org
sud@coordinationsud.org