

Building Synergies is Sustainable Development Goals. The Devil is In the Details

Roberto Sanchez Rodriguez
El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (Mexico)

The critical role of synergies for the sustainable development trajectory and its four dimensions

(economic development, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and good governance), goals and their targets

Timing- a small window of opportunity (synergies do not occur by themselves)
Contributions from science – operational approaches and new research areas

Support for Synergies

“The challenges addressed by the proposed SDGs are inherently integrated, so sustainable development will require that the sustainable development challenges be pursued in combination, rather than individually or one at a time.”
(SDSN 2013)

“failure in one area can undermine progress in others.”

“Efforts to make targets ‘concise’ and ‘achievable’ should maintain the highest Ambition in order to reframe sustainable development and not diminish the interdependent and integrated character of the goals and targets” (Beyond 2015)

But

Not much has been done -- confronting approaches

Interpretation of the sustainable development trajectory
(monitoring and reporting – changes and their sustainability)

Operational approach based on single variable indicators with
straightforward policy recommendations.

Composite indices should be avoided- complex data collection do not
lend themselves to policy recommendations.

Global monitoring indicators should rely on metrics that consist of one
variable only (UN Indicators Technical Report March 2015)

17 SDGs- 169 Targets 8 MDGs- 19 Targets

- A Role for Science
- Synergies can help create an innovative approaches for a sustainable development trajectory
- continuous learning and adaptive process
- new research areas
- Operational approaches
- Create Precedents – structural change

Synergies

Global

Regional

National

Thematic

Target

Indicators

Timeline- research and operational outcomes

Environmental Sustainability Goals

6- ensure availability and sustainable management of water, 7- ensure access to energy, 13- combat climate change and its impacts, 14 sustainable use the oceans, 15- sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems

International attention - Planetary boundaries

Linkages to economic, social, and governance goals.

Global goals- global benefits

All global goals have a local component

Win-win situations?

Useful examples

Attention to local unintended consequences

The role of science (development studies, livelihoods analysis, political ecology, vulnerability, and other approaches addressing inclusive perspective in natural resources and environmental management)

Imposition of development agendas

No monitoring and evaluation

Little attention to local empowerment, building capabilities and the cultural dimension needed to achieve local sustainable development

Attention to targets and indicators (composite indices)

Social Inclusion goals

1-End poverty, 2-End hunger, 3-Ensure healthy lives,
4- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, 5- Achieve gender equality,
10- Reduce inequality among countries, 11- Make cities and human settlements
inclusive

Synergies with environmental, economic, governance goals

Global goals- National goals and in some instances potential synergies with
regional and thematic goals

Planetary boundaries - Social Boundaries? (governance goals and reframe
environmental and economic goals)

Funding constraints?

The role of science

Contributions from the social sciences and humanities (I.e. the case of poverty)

Lessons from development strategies and projects

Imposition of development agendas

No attention to the sustainability of projects, monitoring and evaluation

Little attention to local empowerment and building capabilities and to the
cultural dimension

Attention to targets (research and operational approaches)- Indicators
(composite indices)

Economic Development Goals

8- economic growth, full and productive employment, 9- infrastructure for industrialization and innovation, 12- sustainable consumption and production patterns

International attention

Challenges and opportunities

Synergies social and environmental goals selective targets

The role of science

Six transformations: energy, agriculture, urbanization, population, fragile states, biodiversity

Opportunities production patterns- Employment, livelihoods, and the role of technology

Consumption patterns (developed and developing countries)

Composite indicators (food and energy, urban areas)

Rural areas, fisheries (livelihoods, biodiversity, and ecosystem services)

Governance Goals

16- Peaceful and inclusive societies for SD and accountable institutions,

17- Global partnership for sustainable development

Synergies social, environmental, economic goals

Major challenges

Power structures -international, national, and local level

Data

Opportunities- innovation for structural changes

The role of science

Research - a new framework – The sustainable development trajectory

Contributions: governance, institutions, power, the science-policy/practice

interface, transboundary studies, interdisciplinary research

Timing- a small window of opportunity for operational approaches

Potential major contributions in new research areas –co-production of knowledge

Multilateral agencies, national governments, stockholders

Concrete strategies needed soon

Summary

A critical role of synergies in the sustainable development trajectory – structural changes

Timing – A small window of opportunity (operational approaches and new research areas)

Contributions from the scientific community – The science-policy / practice interface, co-production of knowledge

Concrete strategies needed soon