

Singapore's Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals Implementation

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Introduction

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by countries including Singapore at the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015 as a global framework for achieving a sustainable future. It comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets across the economic, social and environmental domains, and a total of 247 indicators (known as the Global SDG Indicator Framework) to measure countries' progress in ending poverty, improving healthcare and education, reducing inequality, dealing with climate change and spurring economic growth, among others.

This article reports on Singapore's monitoring of SDG implementation under the SDG Indicator Framework.

DOS's Role in Monitoring Singapore's SDGs

An Inter-Ministry Committee on SDGs (IMC-SDG) was formed to lead a Whole-of-Government (WOG) approach towards SDG implementation, co-led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment (MSE)¹.

The Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS) is a member of the IMC-SDG. DOS supports the work of the IMC-SDG by collating SDG data from government agencies to report on Singapore's progress at various international and regional fora. With the help of IMC-SDG members, DOS identifies the relevant source agencies to obtain data for the SDG indicators.

Apart from serving as the national SDG indicators focal point for the UN, DOS is also an active member of the ASEAN Working Group on SDG Indicators (WGSDGI) since 2019, as well as chair of the WGSDGI jointly with the ASEAN Statistics Division over a 2-year term from 2020 to 2021. The WGSDGI's key deliverables include the release of the inaugural ASEAN SDG Indicators Baseline Report 2020² and the ASEAN online SDG database on 23 Oct 2020.

As Singapore adopts a decentralised statistical system, SDG indicators and sub-indicators which cover a wide range of topics and data domains come under the purview of various agencies.

For instance, the source agency for data on air quality and climate-related indicators (e.g. SDG 13.2.2 "Total greenhouse gas emissions per year") is the National Environment Agency (NEA).

There are also indicators which are cross-cutting and fall under the purview of more than one source agency, such as SDG 9.1.2 "Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport", with data being provided by the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS), Land Transport Authority (LTA), Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and Singapore Tourism Board (STB).

DOS works with agencies on the provision of data for the SDG indicators to align them with the global metadata on methodology, definition and units of measurement. Where data are not available, proxy indicators or alternative indicators that better reflect Singapore's unique national circumstances and priorities are used.

¹ More information on Singapore's SDG work and indicators can be found in:

- MFA's website at <https://www.mfa.gov.sg/SINGAPORES-FOREIGN-POLICY/International-Issues/Sustainable-Development>
- MSE's website at <https://www.mse.gov.sg>
- Voluntary National Review 2018 publication: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19439Singapore's Voluntary National Review Report v2.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19439Singapore%20Voluntary%20National%20Review%20Report%20v2.pdf)

² The ASEAN SDG Indicators Baseline Report 2020 is available at: <https://www.aseanstats.org/publication/asean-sdg-report-2020>.

Singapore’s SDG Performance

To facilitate the reporting and monitoring of the progress in Singapore’s sustainable development journey, DOS has developed an SDG webpage³ on the SingStat Website in Sep 2019, which serves as a one-stop online portal to provide access to statistics on Singapore’s performance on the relevant SDG indicators.

Singapore’s SDG data profile covers a broad range of areas, with at least some data⁴ available across all 17 goals (Chart 1). For example, data are available for indicators across different subject areas under health (SDG 3), education and technology (SDG 4), economic growth (SDG 8), urbanisation (SDG 9) to global development (SDG 17).

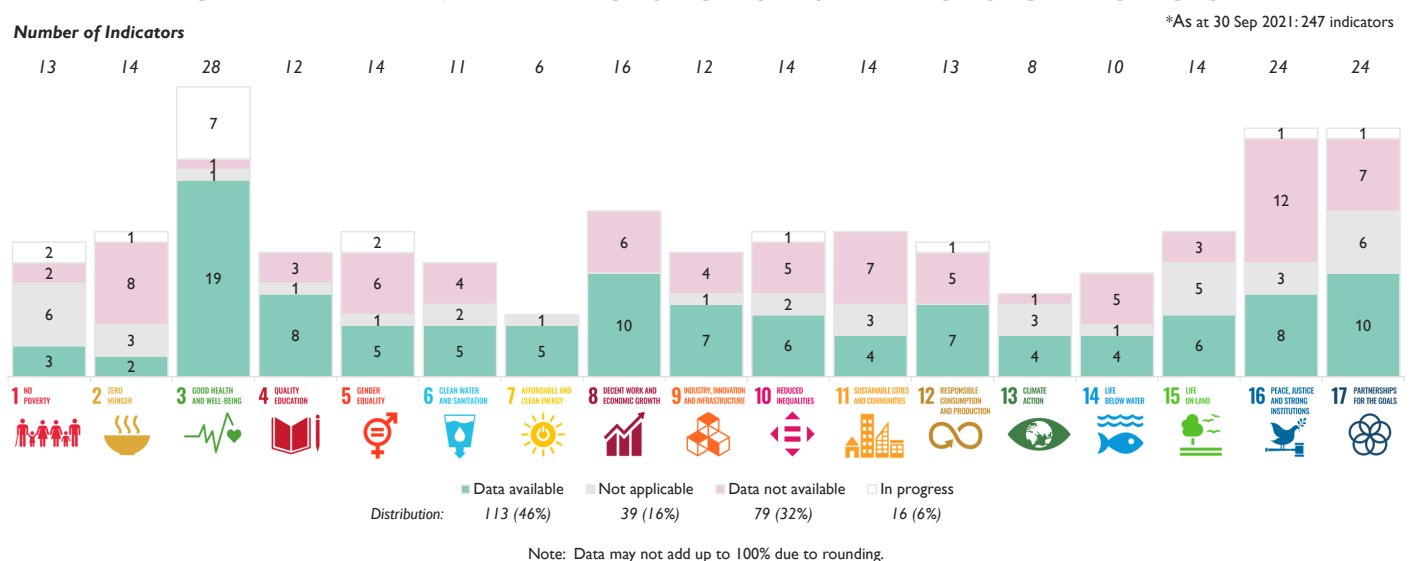
Singapore has performed well in terms of data availability and progress for education-related indicators under SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. In 2020, Singapore achieved near gender parity in gross enrolment across all education levels (SDG 4.5.1) and literacy proficiency rates were above 95 per cent among resident population aged 15 years and over for both genders (SDG 4.6.1). Moreover, nearly all (97.1 per cent) of Singapore’s youth aged 15 to 24 years possessed some information and communications technology skills (SDG 4.4.1) in 2019.

Like other countries, Singapore has strived to make progress in collecting and reporting data on SDG indicators despite the challenges. In some cases, source agencies do not regularly collect data which are no longer relevant in the Singapore context. For example, as the burden of stunting is low in Singapore, data are not collected for SDG 2.2.1 “Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age”. In other instances, source agencies may collect or track an alternative series of data that is more relevant to the local context as opposed to the parameters set out by global metadata. For example, although data for SDG 7.3.1 “Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP” are not available, the source agency provided an alternative set of data on energy consumption per Singapore dollar gross domestic product (per cent improvement from 2005 levels).

Concluding Remark

Recognising the importance of the SDGs for global comparison and monitoring, DOS will continue to explore with the relevant policy and source agencies to identify appropriate data, proxy or alternative indicators, including the usage of UN custodian agencies’ data for reporting and monitoring of the progress Singapore’s SDG performance.

CHART 1 AVAILABILITY OF SINGAPORE’S DATA FOR SDG INDICATORS



3 DOS’s SDG webpage: <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/find-data/sdg>

4 Singapore’s data are available for 113 out of the 247 (46%) SDG indicators as at 30 Sep 2021, with 39 indicators (16%) not applicable to our context. Data for the remaining 95 indicators (38%) are either unavailable or still being developed.