

## TOOLS FOR IDENTIFYING SDGS INTERACTIONS FOR DOMESTIC POLICY INTEGRATION

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The concept of sustainable development is characterised by integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions. In addressing its implementation, literature on governing for sustainable development have demonstrated little success in policy integration. The advent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was hailed as the turning point towards better integration with the outcome document emphasising that it must be seen as an integrated package with the goals and targets indivisible from each other. Nonetheless, as an outcome of a political process, it has been criticised from a scientific perspective of achieving a low level of integration. This paper attempts to assess the promise of SDGs of moving towards integration by assessing two levels of linkages. Firstly, tools for identifying functional linkages across SDG targets are assessed. Secondly, the political linkages, and more specifically, the institutional arrangements of the identified issue linkages are then identified to determine whether there is a correlation or mismatch between the two types of linkages. A case study to identify and implement the issue linkages of the drivers and benefit of forest cover (SDG 15.1) in Malaysia was undertaken for this purpose. The results demonstrated that by using a combination of existing approaches such as scoring of interaction of the SDGs and issue mapping through network analysis clusters of strongly inter-linked issues such as the Forest-Climate-Resilience nexus can be identified. The causalities between the issue linkages are, however, difficult to infer due to unreliable data, resulting in higher uncertainties in more complex systems and requiring tools such as integrated modelling. In conclusion, the findings suggest that the SDGs, supplemented with existing tools, can be a starting point to identify issue linkages of strongly linked clusters. This lends itself to a piece-meal approach of addressing issue linkages rather than integration as a whole, which may prove to be more pragmatic in the shorter term.*

**KEYWORDS:** *SDGs, Interlinkages, Policy Integration, Biodiversity, Sustainable Development*

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