

# Realising the Transformative Potential of the SDGs

## Making SDG Implementation More Ambitious

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Driving Transformative Actions through Integrated and Innovative Approaches



# ISAP 2018

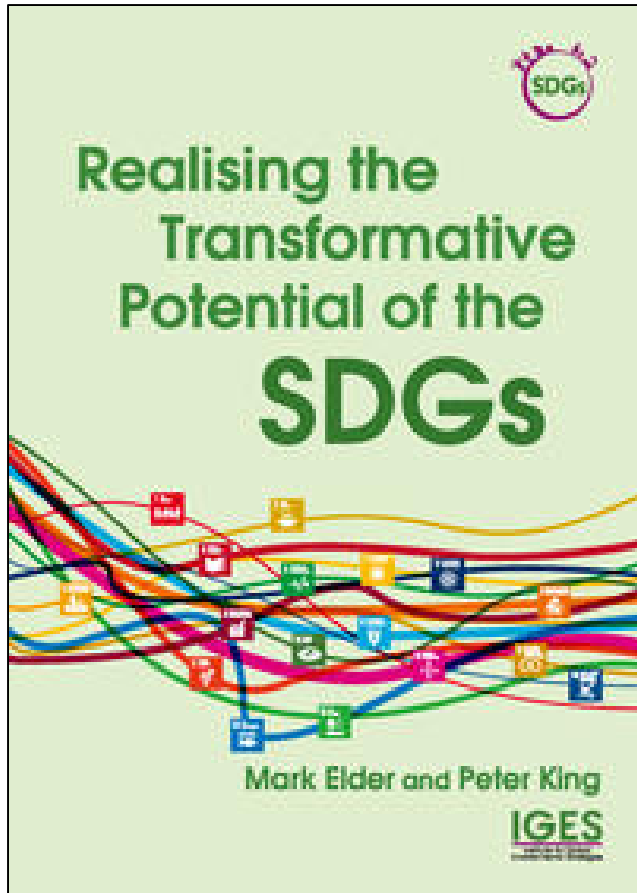
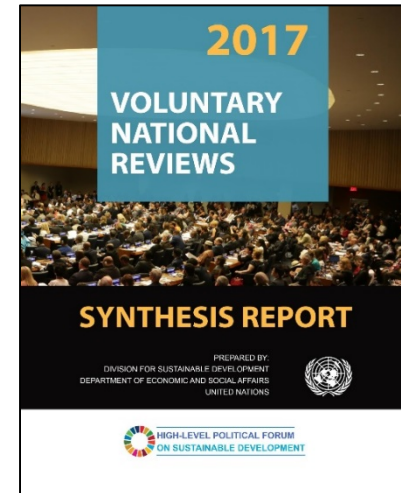
International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific 2018

**IGES**  
Institute for Global  
Environmental Strategies

# Agenda 2030: Transforming Our World

## 2017 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of SDGs

- There has been **“considerable progress”**
- BUT
- The **“pace of progress is insufficient** to fully meet” the SDGs by 2030



### Aim of this book

- Encourage more ambitious actions with transformative potential

# Current Efforts Are Insufficient

## Governments

- Emphasis on implementation frameworks, plans
- Few major policy changes
- Resources for implementation not very significant.

## NGOs, research community

- Complex modelling, best practice cases
- Recommendations are vague or conceptual

## Overall

- Much effort on data and indicators
- Many small projects
- Focus on voluntary actions by business & citizens

- These activities are helpful and important.
- However, they are not ambitious or transformative.

# Many Indicators Are Not Very Ambitious

- In principle, indicators promote accountability and action.
- However, many indicators:
  - Water down the goals
  - Narrow their focus
  - Weaken ambition
 (especially sustainability & environmental elements)

	Targets	Indicators	Problems
9.2	Inclusive & sustainable industrialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing value added</li> <li>• Manufacturing employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Omits “sustainable”</li> <li>• Omits “inclusive”</li> </ul>
11.4	Reduce environmental impact of cities, especially air pollution & waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate waste collection &amp; discharge</li> <li>• PM 2.5, PM 10 (air pollutants)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Omits other environmental impacts</li> <li>• Omits other air pollutants</li> </ul>

# Ambitious Solutions Are Already Available



- SDG issues are not new. They are old, and getting worse.
- These issues have already been thoroughly researched.
- Many solutions to these problems have been proposed in the past. Most are still valid.



This report discusses a range of these.



# Ambitious Solutions Are Already Available



**Need more ambitious actions**

- SDG is not new. They are old, and getting worse.
- The solutions to these problems have been proposed in the past. Most are still valid.



This report discusses a range of these.

# Example: Decarbonization

Area	Stronger Recommendation
Renewable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shift fossil fuel subsidies to renewable energy</li><li>• Require utilities to use more</li><li>• Phase out fossil fuel use (leave it in the ground)</li></ul>
Energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Standards should be required, not voluntary</li><li>• Remove inefficient products from the market</li></ul>
Carbon pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carbon tax (at a high level)</li><li>• Carbon budget (ceiling on carbon use)</li></ul>
Construction standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthen the standards</li><li>• Strict enforcement</li></ul>

## Example: Sustainable Consumption, Production, Chemicals, Waste

Area	Stronger Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource efficiency</li> <li>• Clean production</li> <li>• Extended producer responsibility</li> <li>• Recycling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions should be mandatory, not voluntary</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer awareness</li> <li>• Green purchasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulate/ prohibit/ tax unsustainable products</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulate chemicals after hazards are discovered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Precautionary principle</li> <li>• Lifecycle assessment of new chemicals</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum pollution standards, enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen standards, monitoring, enforcement</li> <li>• Restrict/ prohibit use of polluting materials</li> </ul>

**New Concept: Circular Economy**



# Governance:

## Strengthen Basic Environmental Governance Capacity

Developing Countries	➤ Many lack basic capacity
Developed Countries	➤ Needs strengthening

- Assessment, monitoring and data
- Policies, laws, regulations, standards, economic instruments
- Inspections and issuance of licences, and compliance enforcement
- Effective environmental judicial system and enforcement
- Environmental impact assessment (EIA) of projects, policies, plans, programmes
- Capacity-building, environmental education
- Public awareness, outreach, promote Corporate Social Responsibility
- Networking and partnerships with civil society
- Coordination of environment-related issues within the government
- Research

# More Ambitious Ways to Strengthen Governance

## Mainstream sustainability into all policy areas

- Especially economic, development, financial policies
- Land use, natural resources, social policies

## Strong coordinating body

- For example, connected to the prime minister's office
- Influence over budgets

## Sustainability assessment of policies and budgets

- High level supervision
- Prioritization of sustainability

## Strengthen the role of environment ministries

- Mandate, budget, staff
- Coordination role

# Governance: New Measures of Progress to Replace GDP

- GDP isn't measuring or getting us what we want.
  - We want prosperity, well-being, happiness
  - GDP isn't providing these well
  - Jobless growth, technology, inequality
  - Environmental degradation undermines prosperity

- Many alternatives to GDP exist
- Should be implemented by national governments
- Needs institutional support, budgets, staff
  - Statistical agencies need big budget & staff for GDP

# Key Messages

➤ No need to delay implementation to wait for final indicators, complete data, or more research.

- There are already many solutions for most SDGs.
- Implementation can begin immediately.

➤ Voluntary approaches are not enough

➤ National governments need to take the lead.

- Direct resources towards sustainable activities and away from unsustainable activities.
- National governments have the power to tax, spend, and regulate.