

# Mapping interlinkages and localising the SDGs in Asia's Great Living Deltas during COVID: emerging insights and experiences

Albert Salamanca (SEI Asia, Thailand)

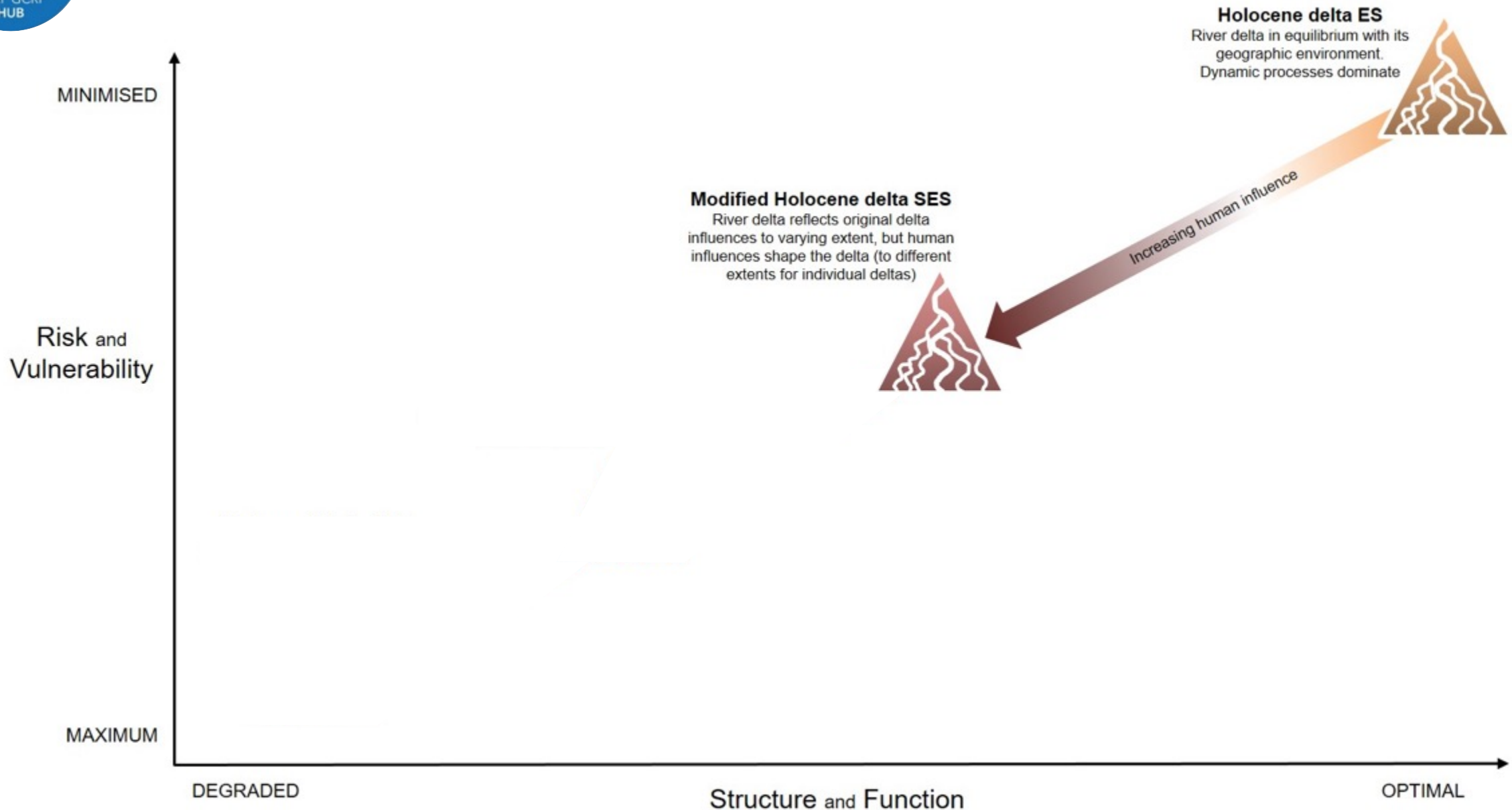
Jack O'Connor (EHS-UNU, Germany)

# Living Deltas



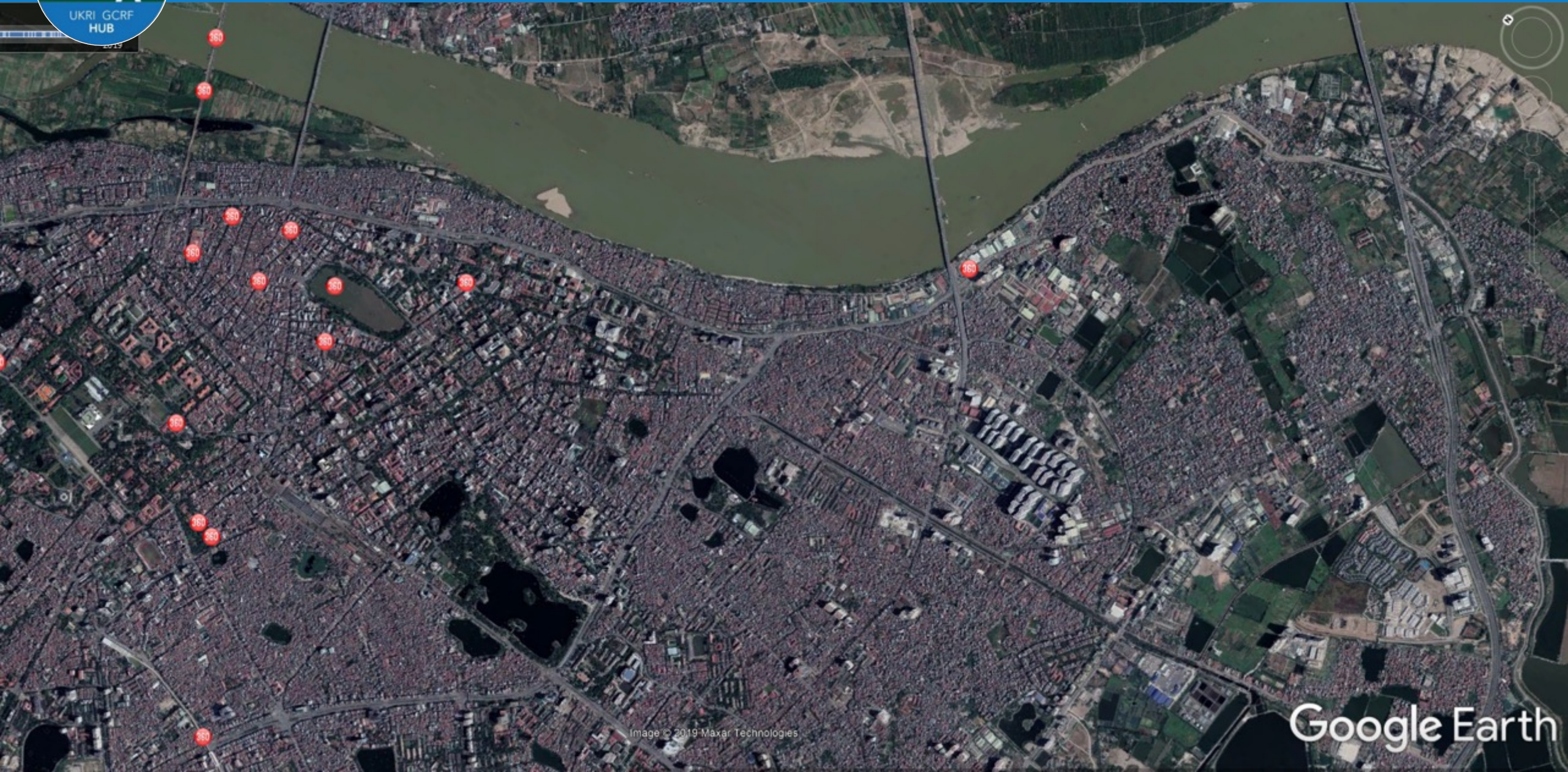
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**Complex Development Challenge:** avoid collapse of South and SE Asian deltas as functioning, highly-productive social-ecological systems in the face of human development and climate change





# Four megadelta social-ecological systems





# Four overarching questions for these megadeltas

1

How are deltas changing, and what are the key drivers and consequences?



Learning from the Past, across Scales and across Disciplines.

2

How do we learn from lived experiences to build better, sustainable, futures for Delta Dwellers?



New ways of thinking and strong relationships with Country Partners and Delta Dwellers.

3

How do we maximise capacity-building to ensure 'no-one is left behind'?



Building relationships with Partners across the Research-Policy-Governance interface with a focus on the vulnerable and marginalised.

4

How do we address infrastructure, inequality and resilience?



Solutions-Focused, with deep, co-created understanding of In-Country Challenges.



# Why should we care about interlinkages in our work in the deltas?

- Coherent policies and strategies are more effective.
- If we want policy coherence, we need to know how the pieces fit together.
- We need to induce valuable policy dialogue/s and learning processes.
- We need to offer advise to delta stakeholders on who they should cooperate with and negotiate with in implementing their priority SDG target/s.
- We have to help them implement their priorities efficiently.

VIETNAM  
RIVERS  
NETWORK



## GOALS SCORING

The influence of one Sustainable Development Goal or target on another can be summarized with this simple scale.

Interaction	Name	Explanation	Example
+3	Indivisible	Inextricably linked to the achievement of another goal.	Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is indivisible from ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership.
+2	Reinforcing	Aids the achievement of another goal.	Providing access to electricity reinforces water-pumping and irrigation systems. Strengthening the capacity to adapt to climate-related hazards reduces losses caused by disasters.
+1	Enabling	Creates conditions that further another goal.	Providing electricity access in rural homes enables education, because it makes it possible to do homework at night with electric lighting.
0	Consistent	No significant positive or negative interactions.	Ensuring education for all does not interact significantly with infrastructure development or conservation of ocean ecosystems.
-1	Constraining	Limits options on another goal.	Improved water efficiency can constrain agricultural irrigation. Reducing climate change can constrain the options for energy access.
-2	Counteracting	Clashes with another goal.	Boosting consumption for growth can counteract waste reduction and climate mitigation.
-3	Cancelling	Makes it impossible to reach another goal.	Fully ensuring public transparency and democratic accountability cannot be combined with national-security goals. Full protection of natural reserves excludes public access for recreation.

### Context matters!

- Geography
- Governance
- Technology
- Current state of progress on SDGs



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Expert judgment

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Stakeholder consultation process

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Statistical correlations

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Case study evidence

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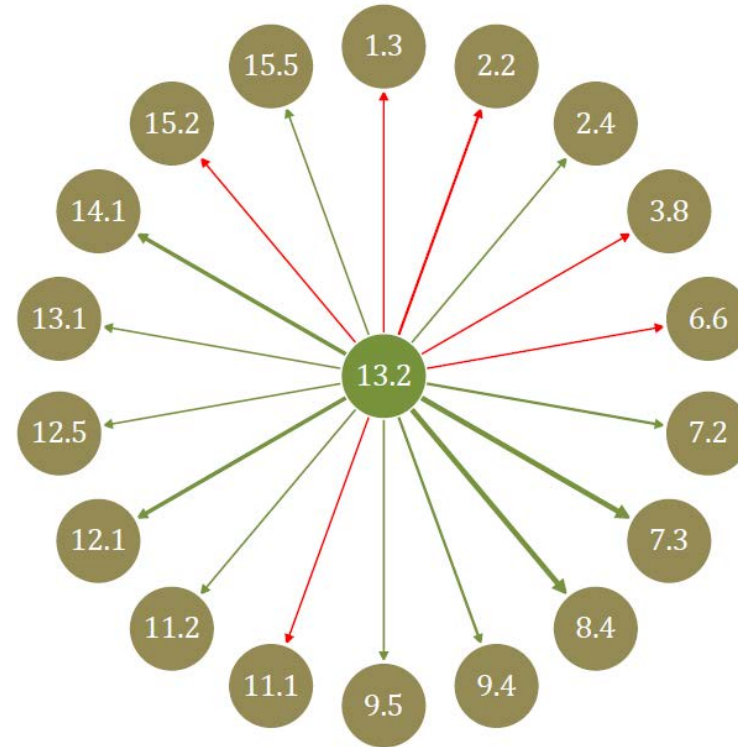
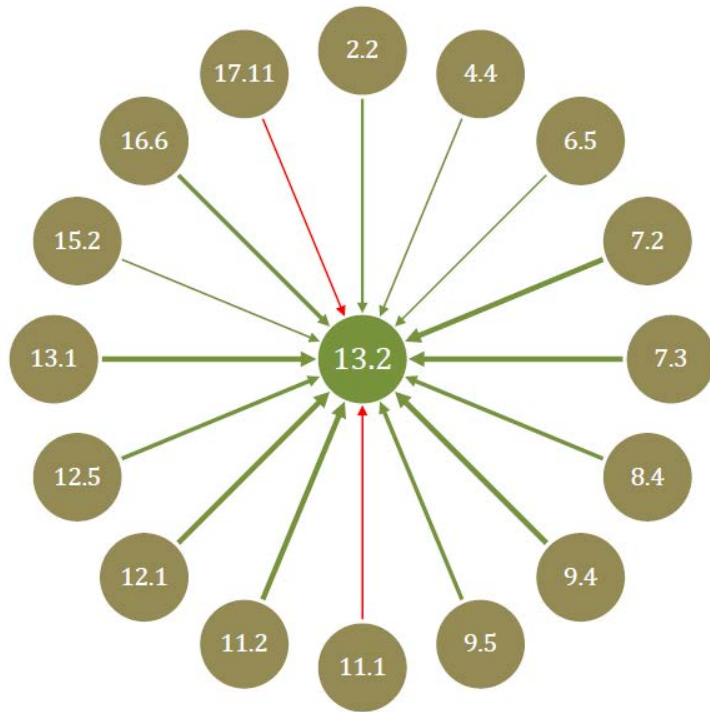
Model-based evidence

	1.3	1.5	2.2	2.4	3.4	3.8	4.1	4.4	5.4	5.5	6.5	6.6	7.2	7.3	8.4	8.5	9.4	9.5	10.1	10.7	11.1	11.2	12.1	12.5	13.1	13.2	14.1	14.4	15.2	15.5	16.4	16.6	17.11	17.13	SUM	
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# First Order Impacts



# Both directions



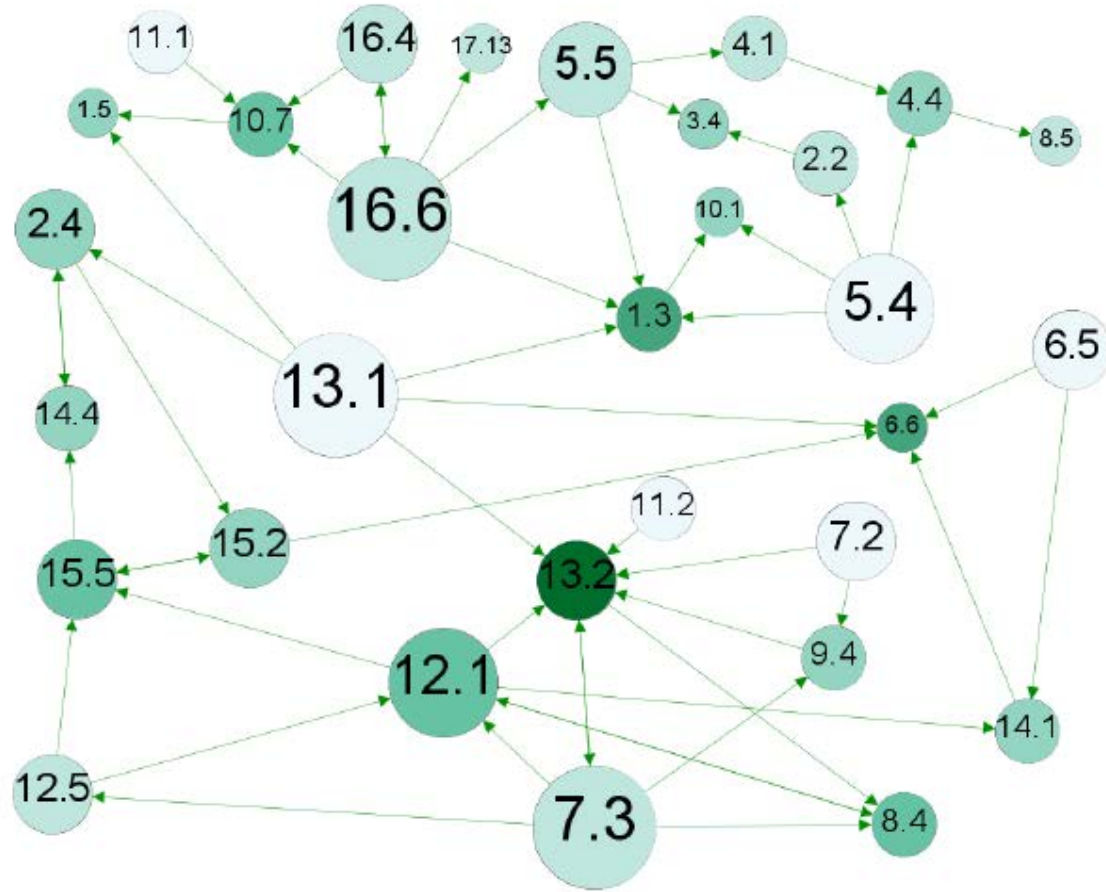


Fig 4: Sub-network of indivisible (+3) interactions. Directed as shown by arrows. The size of the nodes (targets) are proportional to the degree of influence (out-degree) with bigger nodes representing more influential nodes. The color is proportional to the degree of being influenced with darker color for nodes more influenced by other nodes



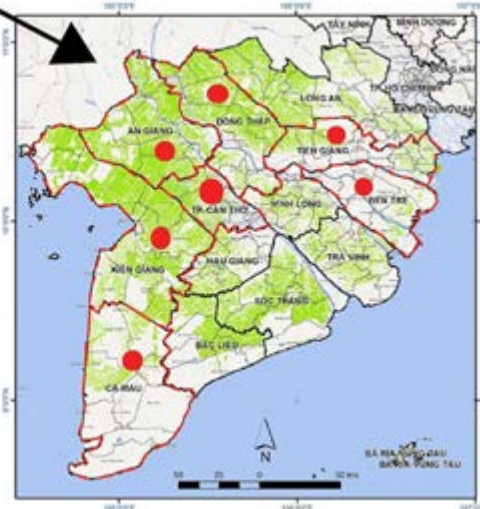
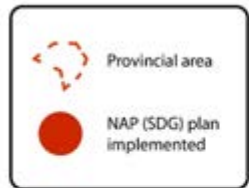
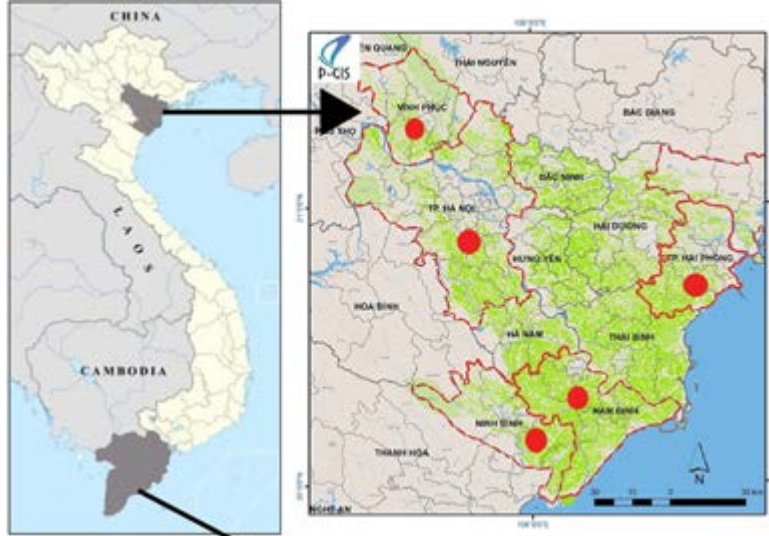
# Principles

- Co-creation & stakeholder-led process
- Responsiveness to the national/delta policy community's priorities
- Support interagency dialogue on SDG targets
- Support Agenda 2030 policy coherence
- Added value for national/delta-level policy planning and budgeting
- Opens opportunities for localization of SDGs





## Red River Delta



## Mekong Delta





# COVID and the SDGs: the digital divide (SDG 9.c)

*“Global human development – which can be measured as a combination of the world’s education, health and living standards – could decline this year for the first time since the concept was introduced in 1990” – UNDP<sup>1</sup>*



FIGURE 5: COVID-19 AFFECTING ALL SDGS

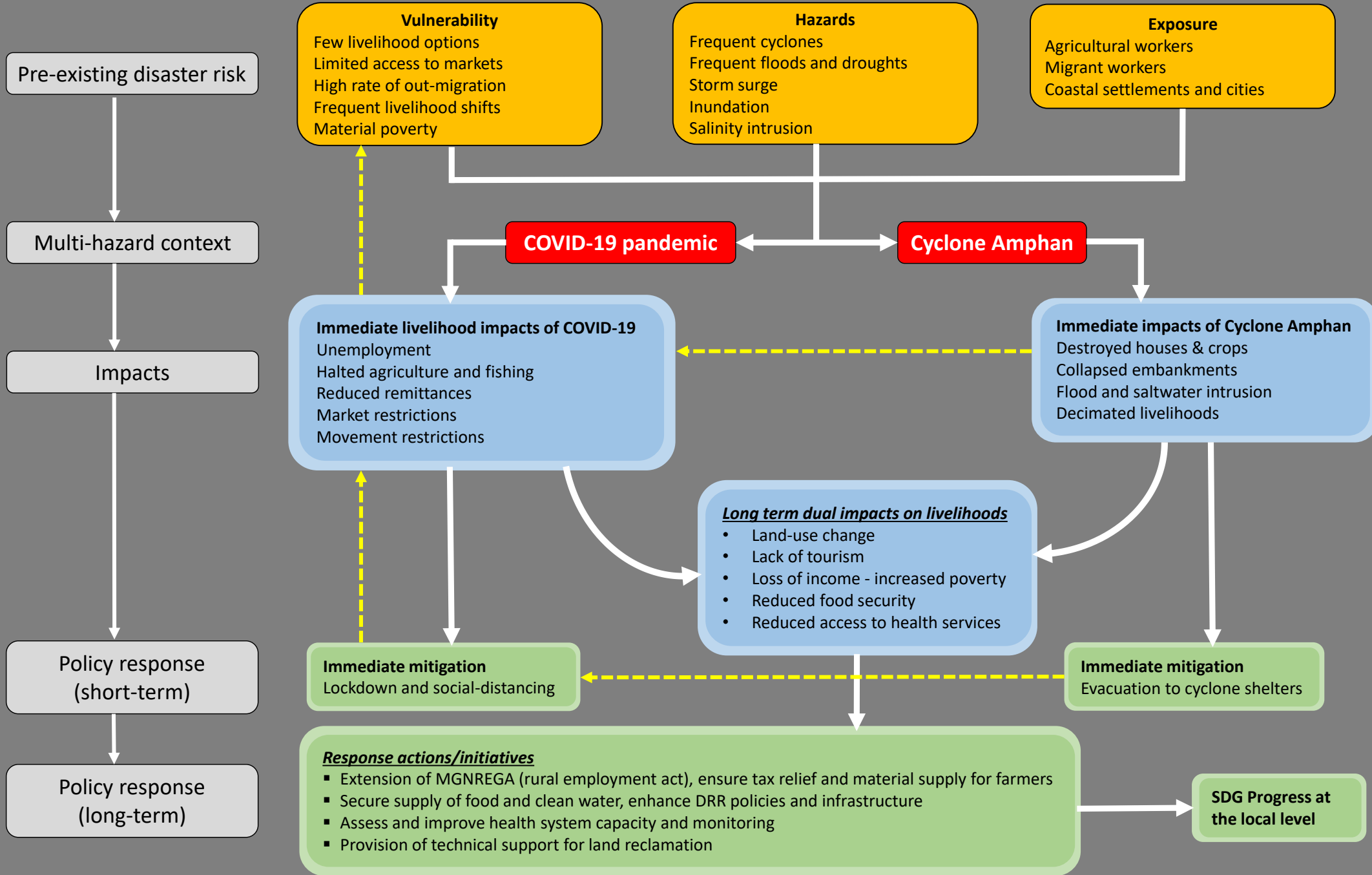


<sup>1</sup>Kovacevic and Jahics (2020). Covid-19 and Human Development Exploring global preparedness and vulnerability, UNDP

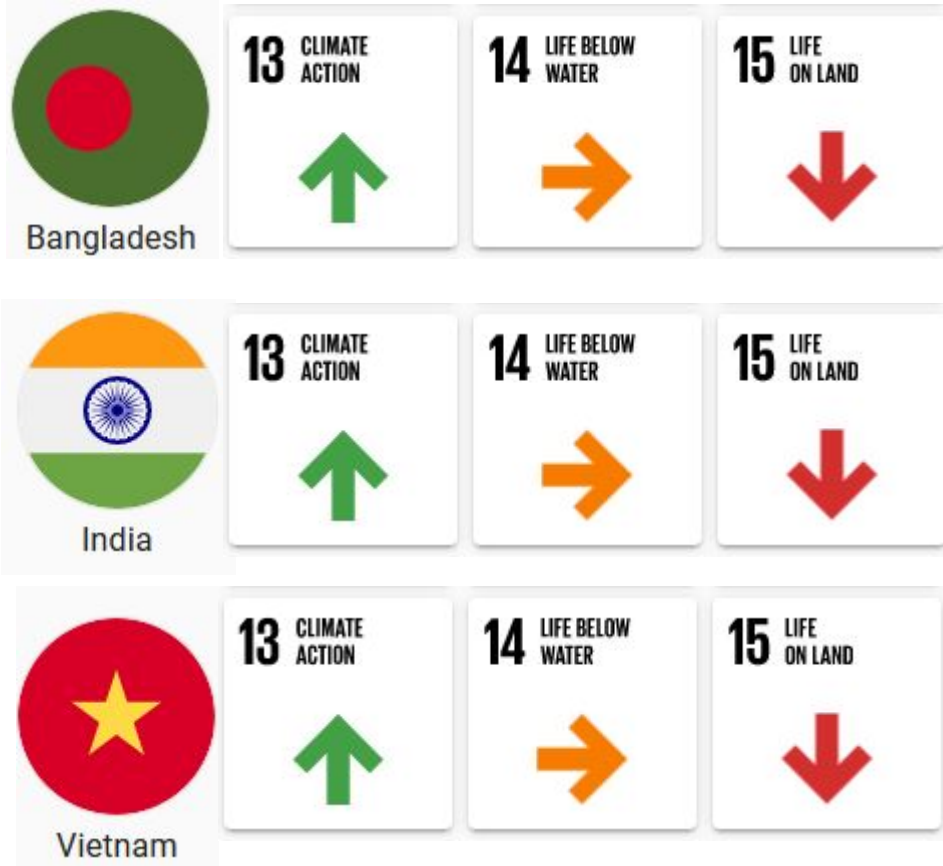


SDGs in a multi-hazard context: COVID-19 lockdown and Cyclone Amphan, Sundarbans region, India





## Trends

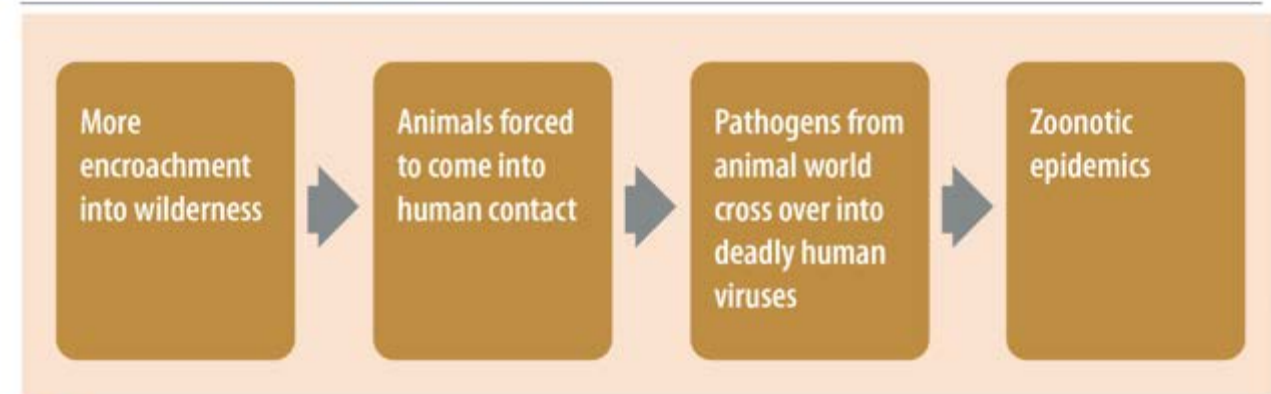


Legend: ↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement → Moderately improving → Stagnating ↓ Decreasing

\*13 includes only CO<sub>2</sub> emission indicators NOT disaster risk reduction

Source: <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org>

Figure 4  
Encroachment of nature leading to zoonotic epidemics



Source: UN DESA.

*“The zoonotic nature of COVID-19 and other recent epidemics (Figure 4) have yet again shown the urgency to reduce human pressure on nature and to protect land, water, and biodiversity.”*  
– UN DESA



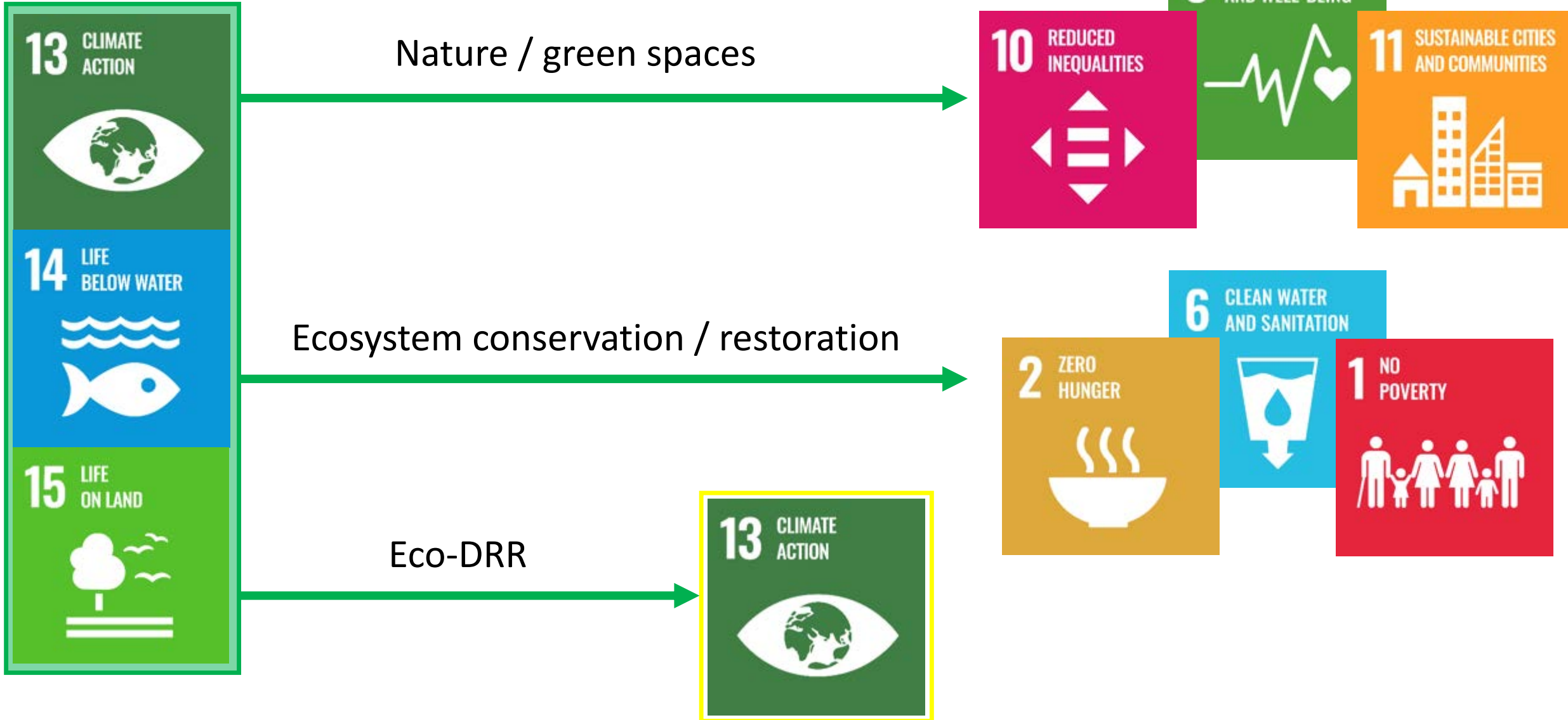




Photo by: Tuhin Ghosh



# Why interlinkages and localisation?

- Identify “accelerator interventions” and critical clashes among delta-level SDG targets
- Identify resource effective options especially in the context of COVID
- Inducing interagency policy dialogue and partnerships
- Guidance for coherent and locally-responsive policies
- Enable local ownership of the process







Thank you!

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