# Implementation of the SDGs and preparation of the EU Voluntary Review

*Policy Forum for Development - 22 November 2022*

# Preparation of the 2023 EU Voluntary Review

## General presentation and framing questions

# Commission Work Programme 2023

- *"[…] The Commission's work will continue to be guided by the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in all policy areas. The Sustainable Development Goals have been integrated into the European Semester and mainstreamed in our better regulation tools. In 2023, the Commission will put forward **the EU's first voluntary review of SDG implementation** in the framework of the UN's High-Level Political Forum […]"*

# Shared understanding of the purposes of the EUVR

- Externally:

  1. Uphold EU commitment to SDGs and to multilateralism in general, notably when global shared frameworks are at risk with the Russian aggression in Ukraine

  2. Influence positively the SDG summit at the middle of the SDG cycle

  3. Reaffirm the EU as a global actor at the UN, harnessing its full participant status at HLPF for enhanced impact and visibility. Contribute to projecting together at global level the EU and its Member States (e.g. Team Europe approach to international partnerships)

- Internally:

  1. Articulate in a coherent and systemic manner the EU commitments/targets contributing directly to each SDG ("EU targets")

  2. Further illustrate EU's 'whole of government' approach

  3. Reinforce engagement with stakeholders.

# Framing questions: type of document and length implications

- From the purpose sought to the type of content needed ("form follows function"):

  - Towards a compelling political document: need for concision to ensure political traction.

  - For the main Commission Report, need to comply with strict length requirements.

  - To limit total length of annexes: consider projections of any additions or extensions on the total length with all annexes (eg if main annex would have 10 pages per SDG, it would imply that just this annex would reach 170 pages).

  - Practical implications for each SDG chapter limiting the scope for potential add-ons, with some discipline for each section. Complexity of continued simplification and streamlining, while gradually addressing any identified major gaps – and consistency among all chapters.

# Framing questions: ways to remain focused

- What should be conveyed within this limited length:

    - Balance between overall trends, main EU policy orientations (which cannot be comprehensive within the targeted bountaries), and illustrative examples.

    - Aim at compelling narrative of EU commitments and implementation. No space for excessive details per thematic issue. Avoid being technical (but covering basically their main scope through meaningful actions).

    - For examples of external actions, preference for a selection of illustrative joint actions of EU and MS (Team Europe).

    - Reinforced by a brief selection of illustrative MS examples (which requires close coordination with MS).

    - Trends in main text, but not enough space for graphs (length constraint), so graphs expected to be set in an additional statistical annex.

# Framing questions: scope and some choices

- Some aspects on scope:

  - Scope to reflect strategically in the EUVR, under each SDG chapter, the main EU commitments per SDG ('EU SDG targets').

  - Nature of a Voluntary Review: fundamentally a reporting exercise, but ongoing reflection on what can be put as selected forward-looking messages.

  - Commitment to reflect external impacts, policy coherence for development, and where feasible spillovers beyond EU borders (e.g. environmental and social) – see details later.

  - How to reflect systemic issues (eg LNOB, interlinkages across SDGs) without repetitions or too academic segmentation of each SDG chapter – looking at VNR precedents. Intention to innovate where possible on interlinkages assessment and graphics.

# EU Voluntary Review annotated outline

# EU Voluntary Review: target date and structure

- Target date: April/May 2023, ahead of presentation at UN HLPF in July 2023.

- General Part: Report from the Commission

- Annexes:

  - Main annex by SDGs

  - Statistical annex – data from Eurostat, complemented by illustrative information on SDG interlinkages, and probably estimation of collective ODA per SDG (still tbc, as data gaps)

  - Youth engagement annex

  - Synopsis report on consultation activities

- Accompanied by the 2023 edition of the ESTAT monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context.

# Outline: General Part

- Introduction

- Key messages

  - Substance: The six headline priorities as entry points in order to achieve a better future for people and planet, while attaining prosperity and peace through partnership (5Ps)

# Outline: General Part

- Governance and institutional issues:

    - 'Whole of government approach', policy coherence for sustainable development (including Better Regulation and impacts on developing countries), monitoring and reporting.

    - Roles of institutions, engagement with stakeholders, etc.

- Conclusions

# A comprehensive exercise integrating various reporting strands

- The Voluntary Review will cover internal and external actions in a comprehensive manner.

- For this purpose, it will fully integrate two Commission reports planned for 2023 under the responsibility of DG INTPA:

  1) the Joint Synthesis Report on the European Consensus on Development, which should present every four years how the EU and its MS support partner countries to implement the SDGs, and

  2) reporting on policy coherence on development on impacts of EU policies on developing countries.

# Outline: Main annex by SDGs

- SWD compiling the most important measures, actions and initiatives to support the implementation the 2030 Agenda

- For each of the 17 SDGs:

    - Internal

    - External

    - Internal/external coherence (external dimension of policies, policy coherence for development and spillovers)

    - Looking ahead

- Should also include illustrative examples of very significant internal and external actions taken by Member States – given the structure, arranged across SDG chapters.

# I. Internal developments for each SDG

1. Overview and challenges;

2. Systemic presentation of most relevant EU level policy targets (and trends for 2030);

3. Selection of the most relevant EU level key initiatives;

4. Enablers - selection of practical examples from EU financial instruments, Next Generation investments and reforms, Horizon projects;

5. Stakeholder engagement – illustrative examples of fora, dialogues, platforms, prizes;

6. Multi-level governance approach - good practices.

# 2030 targets at EU level (and trends)

- Table listing relevant policy targets set at EU level contributing directly to the SDG at stake.

- Clear link to relevant policy document of each target set at EU level (e.g. Regulation, Directive, Strategy, Action Plan)

- Brief assessment of trends – linking to more details in the EUVR statistical annex and in ESTAT monitoring report.

- This is an illustration of the Commission having already fully into account views of stakeholders, as part of its commitment for a meaningful and genuine consultation.

# Main annex by SDGs: external aspects and policy coherence

# II. External developments for each SDG

- In the case of the EU, important that the VR also shows at the UN how we support out partners – including through our international partnerships, in our neighbourhood, and through our humanitarian assistance.

- This part of the EUVR fully integrates the Joint Synthesis Report on the European Consensus on Development ('JSR', see para 120 of the Consensus), which should assess every four years how the EU and its MS support partner countries to implement the SDGs, as a contribution to EU reporting to the HLPF.

- Important that this part of the EUVR projects globally the Team Europe approach, to show at the UN what the EU and the MS do together to support partner countries.

- Special focus given to Global Gateway (GG), the EU strategy for sustainable connectivity, which contributes to most SDGs through its main investment priorities.

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# Global Gateway and the SDGs

# External: overall outline

1. Global trend in SDG implementation.

2. Main policy orientations and initiatives.

3. Trends and level of EU and Member States financial engagement and results.

4. Illustrative country case interventions (with focus on Global Gateway flagships and Team Europe initiatives) and selected Member States examples of external action.

# 1. Global trends

- This EUVR cannot be made in isolation of the global progress towards the SDGs – including recalling setbacks from the pandemic and the impacts of the war in Ukraine, reinforcing its geopolitical perspective.

- A section on global trends shows the global challenges that the EU aims to achieve in its partnerships with other countries.

- Still, the EUVR needs to be concise, so this section on global trends (still tbc) needs to remain very short and focus on very selected messages. This implies an active decision to set aside many potential background elements.

# 2. Main policy orientations and initiatives on international partnerships, neighbourhood and humanitarian action

- This section aims to provide the key orientations of our main policy initiatives when it comes to international partnerships, neighbourhood and humanitarian action.

- Major global and regional flagships (e.g. Global Gateway commitments at the Summit with African Union) often illustrate the main policy orientations pursued by the EU, so this section shows some of them as concrete illustration of main areas of work.

- Focuses on joint actions and Team Europe approach.

# 3. Trends of EU and MS financial engagement and results

- This section likely to be developed in the Statistical Annex (see later).

- The purpose would be to provide an estimation on how the EU and MS contributions to each given SDG, and an understanding of SDG interlinkages as reflected in reporting.

# 4. Illustrative country case interventions (with focus on Global Gateway and Team Europe initiatives)

- This section is by nature illustrative, due to space restrictions. The purpose is to show some examples of actions undertaken at country level.

- Particular focus is given to actions undertaken with MS, notably Team Europe initiatives (and Joint Programming). It includes actions at country level contributing to Global Gateway, showing how these contribute to SDGs.

- This section also contains selected illustrative examples of actions undertaken by MS in partner countries.

- Further to feedback (notably through replies to Have Your Say), possible scope for examples of good practices on multi-stakeholder partnerships in the EU and in cooperation with partner countries, notably by civil society and local authorities, on successful implementation of SDGs.

# III. Internal/external coherence, including policy coherence for development

- The main report and SDG17 should contain horizontal elements on: (1) the broader commitment for policy coherence for sustainable development, and (2) as an important part of that (see Consensus), addressing impacts on partners countries, i.e. our commitment to policy coherence for development.

- As a complement, in the main annex, there is a section on internal/external coherence, with several complementary components (with possible variation for each SDG chapter depending on specifics).

- This section provides space to present first of all the external dimension of relevant EU policies.

- Closely related, it engages on impacts on developing countries, and therefore this is the part of the EUVR which integrates the commitment to report on **policy coherence for development**.

- It also contains, where information is available, information on spillover data, such as the emerging work made by Eurostat on this matter.

- Commitment to reflecting these important issues in the EUVR, while need to acknowledge that not always possible to have meaningful information under each SDG, and only selected indicators.

# IV. Looking ahead

- Internally: in each chapter explore scope for EU initiatives contributing to each SDG at stake (e.g. on SDG12, new legislative measures on food waste and waste of textiles).

- Externally: focus on main Global Gateway flagships as important vehicle to contribute to each SDG at stake (e.g. for SDG3 health, the Team Europe initiative "MAV+" on Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, medicines & health technology products in Africa).

# Quantitative analytical annex

For each SDG:

- Eurostat selected information on indicators
- Assessment of interlinkages (JRC)
- External: estimating collective EU and MS ODA

# Statistical annex

- The main part of the Statistical annex contains a selection on trends by indicators prepared by Eurostat (ongoing effort to streamline).

- The purpose is to show progress since adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

- Intention to make it simple and attractive to citizens and policy makers.

- Given the unavoidable time gap between the Eurostat data and the EUVR, the main report and the main annex will stress the deteriorating impacts of the crisis.

- Messaging on mixed progress and sometimes setbacks will contribute to an honest review and a call for additional action.

- Exploring options about possibly updating data in final stages just before adoption.

# Statistical annex: interlinkages

- The main part of the Statistical annex, prepared by Eurostat, should be complemented by some analytical assessment on SDG interlinkages, prepared by JRC.

- Work in progress on possible workstrands (illustrative graphic, final appraoch still tbd).

**Figure 14.7:** Interlinkages of SDG 14 with other goals



Source: Based on literature review by JRC. Interlinkages - targets | Know SDGs (europa.eu)
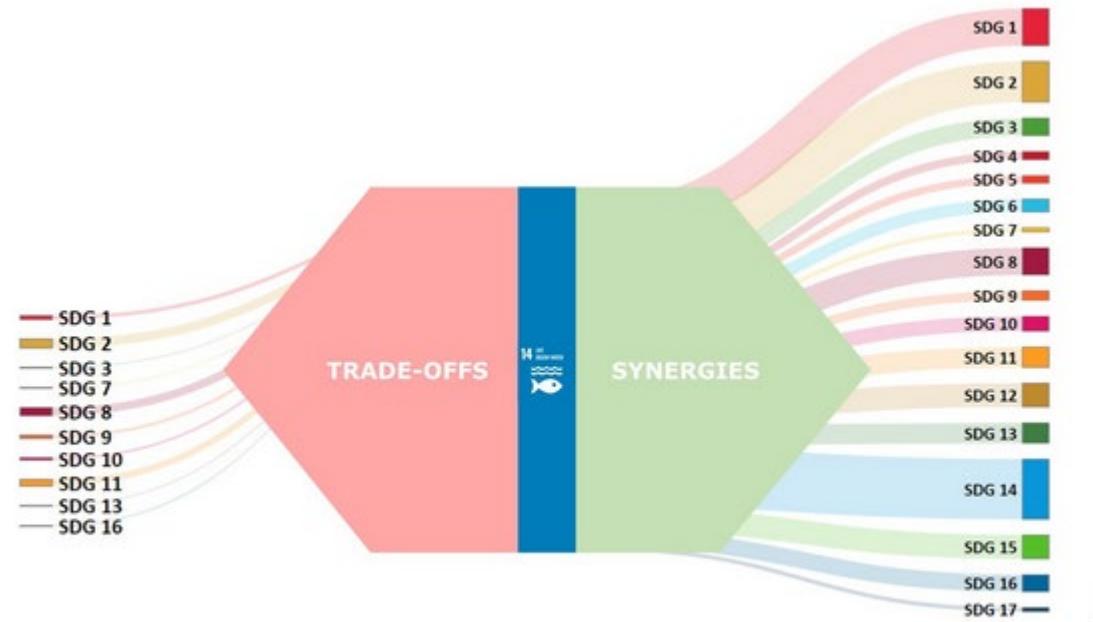
# Quantitative analytical annex External:

- For each SDG: estimating collective EU and MS ODA

# External data: positive developments of ODA reporting of EU funds per SDG (and interlinkages)

- The Annual Report on external action instruments adopted on 8 November 2022 (COM(2022)578, to be published soon) contains innovative information of EU reporting by SDGs.

- By identifiying in each action one main SDG and other significant SDGs (up to 9), it is possible:

  - on the one hand to manage the issue of double counting (as there can be only one 'main' SDG per transaction, there is no double counting of 'main' SDGs, and their total matches the total of transactions.)

  - and on the other hand shows all the wealth of information on relevant SDG interlinkages, relevant to progress towards sustainable development in a balanced manner.

- For now, this combined information (main/significant SDG) are only available for reporting made by the EU as such.

# External data: positive developments of ODA reporting of EU funds per SDG (and interlinkages)
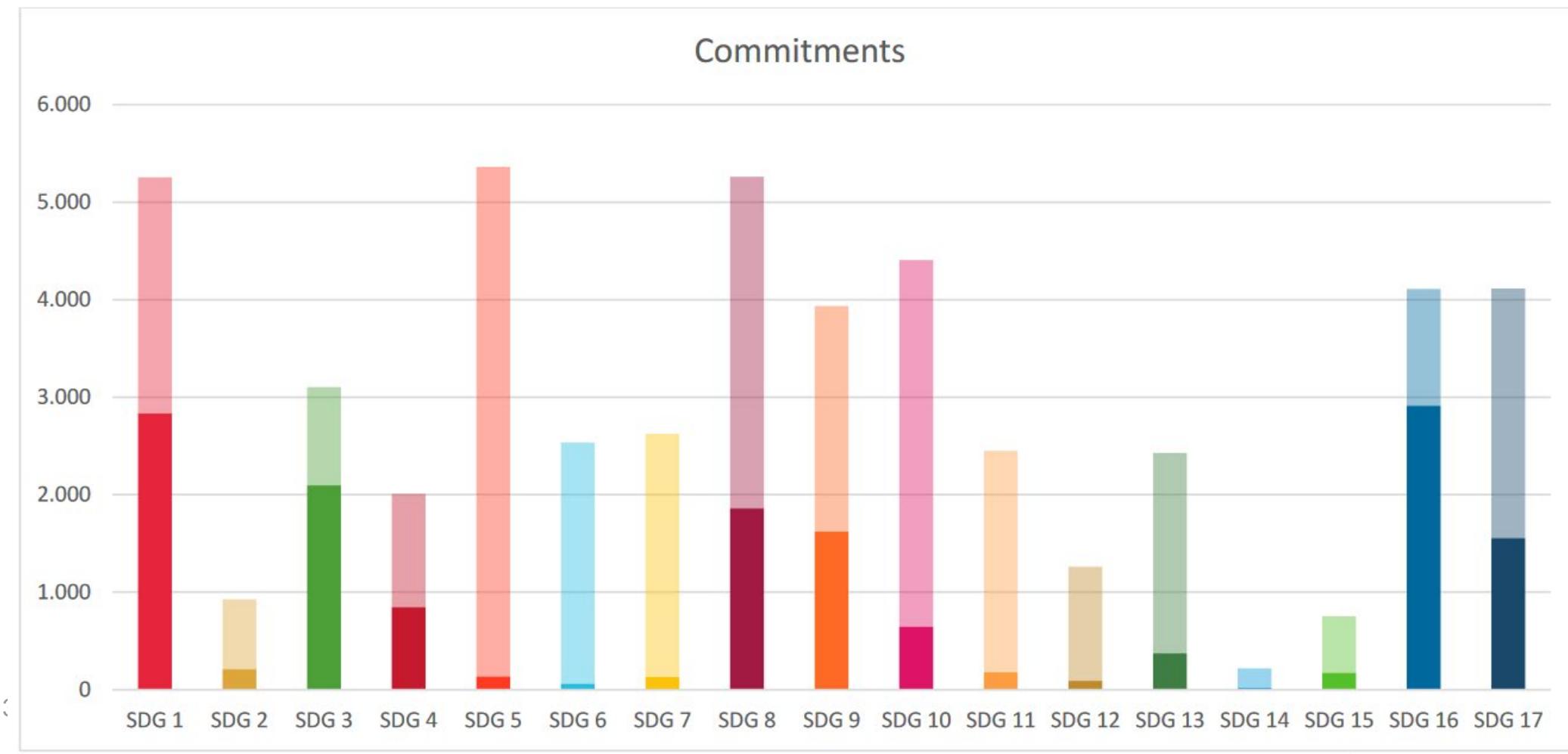
# External data: showing SDG interlinkages

- The recent Annual Report also contains graphs showing how projects where a given SDG was reported as main SDG contribute to other interlinked SDGs (see below the case of SDG1 poverty).

- And also the other way round, it shows how a range of projects, even if targeting primarily other SDGs, still contribute significantly to a given SDG (see below the case of SDG6 water).
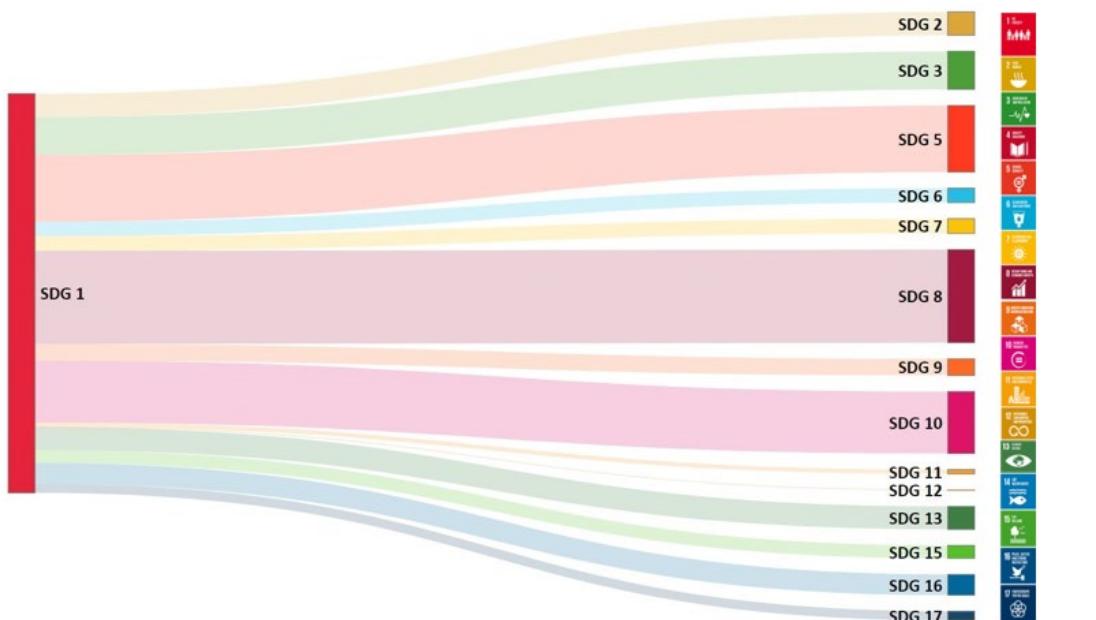


The 162 EU interventions where SDG 1 (No Poverty) was reported as the main SDG also indicated their contribution to other significant SDGs as shown.
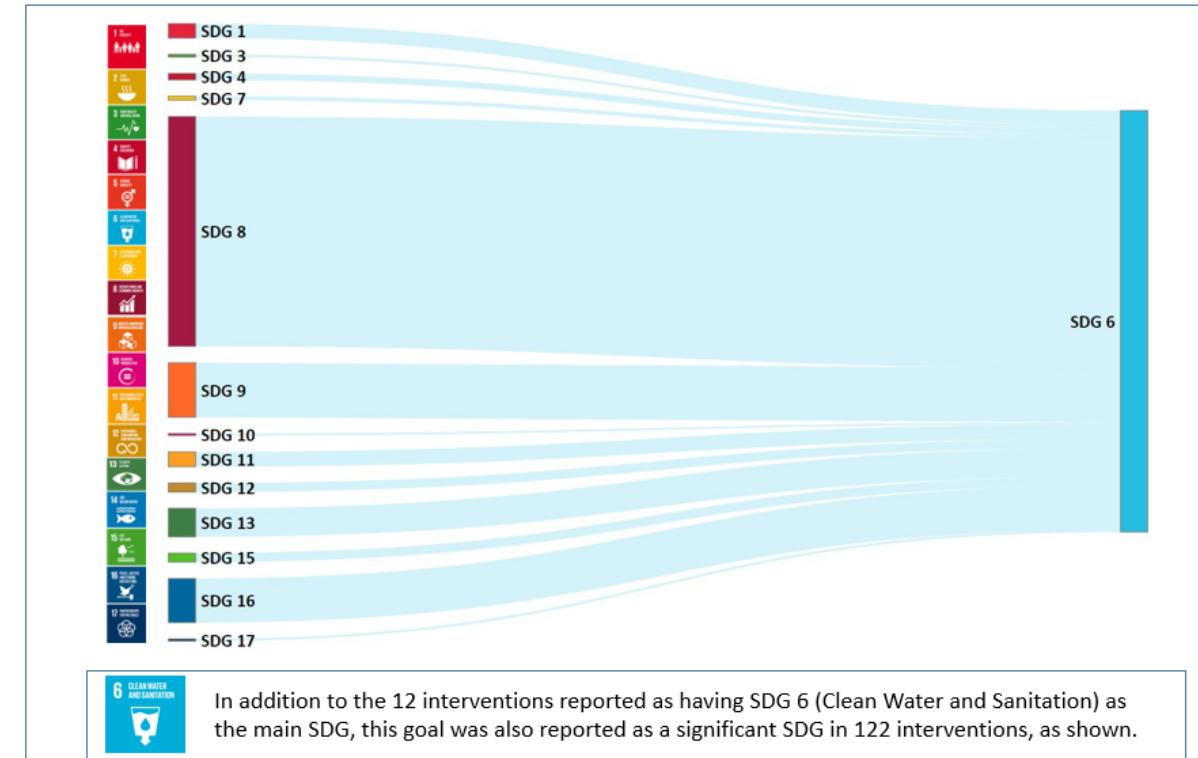
In addition to the 12 interventions reported as having SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) as the main SDG, this goal was also reported as a significant SDG in 122 interventions, as shown.

# External data challenge: there is no comprehensive or consistent ODA reporting per SDG by EU and all MS

- No possibility for now to aggregate reported data per SDG and present this as Team Europe, given gaps and disparities on methodologies used across by EU and Member States for SDG reporting.

- Some MS do not report to OECD by SDGs (only by OECD DAC codes).

- Also significant methodological variations for now, e.g. on single vs multiple SDG reported (how to report on SDG interlinkages), on proportion of projects where SDGs are not marked, etc.

- See example extraction of data from OECD database, indicating ([2021 DCR donor profiles | Compare your country](#))

# Gaps and inconsistencies on ODA reporting per SDG

- EU Member States do not report consistently in SDGs, and some do not include SDGs in their ODA reporting.
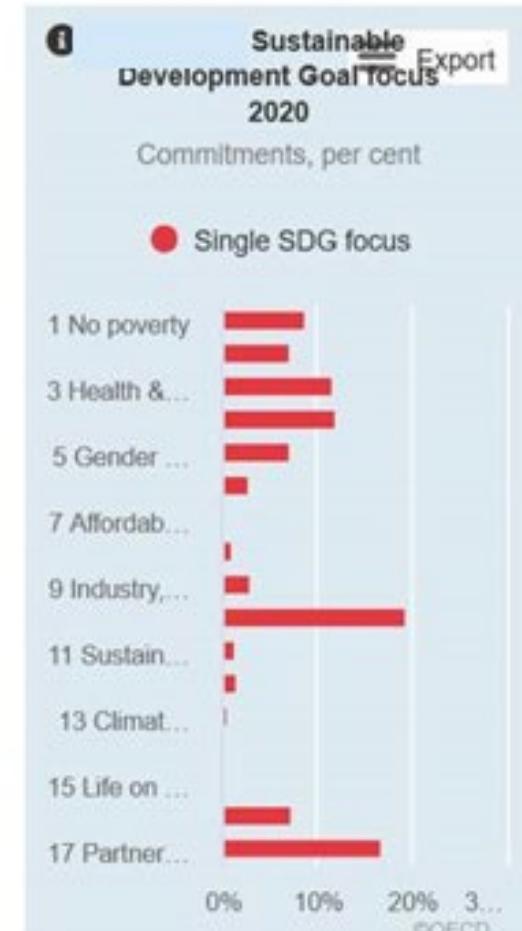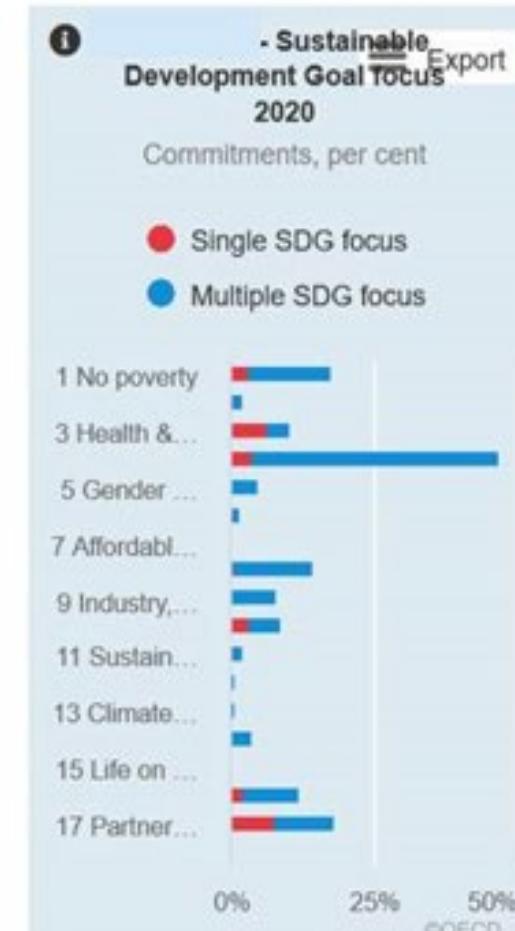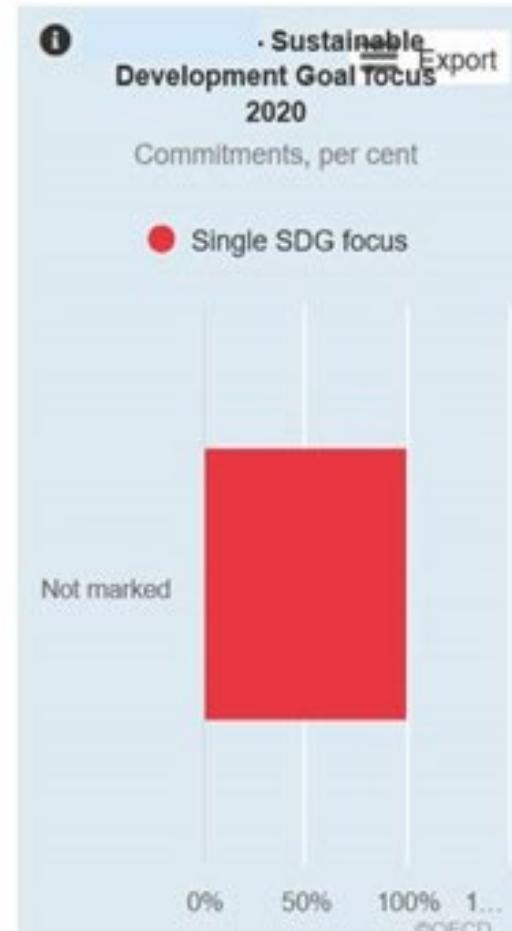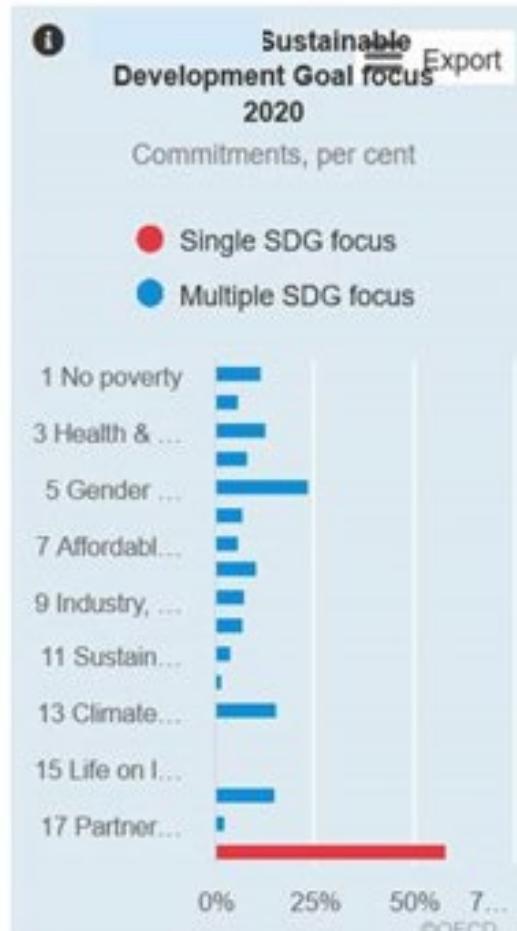
# Ongoing analytical work

- In this situation, the Commission is exploring how to develop estimation methodologies on the collective contribution of EU and MS to each SDG.

- This includes carrying out a thorough statistical assessment of multiple reporting sources.

- It includes aiming at assessing and presenting relevant SDG interlinkages in the actions reported by EU and Member States – by analogy to Commission's own reporting method as shown in latest Annual Report,

- Work in progress, still tbc.

Thank you!