



Alignment between UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the STAR Community Framework: Part 1

This is the first in a multi-part series exploring the potential relationship between the STAR Community Rating System and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) passed a resolution establishing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the intent of creating a more sustainable world by 2030. As part of the resolution, the UN identified a formal series of 230 targets and indicators for all nation-states in order to demonstrate progress.

The indicators and targets of the SDGs are set at the nation-state level, but recently, several efforts have been made to localize them for cities and counties. These efforts include the Sustainable Development Solutions Network's U.S. Cities SDG Index in August 2017, the World Council on City Data's City Data report in July 2017, and the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities' Urban Sustainability Framework in February 2018.

The SDSN report focused on metrics from the 100 most populated U.S. urban areas and established an index to rank these metro areas within each SDG area. The WCCD report utilizes the data sets submitted by 45 cities in countries worldwide to map the ISO 37120 indicators with the SDG indicators. Finally, the GPSC provides a process and framework for cities to use, but not the metric values themselves. Rather, it identifies 185 indicators submitted by a variety of sources, including GPSC, ISO 37120, the City Resilience Framework, City Prosperity Index, Global Environment Facility, and World Bank.

Since the SDG targets and indicators were developed for nation-states, many are not directly applicable at the local scale, especially in the U.S. Organizations that have attempted to localize the SDGs to the U.S. context have run into challenges common to open data initiatives in the U.S., including the limitations of using only nationally available datasets and adapting international standards that include critical issues in developing nations that have generally been addressed in the U.S. (for example, access to water, sanitation, education for girls, etc).

To address these limitations, organizations that are looking to apply the SDGs to U.S. cities and counties could consider using the 500+ evaluation measures contained in the STAR Community Rating System (STAR) to track progress towards the SDG goal areas. The 17 SDGs offer an existing high-level framework that aligns closely with the 7 goals and 45 objectives in the STAR framework. Using this high-level framework may enable better collaboration between U.S. communities and global cities seeking alignment with the SDGs.

STAR is the leading framework and certification program for measuring sustainability in the United States. Over the past 10 years, STAR Communities has certified over 70 cities and counties, and used this data to refine and hone the rating system's evaluation measures for the U.S. context. The STAR evaluation measures

are calibrated to include both national datasets and local datasets, to provide statistically relevant indicators and nationally applicable standards and best practices. Each evaluation measure also has a performance threshold to be used as a benchmark.

To support organizations and communities that are interested in using STAR evaluation measures to track progress towards the SDGs, STAR Communities has reviewed all 116 quantitative outcome measures (plus 17 Innovation & Process) in the rating system and mapped them to the 17 SDG goal areas.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Area	STAR Outcome Measure (see Rating System for Goal Area & Objective references)
Goal 1: No Poverty End Poverty in all its forms everywhere	EE6O1: Poverty Reduction
	EE6O2: Equitable Poverty Reduction
	EE3O1: Reduce Risk and Exposure (Environmental Justice)
Goal 2: Zero Hunger End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	HS2O2: Health Behaviors (Food Environment Index)
	HS4O1: Food Security and Access
	HS4O2: Access to Healthful Food
	HS4O3: School Nutrition
	NS6O1: Protection (Working Lands)
	NS6O2: Production (Working Lands)
Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	BE7O3: Transportation Safety
	EAC6O1: Successful Aging
	EE5O2: Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
	HS1O1: Active Adults
	HS1O2: Active Kids
	HS2O1: Health Outcomes
	HS2O2: Health Behaviors
	HS2O3: Indoor Air Quality in Schools
	HS2O4: Indoor Air Quality Complaints to Enforcement Agency
	HS5O1: Clinical Care
	HS5O2: Quality of Local Hospital Systems
	HS5O3: High Performing Health Department
Goal 4: Quality Education Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	EAC3O1: Reading Proficiency
	EAC3O2: Reading Proficiency Equity
	EAC3O3: Graduation Rate
	EAC3O4: Graduation Rate Equity
	EJ6O1: Trained Workforce
	EJ6O2: Workforce Mobility
Goal 5: Gender Equality Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	EAC5O1: Diverse Local Government Hiring
	EE1O3: Diverse Community Representation
	EE6O2: Equitable Poverty Reduction
	EJ6O3: Equitable Workforce Mobility

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Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	BE2O1: Drinking Water Quality
	BE2O2: Water Footprint
	BE2O3: Safe Wastewater Management
	BE2O4: Safe Stormwater Management
	CE5O1: Domestic Water Use Per Capita
	CE6O3: Local Government Water Conservation
	NS5O1: Watershed Health Index
	NS5O2: Watershed Vulnerability Index
	NS5O3: Watershed Usability
Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	CE3O2: Electrical Energy Supply
	CE4O1: Energy Use
	CE6O2: Local Government Energy Efficiency
	EJ2O3: Green Power
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	EJ1O2: Employment
	EJ3O2: Local Financial Institution Deposits
	EJ4O1: Median Household Income
	EJ5O2: Targeted Industry Employment
	EJ6O1: Trained Workforce
Goal 9: Industry Innovation and Infrastructure Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	BE1O1: Noise
	BE1O2: Light in the Community
	BE1O3: Light in the Night Sky
	EJ1O1: Businesses
	EJ3O3: Small Businesses
	EJ5O1: Targeted Industry Businesses
	NS6O1: Protection (Working Land)
	NS6O2: Production (Working Land)
NS6O3: Certified Management Practices (Working Land)	
Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities Reduce inequality within and among countries	BE7O2: Transportation Affordability
	BE4O1: Housing and Transportation Costs
	EAC3O2: Reading Proficiency Equity
	EAC3O4: Graduation Rate Equity
	EE3O1: Reduce Risk and Exposure (Environmental Justice)
	EE4O1: Equitable Access and Proximity
	EJ1O3: Equitable Employment
	EJ4O2: Living Wages
	EJ4O3: Income Inequality
	EJ6O3: Equitable Workforce Mobility
Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities Make cities and human settlements	BE3O1: Density, Destinations, and Transit
	BE3O2: Walkability
	BE3O3: Design
	BE4O1: Housing and Transportation Costs

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inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	BE4O2: Affordable Housing Production
	BE4O3: Affordable Rental Housing Preservation
	BE5O1: Infill Development
	BE5O2: Existing Infrastructure
	BE6O1: Acreage (Parkland)
	BE6O2: Proximity (Parkland)
	BE6O3: Connectivity (Parkland)
	BE6O4: Use and Satisfaction (Parkland)
	BE7O1: Mode Split
	CE7O2: Recycling Rate
	EJ2O2: Green and Energy Certified Building Stock
	EAC2O3: Cohesion and Connectedness
	EAC4O1: Local Historic District(s)
	EAC4O2: Preserved Structures and Sites
	EAC4O3: Economic Impact
	HS6O1: Location Specific Hazards
	HS6O2: Full Community Hazards
	NS4O1: Concentration and Emissions of Criteria Air Pollutants
	NS4O2: Risk from Hazardous Air Pollutants
	Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
BE2O4: Safe Stormwater Management	
CE7O1: Total Solid Waste	
CE7O2: Recycling Rate	
Goal 13: Climate Action Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	BE7O4: Vehicle Miles Traveled
	CE1O1: Climate Resilience
	CE2O1: Communitywide Greenhouse Gas Emissions
	CE4O2: Heat Island Mitigation Distribution
	CE6O1: Local Government Greenhouse Gas Emissions
	EJ2O1: Greenhouse Gas Intensity
Goal 14: Life Below Water Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	NS2O1: Threatened Species
	NS2O2: Habitat Conservation and Connectivity
	NS2O3: Invasive Species Management
	NS3O1: Natural Resource Areas
	NS3O2: Wetlands, Streams, and Shoreline Buffers
	NS3O3: Connectivity
	NS3O4: Restoration
	NS5O3: Watershed Usability
Goal 15: Life on Land	EE3O1: Reduce Risk and Exposure (Enviro Justice)
	NS1O1: Green Stormwater Infrastructure

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Area	STAR Outcome Measure (see Rating System for Goal Area & Objective references)
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	NS1O2: Green Infrastructure Distribution
	NS2O1: Threatened Species
	NS2O2: Habitat Conservation and Connectivity
	NS2O3: Invasive Species Management
	NS3O1: Natural Resource Areas
	NS3O3: Connectivity
	NS3O4: Restoration
Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	HS3O1: Superior Fire Protection
	HS3O2: Fire and Police Accreditation
	HS3O3: Community Emergency Management
	HS6O1: Location-Specific Hazards
	HS6O2: Full Community Hazards
	HS7O1: Crime Rates
	HS7O2: School Violence
Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	EE1O1: Voter Turnout Rate
	EAC1O1: Creative Industries
	EAC1O2: Attendance and Participation
	EAC2O1: Accessibility of Community Venues and Facilities
	EAC2O2: Volunteerism
	EAC2O3: Cohesion and Connectedness
	EAC5O2: Social and Cultural Events
	EAC6O2: Senior Satisfaction Survey
	EE1O1: Voter Turnout Rate
	EE1O2: Sense of Empowerment
	EE4O1: Equitable Services and Access
	EJ3O1: Community Self-Reliance
	EJ3O2: Local Financial Institution Deposits
	IP4(1): Quality of Municipal Bond Rating
	IP4(2): Transparency and Open Data

In the next series on “SDGs and STAR”, we will compare STAR’s approach to other efforts to align with local context.

To learn more about STAR Communities and to download the current rating system, go to www.starcommunities.org.