

SDG16 in the Pacific

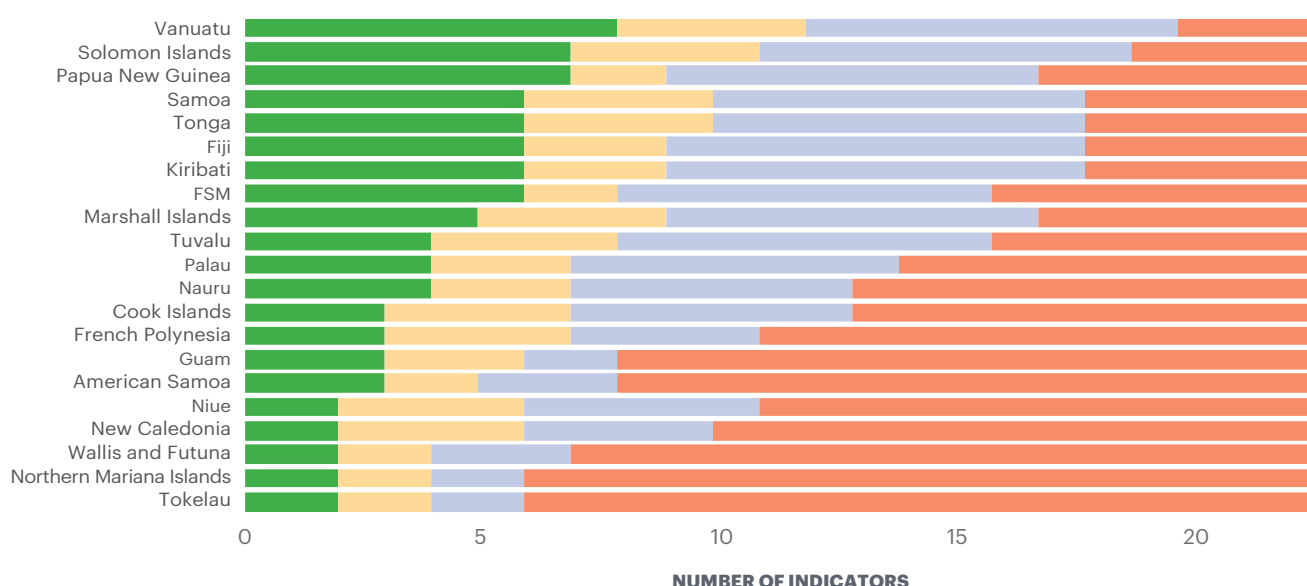
Strengthening and legitimising institutions to achieve sustainable development.

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DATA AVAILABILITY OF SDG16 INDICATORS ACROSS THE PACIFIC

ASSESSMENT OF DATA AVAILABILITY OF SDG16 INDICATORS ACROSS THE PACIFIC

- Available / fully covers what the indicator measures
- Available / only partially covers the indicator measure (i.e. not disaggregated, incomplete age breakdown, etc.)
- Proxy measure available or should be able to be calculated
- Not available / unknown



Source: Author's assessment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pacific region is not alone in facing challenges in measuring and implementing SDG16. No country in the world is currently able to measure all indicators, let alone achieve them.

Strengthening and increasing the legitimacy of institutions and the rule of law is fundamental for development outcomes in the Pacific region. This is especially true with significant projected changes relating to the environment, demographics socio-economics and measuring peace and stability.

Strong institutions are essential to respond to these changes. Institution building can be slow, challenging, with limited resources. We acknowledge the need to think about and measure women's participation and experience in the target areas. Measuring progress on development outcomes presents challenges in the region due to vast geographic spreads, high cultural and linguistic diversity, small and sometimes

remote populations and relatively low internal capacity. This necessitates innovative approaches for high impact and low cost ways of measuring progress. The Pacific should emphasise finding enough information to shape policy to quickly and cheaply guide prioritisation and decision making.

Measuring progress is essential in understanding progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

The 'SDG16 in the Pacific Report' by the Institute for Economics and Peace with support from the Australian Government,¹ discusses challenges and areas for innovation for the region to achieve this development goal.

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CHALLENGES IN THE PACIFIC

There are four main challenges to strengthening and increasing the legitimacy of institutions and sustaining peace in the Pacific: capacity constraints; internal tensions; future challenges; and problems with measurement.

Constraints: distance; limited resources; capacity of institutions and human capital.

Internal tensions: intercommunal violence; interpersonal violence and political tension.

Future risks: environmental; socio-economic and demographic and broader geostrategic competition in the region.

Measurement: no Pacific Island country or territory has data covering all the SDG16 indicators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Pacific governments:

- Prioritise measures of institutional capacity: strong and legitimate institutions, which are at the heart of SDG16, can enable other goals.
- Expand sources of data, including from civil society and businesses: national statistics offices alone cannot bear the data collection and reporting burden. Governments could consider embracing third party data initiatives and using alternate data collections.
- Increase involvement of civil society: civil society organisations and businesses have an important role in monitoring as well as delivering on the SDGs.
- Engage the relevant governmental ministries in the process of collecting and analysis: data is only useful if it is used, especially if used during annual budget negotiations.
- Increase access to data for all citizens: part of the process of increasing legitimacy of institutions includes increasing accountability and transparency.

For the region:

- Continue to emphasise institutions and shared resources: regional actors, such as the Pacific Community and Pacific Islands Forum, already have many initiatives to expand capacity through shared resources and pooling of innovative approaches

to data collection. This should be further encouraged.

- Further promote information sharing to address current and future security threats: share information on threats and response in order to strengthen domestic stability, maintain the rule of law and enable the protection of sovereignty.
- Continue to advocate for more regional measures: focusing on SDG16 targets over explicit indicators will encourage measurements that are of more relevance and more readily available.
- Continue conversations around regional localising and regionally relevant measures: a regional measure, possibly in the form of an index, is a useful exercise to contextualise SDG16 in the Pacific. It allows for prioritising indicators into a measure that can be tracked over time.

For donors and international organisations:

- Continue longstanding support to national efforts to build institutional strength: a focus on institutional strength and legitimacy can highlight where support is required in implementing other SDGs. Institutional development needs a long-term approach.
- Focus on innovative approaches to collect relevant data: at this relatively early stage of the 2030 Global Agenda, donors are encouraged to embrace riskier initiatives. Many lessons can be learned from projects that fail quickly. This means promoting pilot projects, feasibility studies and expanding proxy sources. Innovation does not require technology or expensive projects.
- Encourage data generated from programs to be useful for measuring SDG16: monitoring and evaluation for funded projects could include comparable baselines or proxy data using new methodologies that could be useful for measuring progress across the SDGs.
- Continue sharing of best practices as well as unsuccessful approaches from around the world: share lessons from the Pacific region, as well as disseminating lessons from other regions to the Pacific.
- Encourage implementation over copious data collection: where possible, encourage data to be integrated as part of the normal activity of government. This may include promotion interim goals for 2020 and reprioritise based on measures of progress or stagnation against goals.

The full report can be accessed at
<http://visionofhumanity.org/reports/>

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