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PRIMA SDGs Evaluation Tool

Translating research and innovation outputs into measurable contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

New online tool: wefe-tool.online/NewSDG_Tool

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3 November 2026

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Why we need a user-friendly SDG tool for project assessment



Time is running

The 2030 deadline is approaching and we need to show clear progress and accountability.



See the contribution of PRIMA projects

At the programme level, we need to understand how funded projects contribute to the SDGs and identify remaining gaps.



Existing tools are complex

Many SDG assessment tools exist, but they are often technical, time-consuming and not easy to use for project teams.



A user-friendly SDG tool enables **comparable, transparent** and **credible assessment** of **PRIMA's impact** and helps guide future priorities.

Examples of existing SDG tools

Tool (organisation)	Main purpose	Key limitations for R&I project assessment
SDG Index & Dashboards (SDSN)	Monitors and compares SDG progress at country level.	Country-level indicators; no attribution to individual projects.
SDG Mapper (European Commission – JRC)	Identifies relevant SDGs and targets in documents.	Shows alignment, but does not quantify project contributions or impacts.
SDG Synergies (Stockholm Environment Institute)	Analyses synergies and trade-offs between SDG targets.	Requires expert/participatory scoring; not a KPI-based project assessment tool.
SDG Compass (GRI, UNGC, WBCSD)	Guides businesses to align strategies and report on the SDGs.	Provides guidance and indicators rather than a standardised calculation of project contributions.
UNDP SDG Impact Standards (UNDP)	Integrates the SDGs into enterprise strategy and management.	Focuses on management practices and impact integration, not on quantitative R&I project portfolios.

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The PRIMA SDG Tool: Innovation & Added Value

From project KPIs to quantified SDG contributions and a broader Nexus impact

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1 Project KPIs

Collect project performance indicators (quantitative & qualitative).



2 Five Key Impact Pathways

Organise KPIs into five dimensions capturing the main impact pathways.

- **Economic Impact**
- **Environmental Impact**
- **Governance & Policy Impact**
- **Social Impact**
- **Scientific & Technological Impact**

3 Quantified SDG contributions

Transform KPI results into comparable scores for SDG targets and SDGs.



- Normalisation of KPI results
- Target-specific weighting
- Project relevance matrix
- Quantified scores (0–100)

4 IPBES Nexus response mapping

Link SDG results to the IPBES (2024) Nexus Assessment (70 response options) and extend it with **Energy**.

IPBES
Nexus Assessment (2024)

70 response options

- Address interconnected challenges
- Contribute to 17 SDGs
- Align with the 23 Kunming–Montreal GBF targets
- Support the goals of the Paris Agreement

5 Nexus impact results

Assess contributions across six interconnected domains (WEFE + Health) for a holistic view of project impact.



Added value & innovation

- Turns project KPIs into quantified SDG and target scores
- Integrates the IPBES Nexus approach (70 response options) + Energy
- Reveals synergies and interlinkages across water, food, biodiversity, health, climate and energy
- Identifies strengths, gaps and future investment priorities

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The innovation of the PRIMA SDG Tool

From KPI evidence to quantified, comparable SDG contributions

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1. Start from KPIs

Built on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) collected from PRIMA projects.

- Economic
- Environmental
- Governance & Policy
- Social
- Scientific & Technological

Uses project KPI questionnaire data as the starting evidence base.

2. Transform all answers into numbers

Quantitative answers

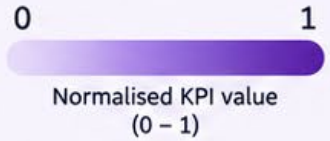
Quantitative values are used directly (e.g. amounts, percentages, counts).

Qualitative / semi-quantitative answers

Qualitative answers are translated into numerical values through semantic refactoring / numerical imputation (e.g. "high" → 1.0, "medium" → 0.5, "low" → 0.0).

Turns mixed data into quantified values

3. Normalise and compare

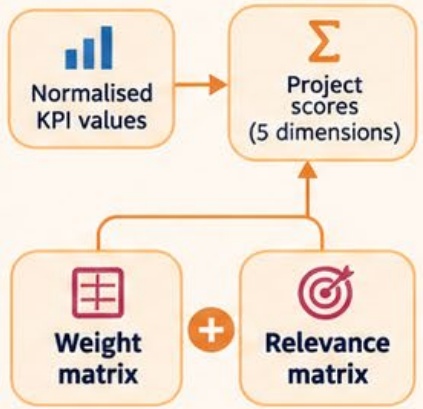


Min–Max normalisation puts all KPI values on a common scale, enabling fair comparison across projects.

Project	Normalised KPI (0 – 1)
P1	0.82
P2	0.56
P3	0.91
...	...

Comparable across projects

4. Calculate smart scores



Links project performance to specific SDG targets through weighted and relevant scoring.

Target-specific and transparent

5. Generate actionable results

- **SDG scores** (overall contribution per SDG)
- **Dashboard** (visual insights at project and programme level)
- **Comparison** (e.g. across projects, topics or calls)
- **Nexus interlinkages** (WEFE Nexus connections and co-effects)

Produces SDG target scores, SDG scores, programme-level insights, and WEFE Nexus interconnections.

Decision-support ready

Why it is innovative

- KPI-based
- Transforms qualitative into quantitative evidence
- Simple and user-friendly
- Works at project and programme level
- Integrates SDGs with the WEFE Nexus

The PRIMA SDG Tool converts project data into measurable, transparent and communicable sustainability contributions.

Environmental Science and Policy 174 (2025) 104284



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Environmental Science and Policy

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/envsci





A novel tool for translating Research and Innovation project outputs into measurable contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

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STEP 1

KPI data collection

Collecting and preparing project data to assess SDG contributions

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1 KPI framework

Project data are collected using a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) organised into five complementary components.

Economic
Value creation, competitiveness, resource efficiency

Environmental
Natural resources, pollution, biodiversity, climate action

Governance and policy
Governance, policy uptake, stakeholder engagement

Social
Social inclusion, capacity building, behavioural change

Scientific and technological
Innovation, knowledge generation, technology development

2 Project selection

Only projects meeting the following criteria were included in the analysis:

1 Completed KPI questionnaire
Only projects that completed the KPI questionnaire were included, ensuring the availability of relevant data.

2 Available evaluation documents
Projects with pertinent and accessible evaluation documents enabling a robust analysis of their progress, outcomes and overall effectiveness.

3 Contribution to the WEFE Nexus
Selection focused on projects that contribute to the WEFE Nexus from multiple perspectives, ensuring a diverse representation of projects addressing interlinked sustainability challenges.

3 From responses to numerical data

Project responses from the KPI questionnaire were converted into numerical values for analysis.

Numerical responses
When the answers were already expressed in numerical form, they were used directly in calculations and analyses.

Qualitative or semi-quantitative responses
When the responses were qualitative or semi-quantitative, a numerical imputation process was adopted through semantic refactoring, aimed at translating the textual categories into equivalent numerical values.

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STEP 2

Normalisation

Converting project KPI data to a common scale (0–1)

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1 Original KPI scores

Projects provide answers to KPIs in different formats and ranges (e.g. %, numbers, scores, qualitative).

Project	KPI 1 (%)	KPI 2 (tons)	KPI 3 (score)	...
P1	20	100	3	...
P2	50	250	4	...
P3	80	400	5	...
P4	10	50	2	...
...	...	...	...	...

2 Min–Max rescaling

Normalization was performed using the Min–Max rescaling method, following the approach adopted in the Sustainable Development Report methodology (Sachs et al., 2022).

$$x_{norm} = \frac{x - x_{min}}{x_{max} - x_{min}}$$

x = original KPI value for a project
x_{min} = minimum value across all projects
x_{max} = maximum value across all projects
x_{norm} = normalized value (0–1)

3 Normalized KPI scores

All KPI values are converted to a common scale ranging from 0 to 1, enabling comparison across projects and indicators.

Project	KPI 1 (0–1)	KPI 2 (0–1)	KPI 3 (0–1)	...
P1	0.14	0.14	0.33	...
P2	0.57	0.57	0.67	...
P3	1.00	1.00	1.00	...
P4	0.00	0.00	0.00	...
...	...	...	...	...

Normalization ensures a **fair and consistent comparison** of project performances across different indicators and data formats.

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STEP 3

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Project scores calculation

Calculating one score per project and per assessment component

1 Normalized KPI answers

For each project, the normalized answers are grouped under the five assessment components.

- Economic
- Environmental
- Governance & policy
- Social
- Scientific & technological

Each component contains several normalized KPI values between 0 and 1.

2 Simple average by component

The Project Score for each component is the simple average of all normalized answers belonging to that component.

Project score =

Sum of normalized answers in one component

Number of answers

$$Score(p, c) = \frac{x_1 + x_2 + \cdots + x_n}{n}$$

p = project, c = component

$x_1, \ldots, x_n$ = normalized answers (0–1)

3 Project score matrix

The results are organised in a matrix showing the score of each project for the five dimensions.

Component	P1	P2	P3	P4	...
Economic	0.62	0.48	0.71	0.55	...
Environmental	0.36	0.82	0.57	0.69	...
Governance & Policy	0.75	0.61	0.43	0.80	...
Social	0.52	0.67	0.59	0.46	...
Scientific & Technological	0.68	0.39	0.77	0.63	...

This step produces **comparable project-level scores** across the five assessment dimensions.

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STEP 4

Weight matrix

Defining the importance of each dimension for each SDG target

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1 Key questions for each dimension

Each dimension is assessed using a set of guiding questions to define its relevance for the SDG target.

Economic

- Does the target directly address economic growth, income or poverty reduction?
- Is there mention of access to credit or essential economic resources?
- Does the target have a direct impact on the financial stability of individuals or vulnerable communities?

Environmental

- Does the target include components that mitigate the impact of natural disasters or extreme climate events?
- How does the target contribute to environmental resilience or biodiversity?

Governance and policy

- Does the target require the development or strengthening of policies, regulations or legal frameworks?
- Is there an emphasis on implementation or improving regulatory frameworks to support poverty reduction?

Social

- Does the target aim to improve the quality of life and well-being of people?
- Does it include measures for social equity, access to essential services (education, healthcare)?
- How does the target contribute to reducing social inequalities?

Scientific and technological

- Does the target leverage technology for its achievement?
- How does technological innovation support poverty reduction or enhance access to critical resources?
- Is there an element of technological development or transfer for vulnerable populations?

2 Scoring (1–5)

For each SDG target, each dimension is given a score from 1 to 5 based on its relative importance.

5 Highest significance
Main driver for achieving the target

4 High significance
Strong contribution

3 Medium significance
Relevant contribution

2 Low significance
Limited contribution

1 Lowest significance
Minor or indirect contribution

3 Final weight matrix (example)

The scores are organised in a matrix with SDG targets in columns and the five dimensions in rows.

SDG targets in rows | Dimensions in columns

SDG target	Economic	Environ-mental	Governance & Policy	Social	Scientific & Technological
1.1	5	1	2	4	3
1.2	5	1	2	4	3
1.3	4	1	3	5	2
1.4	4	1	2	5	3
6.3	2	5	4	3	3

Illustrative scores (1–5)

5 = highest significance | 1 = lowest significance

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STEP 5

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Prepare the SDG relevance matrix

Identify the relevant SDG targets for each project using the text analysis tool

1 Input project information

Paste the project description, report content or proposal text into the SDG Relevance Tool.

SDG Relevance Tool

Scan long text to detect relevant SDG numbers and matching target type.

Scan mode
AI-ASSISTED

Text Scanner 0 words

Paste project description, report content, or proposal text here...

The tool analyses the text using AI to identify the SDG goals and targets that are relevant to the project.

2 Automatic detection of relevant SDG targets

The tool scans the text and matches it with the official SDG targets, identifying relevant targets for the project.



Matching with SDG targets

- Semantic analysis
- Keyword recognition
- Context understanding
- Relevant targets detected

3 Generate the relevance matrix

The tool generates a binary matrix (0/1) showing whether each project is relevant to each SDG target.

Project-by-Target Relevance Matrix

SDG		Target description	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Project 4	...
1 NO POVERTY	1.1	Eradicate extreme poverty for all...	1	0	1	1	...
2 ZERO HUNGER	2.4	Ensure sustainable food production...	0	1	0	1	...
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	6.3	Improve water quality by reducing pollution...	0	1	1	0	...
13 CLIMATE ACTION	13.1	Strengthen resilience to climate-related hazards...	0	1	1	1	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Result : A relevance matrix (0/1) linking each SDG target to the five evaluation dimensions, which will be used in the subsequent steps of the assessment.

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STEP 6

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Calculate the final SDG score

A simple way to combine project performance, importance and relevance

1 Start from project scores

Each project already has a score for the five evaluation dimensions.

Economic	0.6
Environmental	0.8
Governance & Policy	0.4
Social	0.7
Scientific & Technological	0.5

Example project scores (0–1)

2 Calculate each SDG target score

For each SDG target, combine the project scores with:

Weight
How important each dimension is for that target.

Relevance
Whether the project is relevant to that target (0 or 1).

More important dimensions count more.

If not relevant, the score is 0.

Target score = project scores × weights × relevance

Example — SDG target 6.3

Economic 1.8 + Environmental 4.0 + Social 2.8 + Scientific 1.5 = Target 6.3 score 10.9

3 Add target scores to get the SDG total

The total score for one SDG is obtained by adding the scores of all its targets.

Target 6.1	7.4
+	
Target 6.2	3.7
+	
Target 6.3	10.9
+	
…	…

SDG 6 total score 26.4

Project performance matters

Target importance is considered

Only relevant targets contribute

This produces a clear total score for each SDG and helps compare project contributions.

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STEP 7

Interconnections across water, food, biodiversity, health, climate and energy

Linking project results with broader global sustainability frameworks

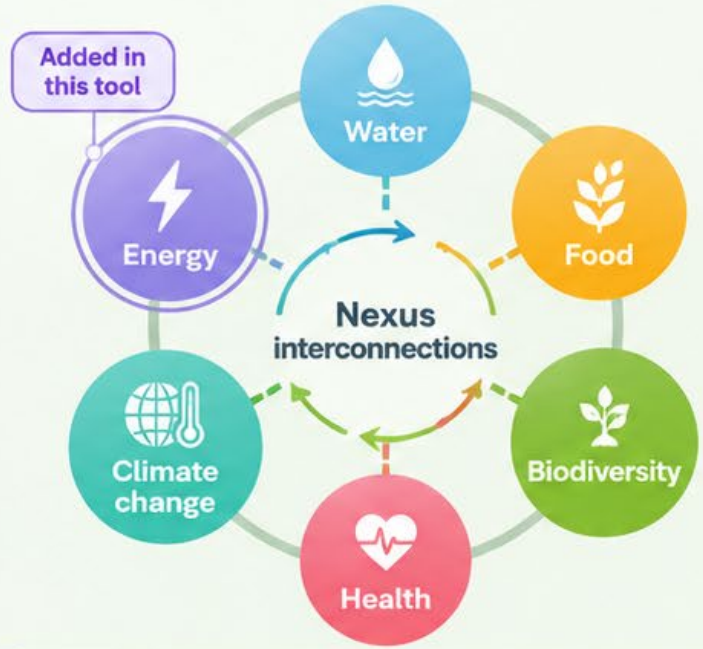
Foundation

IPBES Nexus Assessment (2024)

Integrated approach to global challenges

- **70** response options
- **17** SDGs
- **23** Kunming–Montreal GBF targets
- **Paris Agreement** goals

Six interlinked domains



The tool extends the IPBES framing by including **Energy** as a cross-cutting domain.

Why Energy matters

Energy as a cross-cutting lever

- Supports multiple response strategies
- Strengthens WEFE Nexus analysis
- Improves alignment with international standards

Direct links to SDGs: 7, 9, 12, 13



This step helps interpret project contributions not only through SDGs, but also through the broader interconnections among **water, food, biodiversity, health, climate change and energy**.

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STEP 8

Explore the SDG Tool Dashboard

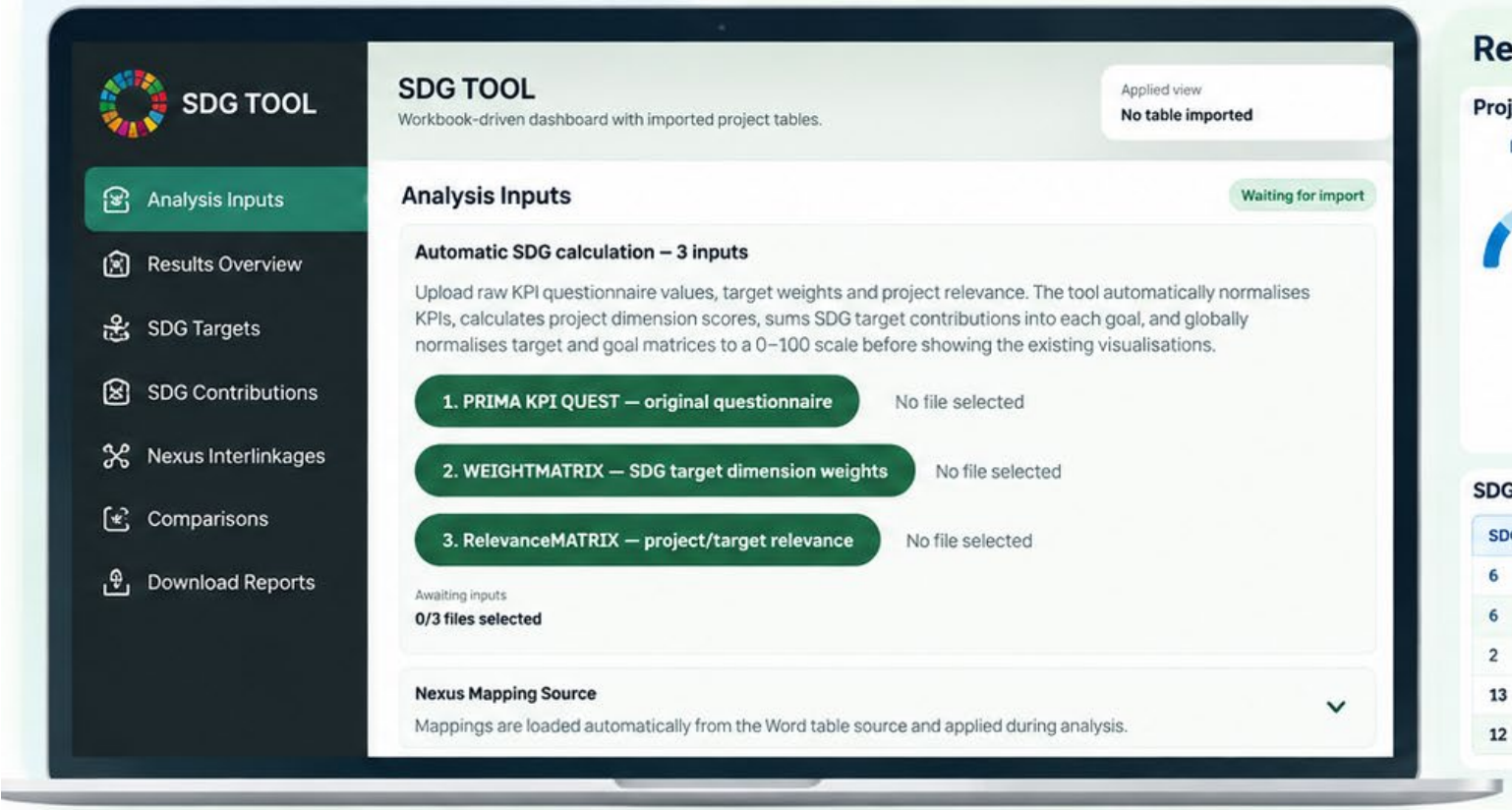
From project data to clear and actionable results

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1 Upload the 3 inputs
Add the KPI questionnaire, weight matrix and relevance matrix.

2 Automatic calculation
The tool normalises KPIs, computes scores for SDG targets and SDGs, and generates visualisations.

3 Explore the results
View project performance, SDG contributions, interlinkages and comparisons.



Results (illustrative view)

Project impact across dimensions



SDG contributions (illustrative)



SDG target results (illustrative)

SDG	Target	Description	Score
6	6.3	Water quality	9.92
6	6.1	Drinking water	8.21
2	2.4	Sustainable food production	7.35
13	13.1	Climate-related hazards	6.48
12	12.2	Resource management	5.74

Nexus interlinkages (illustrative)



Compare projects
See results across projects, regions and thematic areas.

Identify strengths & gaps
Highlight key contributions and underperforming areas.

Guide future priorities
Use evidence to inform programme strategy and investment decisions.

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EXPLORE THE SDG TOOL

Scan the QR code to access and explore the SDG Tool.

wefe-tool.online/NewSDG_Tool



SCAN TO EXPLORE

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Thank you!

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