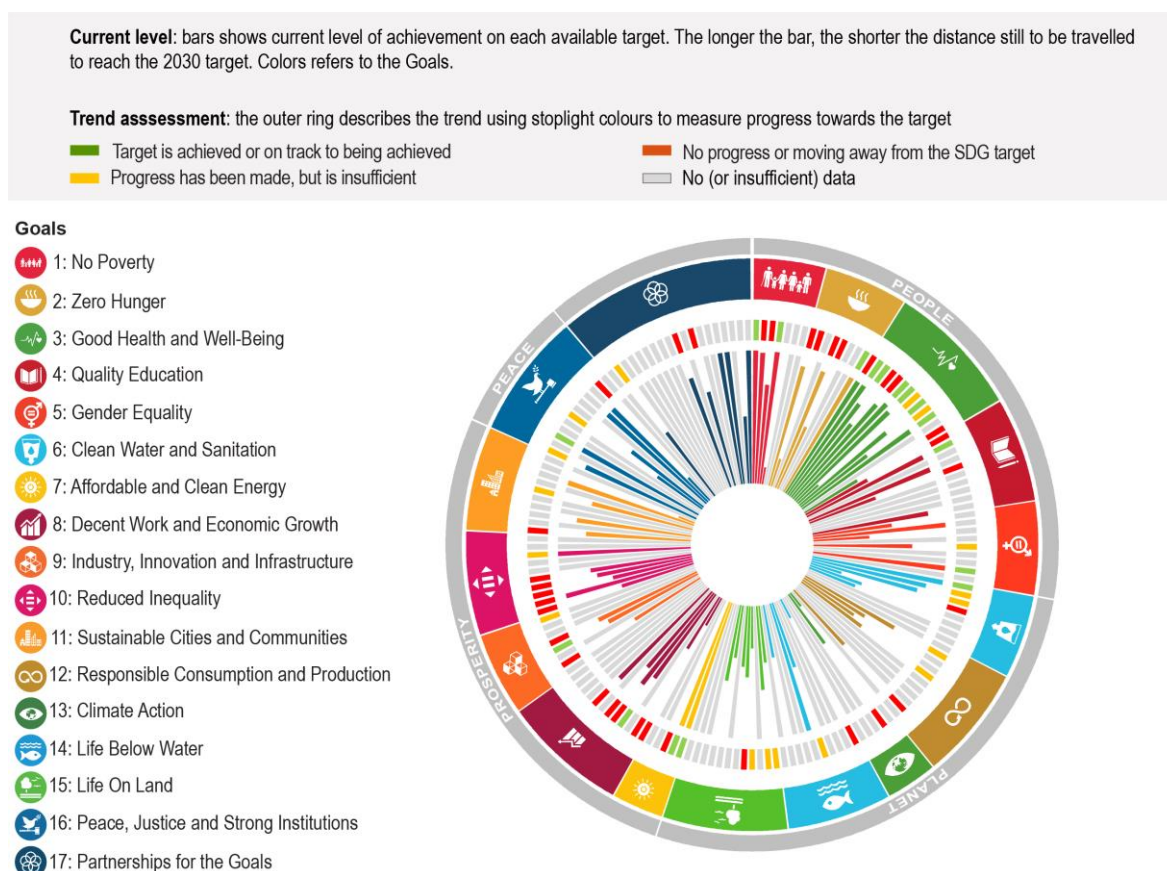


Measuring distance to the SDG targets – Iceland

Iceland has already achieved 21 of the 120 SDG targets for which comparable data are available and, based on most recent trends, is expected to meet 6 additional targets by 2030 (Figure 1). As virtually all OECD countries, Iceland has already met (or is close to meeting) most targets related to securing basic needs and implementing the policy tools and frameworks mentioned in the 2030 Agenda (see details in Table 1). In addition, inequality and poverty are low and Iceland is at the forefront on the use of green sources of energy. Yet, Iceland remains further away from meeting some of the targets relating to resource-use efficiency and on the protection of marine biodiversity. Also, missing data significantly limit the comprehensiveness of this assessment.

This country profile provides a high-level overview of some of Iceland's strengths and challenges in performance across the SDG targets. As such, it differs in nature from Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) or other reporting processes. To ensure international comparability, this assessment builds on the global indicator framework and relies on data sourced from the *SDG Global Database* and OECD databases. VNRs typically use national indicators that reflect national circumstances and are more up-to-date (See section How to read this country profile that provides some methodological details on country profiles).

Figure 1. Iceland's distance from achieving SDG targets included in this report



Source: All data is taken and adapted from (UNDESA, 2021^[1]), *SDG Global Database*, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unsdg> and (OECD, 2021^[2]), *OECD.Stat*, <https://stats.oecd.org/> (accessed on 29 October 2021).

Main strengths

Income inequality is low in Iceland yet, as most OECD countries, it has not been immune from the recent rise (Target 10.1). Iceland also has one of the lowest relative income poverty rates in the OECD, a rate that has been fairly stable over the past decades (Targets 1.2 and 10.2). Low levels of inequality and poverty are partly explained by the breadth of its social protection (Target 1.3) – though only a third of the poor working-age population receives secondary out-of-work benefits. Still, while increasing over time, redistribution appears to be lower than in most OECD countries (Target 10.4). A dynamic labour market also contributes to low inequalities and poverty. Average hourly earnings are among the highest in the OECD (USD PPP 21 per hour in 2018) and both the unemployment rate (5% in 2020) and the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (9% in 2020) are well below the OECD average (Targets 8.5 and 8.6). On gender equality, Iceland is also at the forefront. Within the OECD area, Iceland has one of the most comprehensive legal frameworks to foster gender equality (Target 5.1) and women are well represented in top positions in both the public and economic spheres (Target 5.5 and 16.7), even if parity is not achieved yet. Women hold 40% of seats in national parliament and 47% of those in deliberative bodies of local government. In the economic sphere, they make up more than 40% of managerial position.

Health status are high and behavioural risk factors are below the OECD average. Iceland's population enjoys good access to health care, high immunisation rates (Target 3.b) and broad benefits packages, while the mortality rate due to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease is around the OECD average, thanks to good prevention policies (Target 3.4). Still, behavioural risk factors are major drivers of morbidity and mortality in Iceland as in most OECD countries. While both alcohol and tobacco consumption are below the OECD average (Targets 3.5 and 3.a), obesity is well above the OECD average (Target 2.2) and both obesity and tobacco consumption have been on the rise. Beyond such risk factors, Iceland already meets Targets 3.6 on road traffic accidents, 3.7 on access to sexual healthcare (the adolescent fertility rate, at 4 per 1 000 women aged 15-19 in 2019, is very low) and (before the COVID-19 pandemic hit) it was close to be meeting Target 3.3 on communicable diseases.

Iceland is at the forefront on the use of green sources of energy. Almost all of the country's electricity generation and more than a three quarter of its total final energy consumption come from renewable sources, well above the OECD average (Target 7.2). Still, the plentiful and cheap renewable sources of energy have limited efforts toward greater energy efficiency (Target 7.3) and Iceland has, by far, the highest level of energy intensity – almost four times the OECD average – although this partly reflects Iceland's cold climate, low population density and energy-intensive industries. Beyond the energy sector, Iceland reports good performances on other environment related targets. Mean human exposure to PM_{2.5} in cities (at 6 µg per cubic meter in 2019) is below the WHO-recommended level, and has been decreasing (Target 11.6). Protected areas cover a fifth of its total land, implying that Iceland is already meeting Target 15.1 and the corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target. While the loss of biodiversity is a global concern, the conservation status of major species in Iceland is better than in most OECD countries (Targets 2.5 and 15.5). Still, only a third of freshwater and mountain areas and a fifth of terrestrial areas that are considered as key for biodiversity are protected (Targets 15.1 and 15.4).

Main challenges

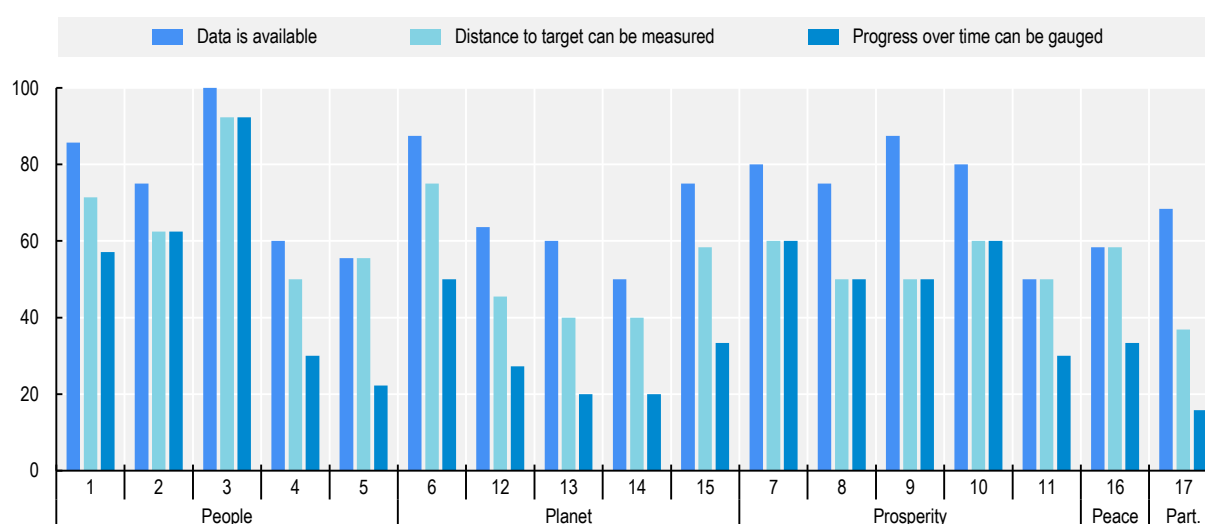
There is scope to further improve environmental performance in Iceland. As noted above, while Iceland has by far the highest share of renewables in energy among OECD countries, it shows a very low level of energy efficiency (Target 7.3). Similarly, water-use efficiency is low – the level of freshwater abstraction per capita is 10 times the OECD average (Target 6.4). Beyond resource efficiency, Iceland is around the OECD average on greenhouse gas emissions intensity (Target 13.2). The protection of marine biodiversity is also a challenge. Protected marine areas covers less than 1% of Iceland's Exclusive

Economic Zone (Target 14.5) and, as observed in many OECD countries, marine ecosystems suffer from eutrophication and marine debris (Target 14.1).

Statistical gaps

Like in many other OECD countries, data availability remains a challenge when measuring distances to targets (see the Overview chapter for details). Available data on the level of the different indicators allow covering 120 of the 169 targets. As shown in Figure 2 below, indicator coverage is uneven across the 17 goals. While six goals (within the People, Planet and Prosperity categories) have most of their targets covered (the indicator coverage exceeds 80%), coverage is lower for Goal 11 on cities and Goal 14 on life below water, with half their targets covered. Data gaps become starker when focusing on performance indicators, i.e. excluding those providing contextual information. In this case, coverage exceeds 80% only for Goal 3 on health. Moreover, for nine goals, mostly within the Planet category (Goals 12, 13, 14 and 15), but also for Goal 4 on quality education, Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 11 on cities, Goal 16 on peace and Goal 17 on partnerships, data are lacking to monitor progress over time for more than two in three targets.

Figure 2. Iceland's share of the 2030 Agenda's targets covered by at least one indicator, by goal



Note: The figure represents Iceland's share of targets covered by at least one indicator for each SDG. Numbers from 1 to 17 stand for the goals: 1 No poverty, 2 Zero hunger, 3 Good health and well-being, 4 Quality education, 5 Gender equality, 6 Clean water and sanitation, 7 Affordable and clean energy, 8 Decent work and economic growth, 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure, 10 Reduced inequalities, 11 Sustainable cities and communities, 12 Responsible consumption and production, 13 Climate action, 14 Life below water, 15 Life on land, 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions and 17 Partnerships for the goals. These goals are grouped under five broad themes (the "5Ps"): People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. Beyond data availability, other statistical gaps such as timeliness or granularity also need to be considered. For instance, given the lag in available data, the effects of the pandemic on current distance and trajectories may not be reflected in the estimates.

Source: All data is taken and adapted from (UNDESA, 2021^[1]), *SDG Global Database*, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unsdg> and (OECD, 2021^[2]), *OECD.Stat*, <https://stats.oecd.org/> (accessed on 29 October 2021).

Detailed information

While some SDG Targets are, on average, close to being met, performance is very uneven across the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Table 1 presents an overview of Iceland's progress towards targets based on available data for each of the 17 Goals. It shows that distances to Targets and trends over time differ significantly even when considering a specific goal.

Table 1. Iceland distances to targets and recent trends

Goal	Target	Short Label	Distance to Target (s.u.)	Trend Assessment	OECD Average distance (s.u.)	OECD Trend Assessment
1	1.1	Extreme poverty	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
1	1.2	Poverty in all its dimensions	0.05	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.41	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
1	1.3	Social protection coverage	0.76	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.80	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
1	1.4	Access to basic services	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
1	1.5	Resilience to shocks	2.61	n.a.	1.00	n.a.
2	2.1	Hunger	0.20	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.28	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
2	2.2	Malnutrition	2.35	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	2.46	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
2	2.4	Sustainable production	0.16	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.34	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
2	2.5	Diversity of seeds and livestock*	1.46	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	3.59	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
2	2.c	Food prices anomalies	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
3	3.1	Maternal mortality	0.00	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
3	3.2	Death of newborns and children	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
3	3.3	Communicable diseases	0.39	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.56	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.4	Premature mortality	0.86	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.26	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.5	Prevention of Substance abuse	0.16	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.63	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.6	Road traffic accidents*	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.78	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.7	Access to sexual health-care	0.09	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.58	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.8	Health coverage	2.38	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	1.79	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.9	Deaths and illness from pollution	0.45	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.55	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
3	3.a	Tobacco consumption	1.11	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	2.65	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target

Goal	Target	Short Label	Distance to Target (s.u.)	Trend Assessment	OECD Average distance (s.u.)	OECD Trend Assessment
3	3.b	Vaccination	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.37	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
3	3.d	Health emergency preparedness	1.61	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.19	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
4	4.1	Primary and secondary education	1.40	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.17	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
4	4.2	Pre-primary education	0.06	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.24	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
4	4.4	Skills for employment	0.03	n.a.	1.23	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
4	4.5	Disparities in education	1.40	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.49	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
4	4.c	Qualification of teachers	0.35	n.a.	0.60	n.a.
5	5.1	Discrimination against women	1.21	n.a.	1.32	n.a.
5	5.2	Violence against women	0.00	n.a.	0.89	n.a.
5	5.3	Harmful practices	1.73	n.a.	1.37	n.a.
5	5.5	Women's participation	0.77	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	1.89	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
5	5.b	Women's empowerment	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.53	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
6	6.1	Access to drinking water	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.15	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
6	6.2	Waste water treatment	0.35	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.35	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
6	6.3	Water quality	0.82	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.68	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
6	6.4	Water-use efficiency	2.27	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.54	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
6	6.5	Water resources management	1.76	n.a.	0.98	n.a.
6	6.6	Water-related ecosystems*	2.18	n.a.	2.18	n.a.
7	7.1	Access to energy	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
7	7.2	Clean energy	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.62	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
7	7.3	Energy efficiency	5.66	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.98	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
8	8.1	GDP growth	2.29	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.89	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
8	8.2	Productivity	1.62	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.77	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
8	8.4	Material footprint	0.66	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.82	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
8	8.5	Employment	0.38	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.97	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
8	8.6	NEET	0.75	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.69	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
8	8.8	Labour rights	0.14	No progress or moving	0.80	Progress has been made,

Goal	Target	Short Label	Distance to Target (s.u.)	Trend Assessment	OECD Average distance (s.u.)	OECD Trend Assessment
				away from the SDG target		but is insufficient to meet the target
9	9.2	Sustainable industry	1.25	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.95	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
9	9.4	Environmental impact	0.71	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.87	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
9	9.5	Research and development	0.53	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.06	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
9	9.c	ICT	0.08	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.36	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
10	10.1	Income distribution	1.30	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.23	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
10	10.2	Social inclusion	0.03	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.54	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
10	10.3	Inequalities of outcome	1.16	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.27	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
10	10.4	Redistribution	0.82	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.12	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
10	10.5	Financial markets	0.69	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.90	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
10	10.a	Tariff-lines	0.00	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.93	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
11	11.1	Housing	0.63	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.80	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
11	11.3	Urbanization	0.39	n.a.	1.19	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
11	11.6	Environmental impact of cities	0.65	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.49	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
11	11.a	Urban policies	0.00	n.a.	0.23	n.a.
11	11.b	Disaster Risk Reduction	2.61	n.a.	0.81	n.a.
12	12.2	Efficient use of natural resources	0.67	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.87	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
12	12.3	Food waste	1.38	n.a.	1.36	n.a.
12	12.4	Chemical and hazardous waste*	1.60	n.a.	1.02	n.a.
12	12.5	Waste generation	1.31	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.66	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
12	12.b	Tourism sustainability	1.33	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.87	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
13	13.1	Resilience to climate events	2.61	n.a.	0.73	n.a.
13	13.2	Greenhouse gas emissions	1.63	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.15	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
14	14.1	Marine pollution**	2.52	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.84	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
14	14.5	Protected marine areas*	1.46	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet	0.38	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet

Goal	Target	Short Label	Distance to Target (s.u.)	Trend Assessment	OECD Average distance (s.u.)	OECD Trend Assessment
				the target		the target
14	14.6	Harmful subsidies to fisheries*	0.00	n.a.	0.36	n.a.
14	14.b	Small-scale fisheries	1.80	n.a.	1.64	n.a.
15	15.1	Ecosystem protection*	1.71	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.74	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
15	15.2	Sustainable use of forest*	1.10	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.60	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
15	15.4	Mountain ecosystems	2.05	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.73	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
15	15.5	Threatened species*	1.39	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.20	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
15	15.6	Benefits from genetic resources	1.62	n.a.	0.78	n.a.
15	15.8	Invasive alien species*	1.81	n.a.	0.30	n.a.
15	15.9	National and local planning*	1.27	n.a.	0.54	n.a.
16	16.1	Violence and related deaths	0.24	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.66	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
16	16.3	Rule of law	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	2.33	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
16	16.6	Accountable institutions	1.76	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	2.26	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
16	16.7	Inclusive decision-making	0.95	n.a.	1.85	n.a.
16	16.9	Legal identity for all	0.00	n.a.	0.00	n.a.
16	16.10	Access to information	0.00	n.a.	0.00	n.a.
16	16.a	National institutions	2.30	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.54	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
17	17.2	Official Development Assistance	1.20	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.94	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
17	17.10	Multilateral trading system	0.38	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.45	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
17	17.12	Market access for least developed countries	0.80	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.72	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
17	17.15	National leadership to implement policies for poverty eradication	0.00	n.a.	2.32	n.a.
17	17.16	Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	0.00	n.a.	0.89	n.a.
17	17.18	Statistical capacity	1.49	n.a.	0.09	n.a.
17	17.19	Statistical capacity-building	0.00	n.a.	0.11	n.a.

Note: * refers to targets with a 2020 deadline. ** refers to targets with a 2025 deadline. The OECD average is measured as the simple average across OECD countries with available data

Source: All data is taken and adapted from (UNDESA, 2021^[1]), *SDG Global Database*, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unsdg> and (OECD, 2021^[2]), *OECD.Stat*, <https://stats.oecd.org/> (accessed on 29 October 2021).

How to read this country profile

The OECD report *The Short and Winding Road to 2030: Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets* evaluates the distance that OECD countries need to travel to meet SDG targets for which data are currently available. It also looks at whether countries have been moving towards or away from these targets, and how likely they are to meet their commitments by 2030, based on an analysis of recent trends and the observed volatility in the different indicators.

As most authors and international organisations, this report adopts a rather simple geometric growth model for assessing the direction and pace of recent changes in the context of the SDGs. Yet, instead of making direct estimates of the value of the indicator by 2030, it models the likelihood of achieving a specific level using Monte Carlo simulations.

While the report provides an overview of where OECD countries, taken as a whole, currently stand, country profiles provide details of the performance and data availability of individual OECD countries.

How to read the OECD SDG Wheel?

Progress on SDGs requires a granular understanding of countries' strengths and weaknesses based on the consideration of the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda. Figure 1 shows both **current achievements** (in the inner circle; the longer the bar, the smaller the distance remaining to be travelled) **as well as whether OECD countries are on track** (or are at least making progress) to meet their commitments by 2030 (in the outer circle).

The length of each bar shows current level of achievement on each target. As detailed in the Methodological Annex, countries' distance to target is measured as the "standardised difference" between a country's current position and the target end-value. For each indicator, the standardised measurement unit (s.u.) is the standard deviation observed among OECD countries in the reference year (i.e. the year closest to 2015). Therefore, the longer the bar, the shorter the distance still to be travelled to reach the target by 2030. The colours of the bars applied to the various targets refer to the goals they pertain to.

The outer ring shows how OECD countries are performing over time and how likely they are to meet the different targets by 2030 based on the observed trends of the various indicators. It uses spotlight colours to classify the progress towards the target:

- green is used to indicate those countries that (based on the change in the different indicators over a recent period) should meet the target in 2030 just by maintaining their current pace of progress (i.e. more than 75% of (randomised) projections meet the target);
- yellow for those countries whose current pace of progress is insufficient to meet the target by 2030 (i.e. less than 75% of randomised projections meet the target, while the correlation coefficient between the indicator and the year is high and statistically significant, implying that a significant trend could be detected); and
- red for those countries whose recent changes have been stagnating or moving them further away from the target (i.e. less than 75% of randomised projections meet the target and the correlation coefficient between the indicator and the year is low or statistically insignificant, implying that no statistical trend could be identified).

How to read the Strength and Challenges sections?

With the aim of helping its member countries in navigating the 2030 Agenda and in setting their own priorities for action, this report relies on a unique methodology for measuring the distance that OECD countries have to travel to achieve SDG targets. The identification of the main strengths and challenges proposed in this report relies on current performances only:

- A target is considered to be a strength when the distance to the target end-value is lower than 0.5 s.u. (i.e. the distance is deemed to be small) or when the country is closer to the target than the OECD average. For instance, while Korea's distance to Target 2.2 on malnutrition is 1.4 s.u. (i.e. classified as medium distance), the average OECD distance is 2.5 s.u. Therefore, Target 2.2 is categorised as being a strength for Korea.
- A target is considered to be a challenge when the distance to target is greater than 1.5 s.u. (i.e. distance is deemed to be long) or when the country is further away from the target than the OECD average. For instance, Estonia's distance to Target 4.2 on pre-primary education is 1.1 s.u. (i.e. medium distance), which is higher than the 0.24 s.u. distance for the OECD average. Target 4.2 is therefore classified as a weakness for Estonia.

While the lack of consistent time series often prevents an exhaustive assessment of trends, they are discussed when available and relevant in nuancing the assessment of current performance.

How to read the Statistical Gaps section?

In total, this report relies on 537 data series supporting 183 of the 247 indicators listed in the global indicator framework (or for close proxies of these indicators). These indicators cover 134 of the 169 SDG targets. Yet, target coverage is uneven across the 17 goals and among OECD member countries.

Figure 2 summarises data availability:

- darker blue bars indicate the share of *targets* for which at least one indicator (including indicators providing context information) is available
- lighter blue bars indicate the share of *targets* for which the available indicator(s) include those having a clear normative direction (i.e. allowing to distinguish between good and bad performance), which are the only ones used to measure distances to target levels.
- medium blue bars indicate the share of *targets* for which progress over time can be gauged (i.e. at least three observations are available over a five-year period).

All methods and concepts are further detailed in the Methodological Annex.