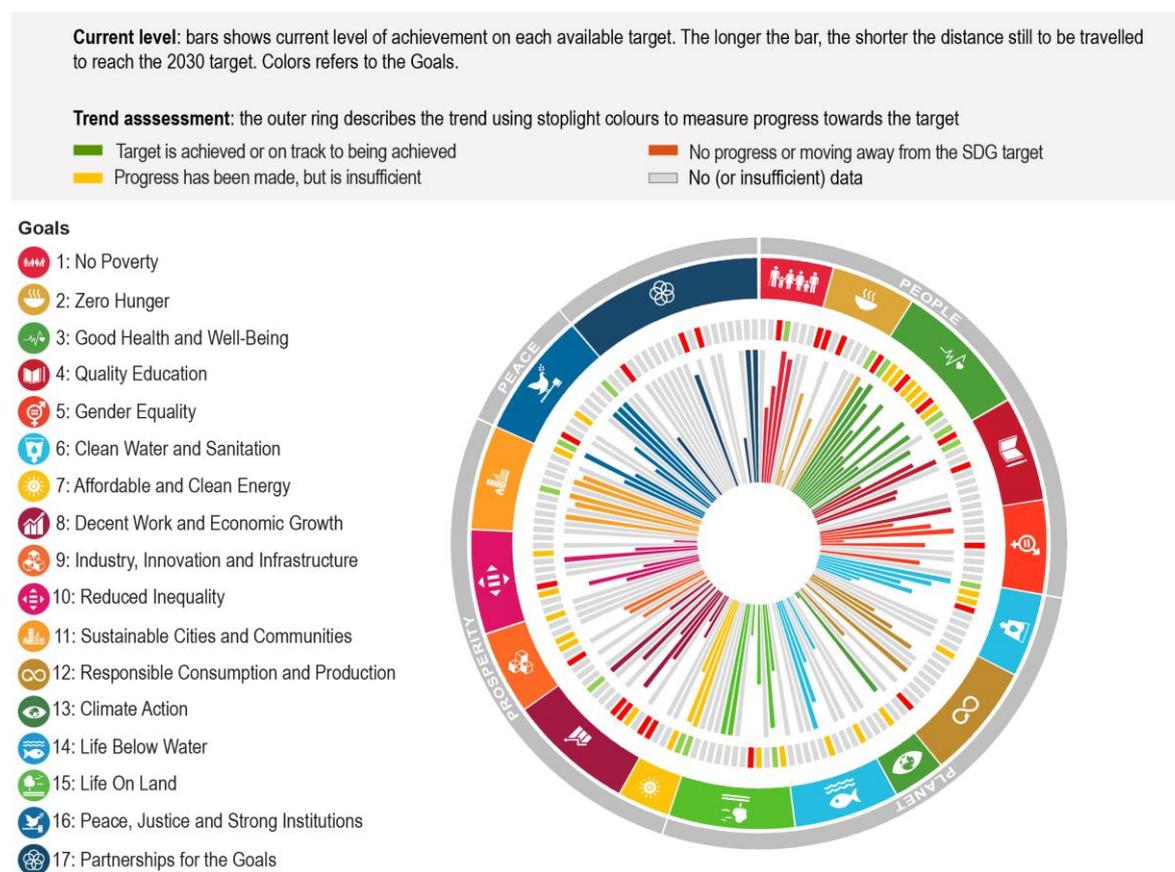# Measuring distance to the SDG targets – New Zealand

New Zealand has already achieved 23 of the 126 SDG targets for which comparable data are available and, based on most recent trends, is expected to meet 5 additional targets by 2030 (Figure 1). As virtually all OECD countries, New Zealand 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). It also displays some strengths when it comes to inclusion or on reducing some of the key environmental pressures. Yet, some challenges remain, particularly in terms of conservation of biodiversity and combatting climate change.

This country profile provides a high-level overview of some of New Zealand'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 draws 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. New Zealand'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

New Zealand performs well on several aspects of inclusion. While there is scope to make the legal frameworks to foster gender equality more comprehensive, New Zealand shows strong achievements on gender equality (Target 5.1 and 5.3). Even though the parity is not fully achieved yet, women are well represented in both the public and economic spheres (Target 5.5 and 16.7). Women hold 48% of seats in national parliament and 39% of those in deliberative bodies of local government. In the economic sphere, they make up 40% of managerial position. New Zealand women still spend more two hours a day on unpaid care and housework than men, a gap which is around the OECD average (Target 5.4). New Zealand also performs well on other inclusion targets. For instance, 90% of the population believe that New Zealand it is a good place to live for racial and ethnic minorities (Target 10.3) and New Zealand meets the requirements to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration (Target 10.7).

New Zealand has reduced some of the main environmental pressures. New Zealand is one of the least densely populated countries in the world, but also one of the most urbanised. While its cities have relatively low population density, New Zealand experienced one of the largest reductions of built-up area per capita over the past decades (Target 11.3). It also made significant progress towards Targets 11.6 and 12.5 on the environmental impact of cities. Mean population exposure to $PM_{2.5}$ in metropolitan areas has declined below the OECD average and WHO recommendations. As a result, New Zealand features well below average rates of mortality attributed to household and ambient air pollution (Target 3.9). On waste, all municipal solid waste is collected and a number of cities implemented policies to reduce waste generation and encourage recycling, but data limitations do not allow tracking progress (Target 11.6). New Zealand also has a comparatively clean and low-carbon energy mix. Renewable energy sources account for more than 80% of electricity generation and around a third of total final energy consumption (Target 7.2).

New Zealand also reports some strengths when it comes to institutions (Goal 16). Besides Target 16.1 on safety, New Zealand is ahead the OECD average on all other targets that can be monitored. Measures of the rule of law are good. While a fifth of detainees are unsentenced this rate is below the OECD average and the index of civil justice from the World Justice Project (at 78%) is almost 10 points ahead the OECD average (Target 16.3). In addition, while there is scope for improvement, institutions are perceived as accountable and inclusive (Targets 16.6 and 16.7). For instance, almost 7 in 10 citizens report confidence with the judicial system, 13 points above the OECD average (Target 16.6).
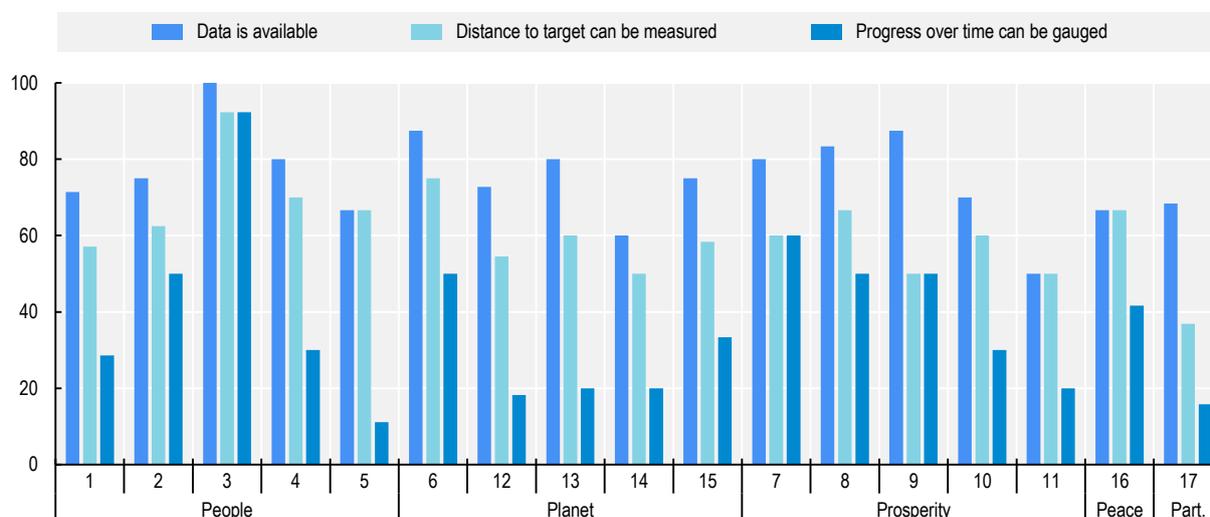
Main challenges

Biodiversity is losing ground. Due to its geographic location and its natural history (which evolved in the absence of mammalian predators), New Zealand has a unique biodiversity, with one of the world's highest rates of endemic flora and fauna species. New Zealand has implemented some of the policy instruments listed under the Planet category, including Targets 14.6 on harmful subsidies to fisheries and 15.8 on Invasive Alien Species, and has already integrated ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning (Target 15.9). In addition, protected areas cover 33% of the terrestrial area and 30% of the territorial sea, well beyond the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Still, too many of the freshwater, terrestrial, mountain and marine areas that are considered as key for biodiversity are not protected (Targets 14.5, 15.1, 15.4). New Zealand has one of the world's highest shares of threatened species (Target 15.5) and virtually all of local breeds with known level of extinction risk are classified as being at risk (Target 2.5). Beyond biodiversity, New Zealand also face other challenges in the Planet category. In particular, its greenhouse gas emissions intensity per unit of GDP is among the highest in the OECD (Target 13.2) and New Zealand is also far from meeting targets on education to sustainable development (Targets 4.7, 12.8 and 13.3).

New Zealand could do more to reduce inequality. In New Zealand, more than one in ten of the population is income poor (Targets 1.2 and 10.2). The income distribution is more unequal than the OECD average, reflecting lower than average redistribution through taxes and transfers (Target 10.4). In addition, many population groups including women, young adults and ethnic minorities face additional challenges. For instance, while the share of young people not in education, employment or training is slightly below the OECD average, it is still high (at 12% in 2020, Target 8.6). Further, education outcomes vary strongly by socio-economic background and ethnicity – Māori and Pasifika tend to fare worse (Target 4.5). Finally, unhealthy behaviours such as malnutrition (Target 2.2), which are more common among low socio-economic groups, exacerbate inequalities.

Statistical gaps

Like in many other OECD countries, data availability remains a challenge when measuring distances to targets (see the Overview chapter for details). For New Zealand, available data on the level of the different indicators allow covering 126 of the 169 targets. As shown in Figure 2 below, indicator coverage is uneven across the 17 goals. While seven goals (mostly within 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 60% or less of their targets covered. Data gaps become starker when focusing on performance indicators, excluding those providing context information. In this case, coverage exceeds 80% only for Goal 3 on health. Moreover, for ten goals, mostly within the Planet (Goals 12, 13, 14 and 15) and People (Goals 1, 4 and 5) categories but also for Goals 10 on inequalities, 11 on cities and 17 on partnerships, data are lacking to monitor changes over time for more than two in three targets.

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

Note: The figure represents New Zealand'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**Error! Reference source not found.** presents an overview of New Zealand'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. New Zealand 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	1.2	Poverty in all its dimensions	1.30	n.a.	1.41	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
1	1.3	Social protection coverage	0.81	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	0.16	n.a.	1.00	n.a.
2	2.1	Hunger	0.85	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.28	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
2	2.2	Malnutrition	2.64	No progress or moving	2.46	No progress or moving

Goal	Target	Short Label	Distance to Target (s.u.)	Trend Assessment	OECD Average distance (s.u.)	OECD Trend Assessment
				away from the SDG target		away from the SDG target
2	2.4	Sustainable production	1.33	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 livestocks*	4.74	n.a.	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	0.17	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	0.43	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.56	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.4	Premature mortality	1.08	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	1.26	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.5	Prevention of Substance abuse	0.21	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*	1.66	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.78	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.7	Access to sexual health-care	0.60	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.58	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.8	Health coverage	1.83	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	0.15	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.55	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
3	3.a	Tobacco consumption	1.57	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	2.65	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
3	3.b	Vaccination	0.24	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	0.41	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	1.19	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
4	4.1	Primary and secondary education	1.77	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	0.50	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.24	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
4	4.3	Lifelong learning	0.00	n.a.	1.25	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
4	4.5	Disparities in education	1.06	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.49	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
4	4.6	Adults' literacy and numeracy	1.14	n.a.	1.57	n.a.
4	4.7	Skills for sustainable development	3.36	n.a.	1.04	n.a.
4	4.c	Qualification of teachers	0.00	n.a.	0.60	n.a.
5	5.1	Discrimination against women	1.34	n.a.	1.32	n.a.
5	5.2	Violence against women	0.50	n.a.	0.89	n.a.
5	5.3	Harmful practices	0.00	n.a.	1.37	n.a.
5	5.4	Unpaid care and domestic work	2.47	n.a.	1.79	n.a.

Goal	Target	Short Label	Distance to Target (s.u.)	Trend Assessment	OECD Average distance (s.u.)	OECD Trend Assessment
5	5.5	Women's participation	0.65	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.89	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
5	5.b	Women's empowerment	0.75	n.a.	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	0.41	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	1.11	n.a.	0.68	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
6	6.4	Water-use efficiency	0.78	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	1.99	n.a.	0.98	n.a.
6	6.6	Water-related ecosystems*	2.29	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	0.06	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	1.22	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.98	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
8	8.1	GDP growth	1.94	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.89	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
8	8.2	Productivity	2.30	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	1.15	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.82	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
8	8.5	Employment	0.26	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.97	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
8	8.6	NEET	1.69	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	0.70	n.a.	0.80	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
8	8.10	Financial institutions	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.45	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
8	8.b	Strategy for youth employment	1.90	n.a.	0.45	n.a.
9	9.2	Sustainable industry	1.31	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	1.10	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.87	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
9	9.5	Research and development	1.01	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	1.06	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
9	9.c	ICT	0.32	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	10.2	Social inclusion	1.30	n.a.	1.54	No progress or moving away from the SDG target

Goal	Target	Short Label	Distance to Target (s.u.)	Trend Assessment	OECD Average distance (s.u.)	OECD Trend Assessment
10	10.3	Inequalities of outcome	0.46	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	1.27	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
10	10.4	Redistribution	1.75	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	1.12	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
10	10.7	Migration	0.00	n.a.	0.69	n.a.
10	10.a	Tariff-lines	1.61	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.93	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
10	10.c	Remittances	2.48	n.a.	2.21	n.a.
11	11.3	Urbanization	0.00	n.a.	1.19	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
11	11.5	Impact of disasters	0.16	n.a.	1.19	n.a.
11	11.6	Environmental impact of cities	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	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	0.16	n.a.	0.81	n.a.
12	12.2	Efficient use of natural resources	1.39	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	0.85	n.a.	1.36	n.a.
12	12.4	Chemical and hazardous waste*	0.24	n.a.	1.02	n.a.
12	12.7	Public procurement practices	0.00	n.a.	0.00	n.a.
12	12.8	Education for sustainability	3.36	n.a.	1.04	n.a.
12	12.b	Tourism sustainability	1.57	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	0.14	n.a.	0.73	n.a.
13	13.2	Greenhouse gas emissions	2.85	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	1.15	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
13	13.3	Education for sustainability	3.36	n.a.	1.04	n.a.
14	14.1	Marine pollution**	1.70	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	1.84	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
14	14.4	Overfishing and IUU fishing*	1.51	n.a.	1.78	n.a.
14	14.5	Protected marine areas*	0.59	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target	0.38	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
14	14.6	Harmful subsidies to fisheries*	0.00	n.a.	0.36	n.a.
14	14.b	Small-scale fisheries	3.60	n.a.	1.64	n.a.
15	15.1	Ecosystem protection*	1.49	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*	0.21	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.60	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
15	15.4	Mountain ecosystems	1.20	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*	3.96	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	2.30	n.a.	0.78	n.a.

Goal	Target	Short Label	Distance to Target (s.u.)	Trend Assessment	OECD Average distance (s.u.)	OECD Trend Assessment
15	15.8	Invasive alien species*	0.00	n.a.	0.30	n.a.
15	15.9	National and local planning*	0.00	n.a.	0.54	n.a.
16	16.1	Violence and related deaths	1.05	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	16.2	Violence against children	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.65	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
16	16.3	Rule of law	1.21	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	2.33	No progress or moving away from the SDG target
16	16.6	Accountable institutions	1.54	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	0.86	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	0.00	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved	0.54	Target is achieved or on track to being achieved
17	17.2	Official Development Assistance	1.38	No progress or moving away from the SDG target	0.94	Progress has been made, but is insufficient to meet the target
17	17.10	Multilateral trading system	0.32	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	5.55	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	3.27	n.a.	2.32	n.a.
17	17.16	Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	1.98	n.a.	0.89	n.a.
17	17.18	Statistical capacity	0.00	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 stoplight 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) <u>or</u> 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) <u>or</u> 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.