

Progress and Remaining Issues of Monitoring and Evaluation on SDG among Selected Asian Countries



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Introduction

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015.
- The 17 SDGs are agreed as a call for action by all countries, developed and developing, in a global partnership.
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities have since been started by U.N. member countries.



Purpose of this study

The purposes of this study are to:

- (i) identify **common progress and characteristics** of the current practice of planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of SDGs among three selected Asian countries (Indonesia, Vietnam and Nepal);
- (ii) identify **remaining issues** for better monitoring and evaluation practices of SDGs, and;
- (iii) propose **some recommendations** for coping with those issues.



Methodology of data collection and analysis

- The recent **Voluntary National Reviews (VNR)** of three countries were collected and carefully compared.
- Then, the current situation of each country indicated by its VNR is reported in table format.
- After that, the characteristics commonly shared among those countries are summarized.



4. Result of analysis

4-1. Comparison of integration of SDGs into national development plans

	Integration of SDGs into national development plans
Vietnam	Seventeen global SDGs have been nationalized into 115 Viet Nam SDG (VSDG) targets in our <u>“National Action Plan for Implementation of Agenda 2030</u> for Sustainable Development”.
Indonesia	The Indonesia's current <u>Long Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2015 – 2019</u> has integrated various topics discussed in the 2030 Agenda.
Nepal	<u>The current (14th) periodic plan (2016/17-2018/19)</u> , and other sectoral plans, policies and their targets are being aligned with SDGs. Specific SDGs codes are assigned for all national programs in the national budget.



- It is observed that all three countries have **significantly integrated** the SDGs into their national development plans.
- Their integration was conducted when they made their next phase long-term development plans as follows (see the underlined sentences).



4-2. Comparison of progress against SDGs

- It is observed that all three countries reported the status using numerical data against the numerical targets set in the SDGs.
- The data indicated **good signs** for achieving the numerical targets. Also, they have adjusted budget allocations along with their long-term development plans.

4-3. Comparison of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems

	Monitoring and evaluation system
Vietnam	Viet Nam is formulating the Roadmap and Indicator System to monitor and evaluate SDGs, expected to be issued in 2018. The nationalization of SDG indicators shows that many indicators <u>do not have metadata</u> .
Indonesia	Indonesia has already developed 87 of the total 241 global indicators, and the rest is still being developed. In addition, to ensure alignment with its national priorities and circumstances, Indonesia also has 234 proxy indicators. One of the challenges related to data is <u>disaggregation to ensure that no-one is left behind</u> .
Nepal	SDGs are interlinked, indivisible, and ambitious posing major implementation challenges in a low-income country like Nepal, which has limited resources. Weak database and <u>lack of availability of disaggregated data</u> by sex, age, social groups, disability status, geography, income and sub-national level will hinder monitoring of progress.



- It is observed that all three countries developed **their own monitoring system with a set of nationally adjusted indicators.**
- However, they pointed out that many SDG indicators require **“metadata”**.



5. Remaining issues identified from the viewpoint of the logic of evaluation

5-1. Evaluand: SDG movement itself or activities toward SDGs?

- What are they monitoring? Are they monitoring the progress of SDGs or their activities against SDGs?
- Do they evaluate whether “Y is good” or “X contributed to Y, thus X is good”. In this case, Y is SDGs and X is governmental activities.



5-2. Formal definition of evaluation and its application for SDGs M&E

- Sometimes, the formal definition of evaluation is defined as “systematic determination of values of things” (Scriven 1980, 1991).

$$\boxed{\text{Evaluation}} = \boxed{\text{Factual finding}} + \boxed{\text{Value determination}}$$

- Thus, a conclusive statement can be an “evaluation” if one concludes it using value-laden words, such as “good/bad”, “satisfactory/unsatisfactory”.
- All three countries reported mainly numerical progress against the SDGs’ numerical targets. In short, those reports are reporting merely factual findings.



5-3. Systematic synthesis of evaluative conclusions

- Value determination can be made if a framework for evaluation is applied. The framework for evaluation consists of **“criteria of value” (vertical axis)** and **“standards of value” (horizontal axis)**.

Criteria of value

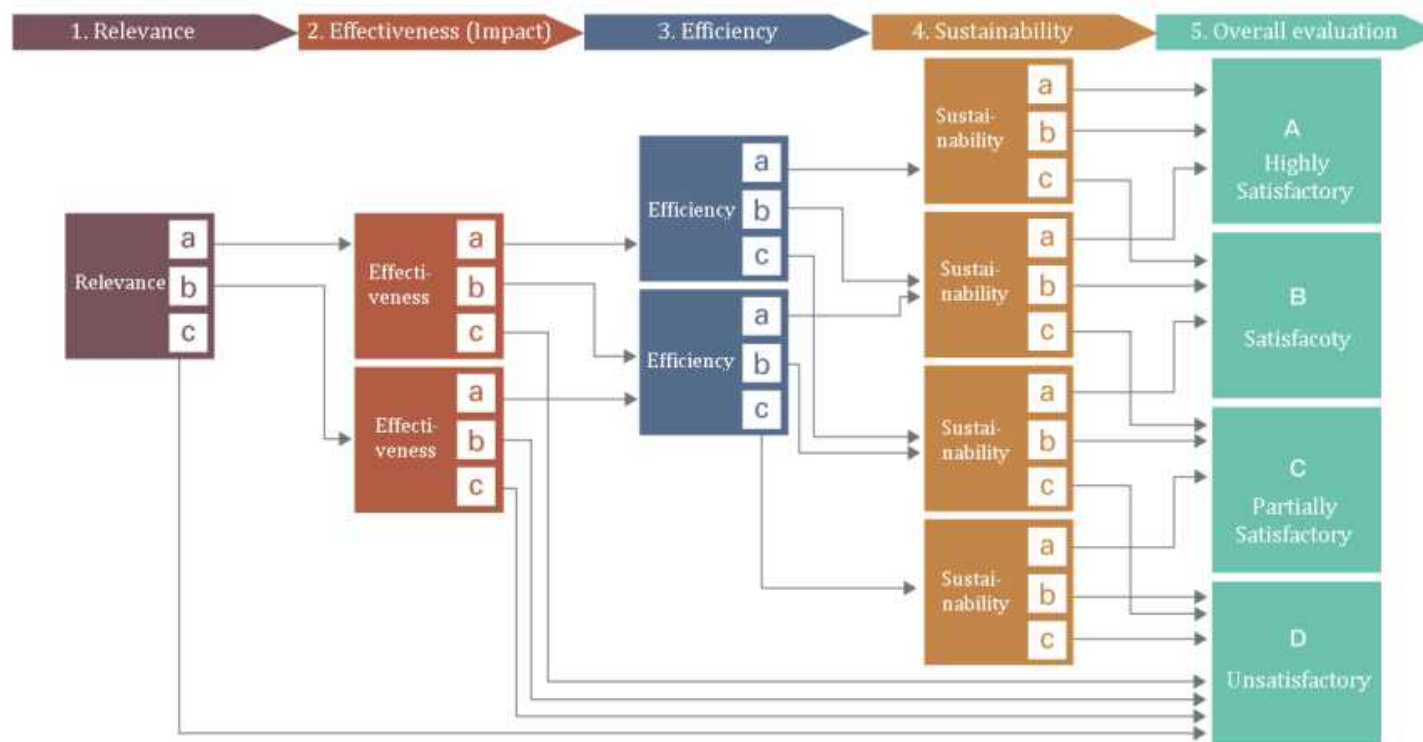
	Relevance	Effectiveness	Impact	Efficiency	Sustainability
a. Highly satisfactory	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)
b. Satisfactory	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)
c. Hard to say	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)
d. Unsatisfactory	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)
e. Highly unsatisfactory	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)	(Definition)

Standards of value

- Then, multiple overall evaluative conclusions at a certain level should be again systematically synthesized to **a single** evaluative conclusion **at higher level.**



Rating Flowchart



(Source) Japan Bank for International Cooperation. (2006).



- So far, the three countries, as well as other countries including Japan and U.N. agencies, **have not considered preparation of this practice (=applying the evaluative framework).**
- So this presentation proposes a **evaluative framework** and a **synthesis procedure as follows.**



One general criticism to SDGs is: **“Too many goals and too many indicators. It is not operational.”**



- Firstly, it is proposed that the evaluative conclusions of the **17 SDGs should be systematically synthesized into 4 evaluative conclusions.**

Table 3: Proposed Summarization of SDGs (S.P.E.C)

Category	Goal
P eople-centered SDG outcome targets	1. No poverty; 2. Zero hunger; 3. Good health; 6. Clean water; 8. Decent Work
S ociety-wide SDG outcome targets	4. Quality education; 5. Gender equality; 10. Reduced inequality; 16. Peace & Justice
E nvironment-related SDG outcome targets	7. Clean energy; 12. Responsible consumption; 13. Climate action; 14. Life below water; 15. Life on land
C ross-cutting SDG outcome targets	9. Industry, Innovation, Infra; 11. Sustainable cities 17. Partnerships for the Goals

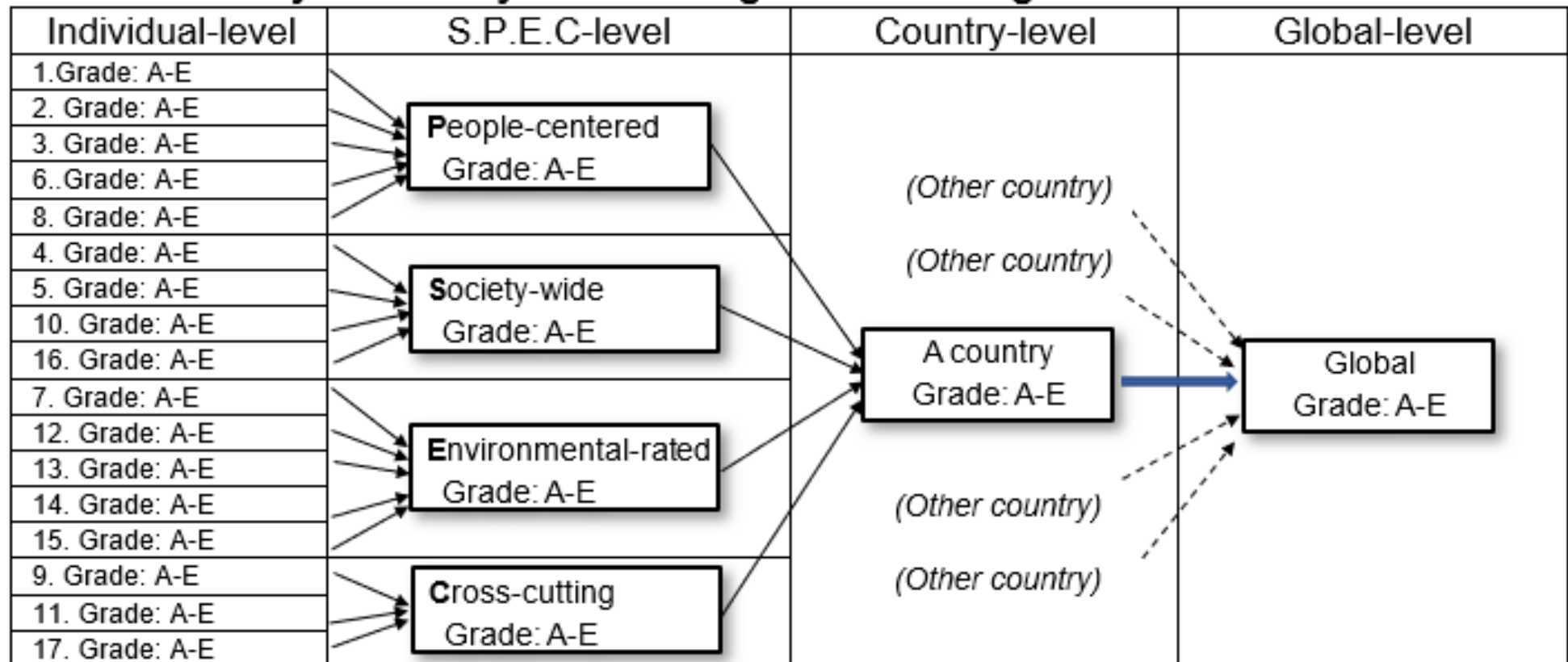
(Source) The author, based on the categorization of Engberg-Pedersen (2016)



- Then, it is proposed that **4 evaluative conclusions (i.e., S.P.E.C-level conclusions)** should be systematically synthesized into **one single country-level evaluative conclusion.**
- Then, it is recommended that multiple country-level evaluative conclusions should be integrated to **one single global evaluative conclusion.**

- This approach will help people easily understand the conclusion of our global effort. => **Make SDGs M&E “operationalized”.**

Table 4: Systematic synthesis to a global-level single evaluative conclusion



(Note) A: Highly satisfactory; B: Satisfactory; C: Acceptable; D: Unsatisfactory; E: Highly unsatisfactory.

(Source) Author.



5-4. Who should conduct SDGs evaluation?

- There are internal evaluation and external evaluation (i.e., third-party evaluation).
- Internal evaluation has a tendency of being inherently biased.
- **External evaluation** should be employed at midterm and endline of the target period, i.e. **2020, 2025 and 2030**, to avoid self-praising.



5-5. Value in evaluation: SDGs can serve as globally shared values for evaluation

- Before the SDGs were widely recognized, it was not clear **whose and what values** should be employed.
- The SDGs were globally accepted through truly international and multilayer discussions.
- Thus, agreement of the SDGs revealed the **globally shared values** and contributed to provide an answer for this question. **This makes the evaluator's job much easier, especially in the international development field.**



5-6. Internal validity (Cause-effect relationship)

- The practice of Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) can be either simply “performance measurement” or “Evidence-based Policy Making” (EBPM) practice.

5-7: External validity (replicability)

- One of the lessons of EBPM is natural replication does not automatically happen and special effort for dissemination is necessary.



5-8. Ethical consideration: Public and general welfare is exactly SDGs.

- *The Guiding Principles for Evaluators*, prepared by **American Evaluation Association (AEA)**, include “responsibilities for general and public welfare”.
- *The Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations*, prepared by **Japan Evaluation Society (JES)**, includes “responsibility of public welfare”.

- Now we evaluators have detailed definitions of *general welfare* if we read SDGs statements, and this will contribute to significant improvement of the practice of evaluation.



Recommendation

- The remaining issues stated in this presentation should be seriously examined and:
- The proposed procedures should be considered for application by both national governments and the United Nations agencies.

Thank you very much.

