

TECHNICAL FRAMEWORK

SDG Alignment Framework

Connecting environmental monitoring evidence to SDG 2, 6, 13, and 15 reporting

What this resource provides

A practical crosswalk for designing indicators, documenting evidence, and avoiding overclaiming when environmental monitoring supports sustainable-development reporting.

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Use the SDGs as a reporting context

Satellite-derived indicators can contribute evidence to programs aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, but an indicator is not automatically an official SDG statistic. Teams should map the result to the relevant target, define its geographic and temporal scope, and explain how it complements official data and local verification.

This framework focuses on four areas commonly connected to environmental intelligence: food and agriculture (SDG 2), water (SDG 6), climate action (SDG 13), and terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15).

- Name the target or program outcome the evidence supports.
- Define numerator, denominator, geography, period, and data-quality rules.
- Separate direct measurement from proxy or contextual evidence.
- Keep an auditable source and method note with every reported value.

SDG 2 — Zero Hunger

Agriculture monitoring can support program learning about crop condition, irrigation access, and the reach or timing of agricultural interventions. A vegetation trend may be useful as contextual evidence, but it does not by itself measure food security, yield, or household welfare.

- Pair crop-condition signals with agronomic, production, or household data.
- Report coverage and observation gaps for the farms or zones included.
- Use field verification to interpret unusual crop signals.
- State whether the indicator is a program proxy, outcome measure, or contextual layer.

SDG 6 — Clean Water and Sanitation

Water extent and water-related spectral indicators can support watershed planning, wetland monitoring, and prioritization of sampling. They should be paired with gauge, laboratory, service-access, or administrative data as required by the reporting question.

- Do not label a satellite screening signal as a laboratory water-quality result.
- Document seasonal variation and the date of observation.
- Connect mapped changes to basin units, water users, and management actions.
- Record how field or agency measurements confirm or qualify the signal.

SDG 13 — Climate Action

Repeat environmental observations can help programs monitor exposure, adaptation actions, or land and water changes relevant to climate planning. The causal link between a mapped change and climate impact requires additional analysis and local context.

- Describe the hazard, exposure, vulnerability, or response dimension being monitored.
- Use a baseline and explain the counterfactual or comparison where relevant.
- Avoid attributing a single observed change to climate without supporting evidence.
- Make uncertainty and scenario assumptions visible to decision-makers.

SDG 15 — Life on Land

Land-cover and canopy-change evidence can support ecosystem management, restoration tracking, and prioritization of protected-area reviews. A change map should be paired with governance, tenure, permit, and field information before it is interpreted as a cause or compliance finding.

- Version protected-area and restoration boundaries.
- Distinguish observed land-cover change from confirmed deforestation or degradation.
- Track restoration activity and natural variability in the interpretation.
- Retain reviewer decisions and source imagery for audit.

Reporting template

For each indicator, record: SDG target and program outcome, indicator definition, geography, period, unit, source data, processing method, validation evidence, limitations, responsible owner, and intended use. This makes the alignment useful to both technical reviewers and funders.

- Evidence status: observed, modeled, field-verified, or reported by an authority.
- Quality status: complete, partial, estimated, or unavailable.
- Decision linkage: what action or learning cycle the evidence informs.

Important note

This is an alignment aid, not an official SDG reporting standard. Confirm indicator definitions and reporting requirements with the responsible national or international authority.