

Progress in monitoring of environment-related SDG indicators in the Republic of Serbia

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Manuscript prepared by:

Dušanka Dostanić and Dragana Đoković Papić, Working
Group for Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals,
Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

Proofreading:

Teodora Todorčić Miličević

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Vijuga M

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The publication was created as a result of the project "Strengthening data and indicator framework for monitoring and reporting on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Republic of Serbia", implemented in 2021 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Serbia (UNRCO) in cooperation with the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS).

The publication presents the main results of the initial phase of the research for 93 environment-related SDG indicators identified by UNEP (UNEP 2019).¹

Special attention was paid to the group of 27 unique environment-related indicators for which, at the time the research began, data for the Republic of Serbia were available in the UN database, but were not verified and available in the database of the SORS.

This publication provides insights into the status of 27 analysed indicators, as well as respective institutional authority. Environment-related SDG indicators already published for the Republic of Serbia are separately presented due to their importance in achieving faster progress towards the goals of the Agenda.

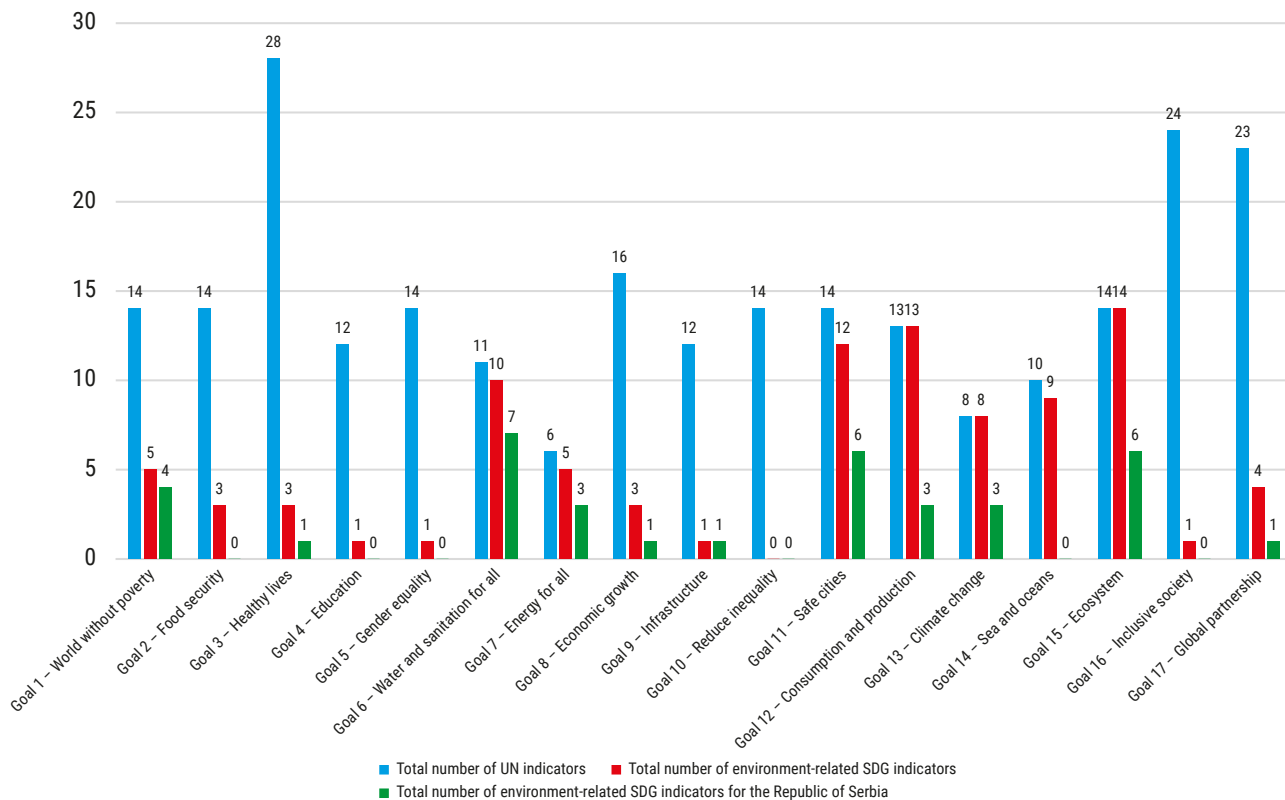
UN Environment Program (2019). *Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs*. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/measuring-progress-towards-achieving-environmental-dimension-sdgs>

¹ According to an updated review published in 2021, the environmental dimension of sustainable development has been integrated into 15 SDGs. A total of 92 environmental indicators permeate the SDGs, with the exception of Goals 10 and 16.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a universal strategy of the UN member states that contains 17 goals, 169 targets and a total of 247 indicators related to social, environmental and economic development in accordance with the principles of sustainability.

At the beginning of 2022, 110 out of 247 SDG indicators are available on the portal of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia for SDG indicators, while sources are being researched for 137.

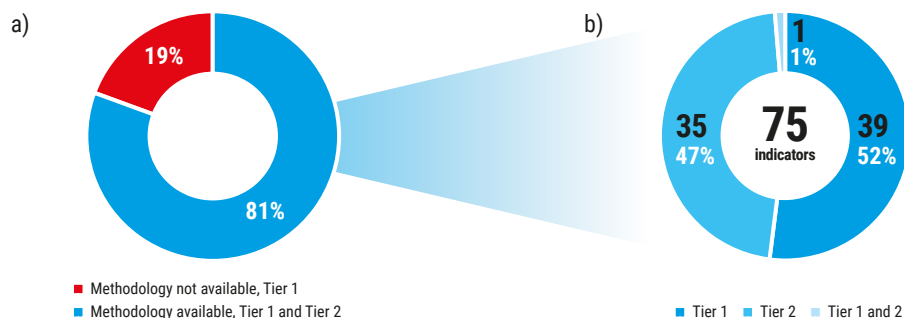
Chart 1. Availability of sustainable development indicators according to sustainable development goals, on SDG portal of the Statistical Office, January 2022.



The most important activities of the research conducted with the support of the Belgrade Open School were related to the analysis of the methodology for environment-related SDG indicators and obtaining answers regarding availability, level of development, and assessment of applicability for the Republic of Serbia.

The initial framework for the analysis was a list of 93 environment-related indicators which were identified in 2019 by UNEP.

Chart 2. a) Availability of the methodology for sustainable development environment-related indicators (%); and b) Indicators by the level of development, 2021.²

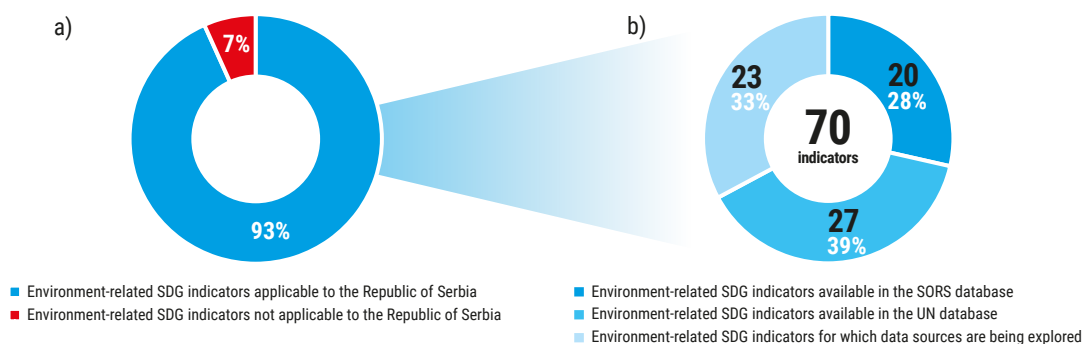


Out of the total number of environment-related SDG indicators, it is estimated that 70 (93%) are applicable for the Republic of Serbia, while the remaining five indicators (7%) are not relevant.³

² According to the UN definition, the methodologies for sustainable development indicators are designated as Tier 1 and Tier 2. The concept of indicators is clear, Tier 1 contains the established methodology and available standards. While for Tier 1 countries regularly collect data (for at least 50% of countries in each region for which the indicator is relevant), data are not collected regularly for Tier 2.

³ Most are Goal 14 indicators, which are not applicable to continental countries - management of marine areas according to the ecosystem-based approach, average marine acidity, coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas and the budget for research in the field of marine technologies. One indicator referred to goal 16 - Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations, but the last revision excluded it from the list of environment-related indicators.

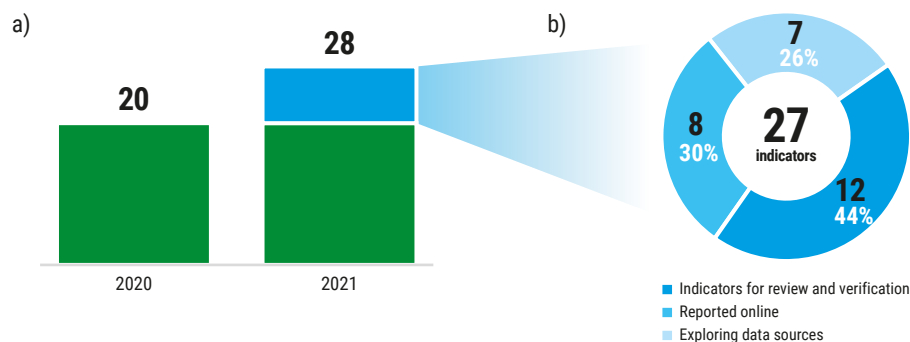
Chart 3. a) Estimated applicability of environment-related SDG indicators at the national level; and b) Availability of environment-related SDG indicators in the UN and SORS databases, 2020.



The second phase of the research was dedicated to the analysis of 27 environment-related indicators from the 2030 Agenda, for which data for the Republic of Serbia are available in the UN database; however they are not listed in the national SDG database. Special attention was paid to the analysis of metadata for each individual indicator.

The analysis was based on an assessment of the reliability of environment-related SDG indicators in the UN database. All relevant data sources and available documentation were used in the analysis, and communication was established between the employees of the SORS and competent experts from international organizations and data producers at the national level.

Chart 4. a) Number of available environment-related SDG indicators on the SDG portal of the SORS in 2020 and 2021; and b) Status of 27 environment-related SDG indicators from the UN database for the Republic of Serbia, 2021.



Responsibility for all 27 indicators of sustainable development in the environmental field, which are comprised in eight SDGs and for which data are available in the UN database, has been determined for a total of eight national institutions.

Table 1. List of indicators being prepared for publication, i.e. in the phase of review and verification which is performed in cooperation with the competent institutions

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	
2.5.1	Number of (a) plant and (b) animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium- or long-term conservation facilities
2.5.2	Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk of extinction
6.5.1	Degree of integrated water resources management
6.5.2	Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation
15.3.1	Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area
Institute of Public Health of Serbia "Dr Milan Jovanović Batut"	
3.9.2	Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services)
Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia	
3.9.2	Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services)
12.4.2	(a) Hazardous waste generated per capita; and (b) proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment
12.b.1	Implementation of standard accounting tools to monitor the economic and environmental aspects of tourism sustainability

14.1.1	(a) Index of coastal eutrophication; and (b) plastic debris density
15.9.1	(a) Number of countries that have established national targets in accordance with or similar to Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 in their national biodiversity strategy and action plans and the progress reported towards these targets; and (b) integration of biodiversity into national accounting and reporting systems, defined as implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting
Serbian Environmental Protection Agency	
12.4.1	Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required, by each relevant agreement
12.4.2	(a) Hazardous waste generated per capita; and (b) proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment
Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia	
15.5.1	Red List Index
15.9.1	(a) Number of countries that have established national targets in accordance with or similar to Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 in their national biodiversity strategy and action plans and the progress reported towards these targets; and (b) integration of biodiversity into national accounting and reporting systems, defined as implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting
Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia	
15.5.1	Red List Index

Table 2. List of indicators published with the responsible institutions

Institute of Public Health of Serbia "Dr Milan Jovanović Batut"	
6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
Serbian Environmental Protection Agency	
6.3.2	Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality
9.4.1	CO ₂ emission per unit of value added
12.1.1	Number of countries developing, adopting or implementing policy instruments aimed at supporting the shift to sustainable consumption and production
12.5.1	National recycling rate, tons of material recycled
15.1.2	Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type
Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia	
6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
14.b.1	Degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	
15.6.1	Number of countries that have adopted legislative, administrative and policy frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits

Key messages for 8 newly published environment-related SDG indicators⁴



6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services is high and has been at the same level for many years.

In 2020, the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services was 75%. The share is slightly higher for the subpopulation from urban settlements and amounts to 82%, while for the subpopulation of the population from other settlements it amounts to 67%.

6.3.2 Underground water bodies have the best ambient water quality.

In the period from 2017 to 2019, 67.82% of water bodies in the Republic of Serbia had good water status - 88.6% of groundwater and 81.82% of open water bodies had good ambient water quality, while 54% of river water bodies had good ambient water quality.



9.4.1 Total calculated carbon dioxide emissions from the fuel combustion process and from the manufacturing industry after 2004 with a variable trend, but declining until 2018.

Total carbon dioxide emissions in 2018 amounted to 44.79 million tons and recorded a decrease of 21% compared to 2004, when they amounted to 56.34 million tons. Carbon dioxide emissions from the manufacturing industry in 2018 were 3.77 million tons. Compared to 2004, when they were the highest (9.64 million tons), they recorded a sharp decline by 61%.

⁴ The data were taken from the SDG portal of the SORS, <https://sdg.indikatori.rs/en-US/>.



12.1.1 Serbia is actively implementing the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, which includes the National Action Plans, Instruments, Policies and Mechanisms for Sustainable Consumption and Production.

12.5.1 Amount of municipal waste recycled in the Republic of Serbia has been increasing since 2017, and in 2019 it amounted to 334 thousand tons.



14.b.1 Degree of application of a legal/ regulatory/ policy/ institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries for the Republic of Serbia was assessed as level 4 (high degree of implementation of instruments for access to resources and markets for small-scale fisheries) out of 5 levels.



15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, as well as proportion of important sites for terrestrial biodiversity that are covered by protected areas has been increasing since 2000 in the Republic of Serbia.

Important sites for terrestrial biodiversity that are covered by protected areas grew from 14.4% in 2000 to 23.2% in 2020. Important sites for freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas grew from 16.5% in 2000 to 26.8% in 2020.

15.6.1.a The Republic of Serbia is a signatory to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and a signatory to the Nagoya Protocol. It submitted a report on the legislative, administrative and policy frameworks to the Central Institution for the Exchange of Specialized Information on Access and Benefit-Sharing Generated by the Use of Genetic Resources. In 2021, it had 106 reported Standard Material Transfer Agreements (SMTAs) under which plant genetic resources for food and agriculture are transferred to the country.

Table 3. List of indicators for which the research of sources continues in cooperation with the responsible institutions

Institute of Public Health of Serbia "Dr Milan Jovanović Batut"	
3.9.1	Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution
Serbian Environmental Protection Agency	
3.9.1	Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution
6.6.1	Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time
Serbian Business Registers Agency	
12.6.1	Number of companies publishing sustainability reports
Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia	
15.4.2	Mountain Green Cover Index
15.8.1	Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species
Ministry of European Integration	
17.9.1	Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries
17.14.1	Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development
Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia	
3.9.1	Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution

Future activities to increase the availability of indicators and to overcome constraints concerning environment-related indicators

A large number of institutions of the Republic of Serbia have been actively working and cooperating with the SORS for many years on the calculation and transposition of environment-related SDG indicators, as well as on their preparation for publication. SORS has developed a clear procedure for preparing of sustainable development indicators for publication. Following the request for submission of data in the sent formats, the SORS takes them over, performs control and additional consultations (if necessary) with the competent experts from the institutions and then publishes the SDG indicator on the SORS portal.

The 40% increase in the number of published environment-related SDG indicators in 2021 compared to the previous year is the best indicator of the project's contribution to strengthening the capacity of SORS. The established institutional cooperation will contribute to the adoption and publication of 12 more environment-related SDG indicators, which are in the phase of review and verification, with the help of members of the internal group of the SORS for SDG.

Capacity building for the generation of statistics corresponding to environment-related SDG indicators will continue, and special attention will be paid to providing data for missing indicators that are the responsibility of two or more institutions. SORS has the role of coordinator in the process of monitoring SDG indicators and in the future it will cooperate with all relevant statistical data producers and international organizations to provide environment-related SDG indicators and monitor progress towards achieving the agreed goals of the 2030 Agenda.



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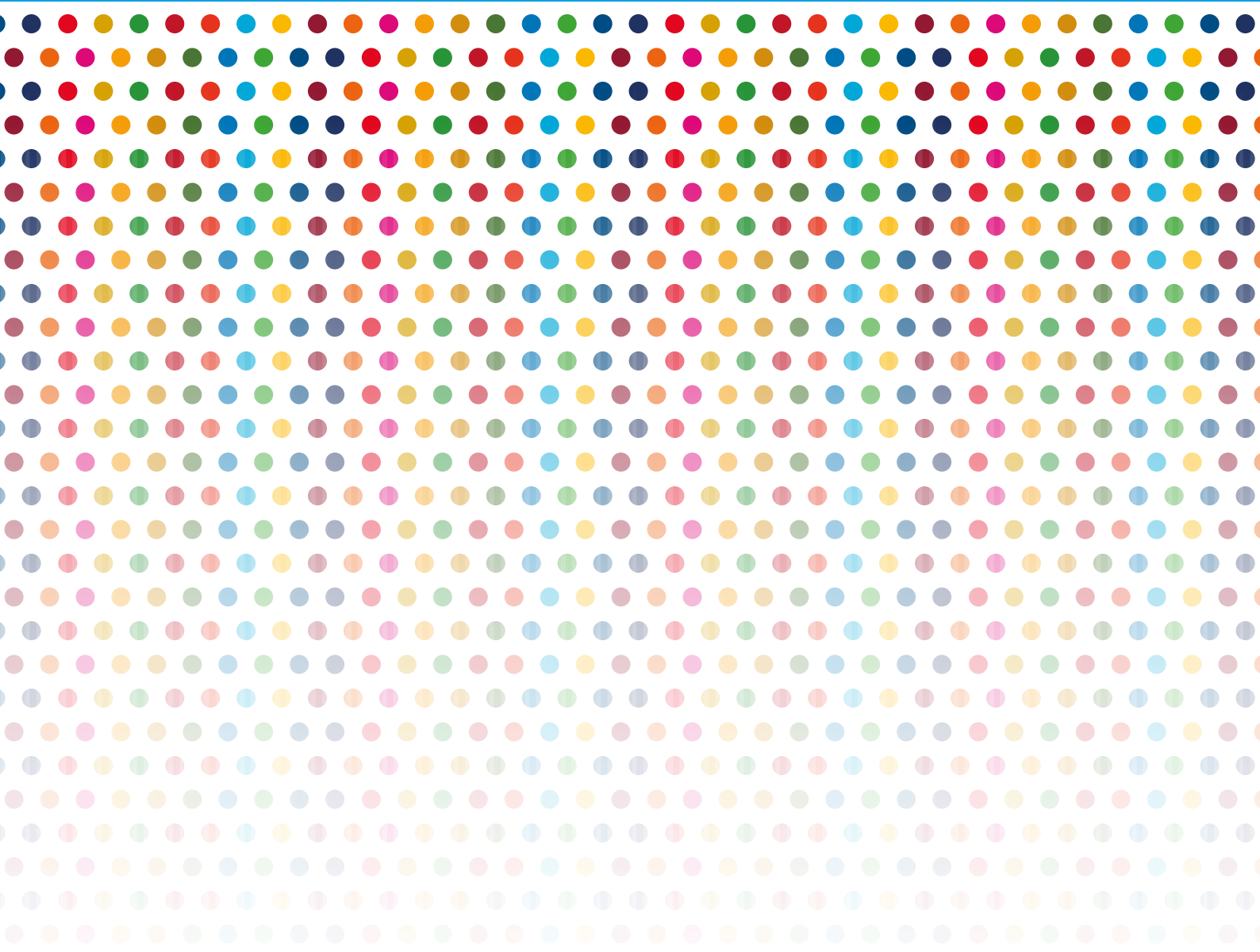
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