Governance Through Goals
New Strategies for Sustainable Development

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A long path of global sustainability governance ...
Many policy instruments have been tried ...

- Multilateral treaties
- Emissions markets
- Public-private partnerships
- Detailed Programmes of Action
A New Approach (agreed in 2015):
17 “Sustainable Development Goals” with 169 targets, all to be achieved by 2030
The global research network ‘Earth System Governance Project’ supported the SDG process via meetings, policy briefs & academic research.
Will it work?

European Research Council Advanced Grant

Global Governance through Goals?
Assessing and Explaining the Steering Effects of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

GLOBAL GOALS
2.5 million EUR (2019-2023)
Open questions in the theory of international relations and global governance
First, GLOBALGOALS analyses whether and under what conditions the Sustainable Development Goals advance institutional integration.
Second, GLOBALGOALS analyses whether and under what conditions the Sustainable Development Goals make global governance more inclusive.

“We pledge that no one will be left behind.”
United Nations, 2015
Third, GLOBALGOALS analyses whether and under what conditions the Sustainable Development Goals advance ecological **integrity** of global governance.
GLOBALGOALS builds numerous (global) actor networks in areas covered by Sustainable Development Goals.

This allows us to understand integration, inclusiveness and integrity over time and across issues.
Global Surveys and Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis

Global Goals surveys

> 180 expert interviews
Country Studies

Plus additional country studies by affiliated teams
- Australia
- Germany
- Italy
Pathways of Influence

Pathway 1: Global Goals as ‘Orchestrators’?
- SDGs could influence global governance by serving as ‘orchestrators’ in dense networks of actors and institutions.

Pathway 2: Global Goals as Consensus-Builders?
- SDGs could influence global governance by fostering cognitive consensus among governments and other actors.

Pathway 3: Global Goals as Agenda-setters?
- SDGs could influence global governance by raising the saliency of issues on the global political agenda.
Project Overview

Nine Sustainable Development Goals with their targets

| SDG 2 | SDG 3 | SDG 7 | SDG 9 | SDG 10 | SDG 11 | SDG 14 | SDG 15 | SDG 16 |

may influence global sustainability governance through three pathways:

- Orchestrating actor networks
- Building consensus among actors
- Raising issue saliency

thus changing institutional and actor networks

- Increasing institutional integration
- Increasing global inclusiveness
- Increasing ecological integrity

hence eventually advancing goal achievement
Core team of 10+ researchers at Utrecht University
Global partnerships with related projects
Side-events at both political and academic conferences
International open science conference on SDG research: June 2020 in Utrecht